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Revitalizing social work education through global and critical awareness: examples from three Scandinavian schools of social work

Revitalisering av sosialarbeider utdanningen ved hjelp av globale og kritiske perspektiver — Eksempler fra tre skandinaviske sosialarbeiderutdanninger

Revitalisering av det sociala arbetets utbildning med hjälp av globala och kritiska perspektiv- Exempel från tre Skandinaviska socialarbetarutbildningar

Fornyelse af socialrådgiveruddannelse med anvendelse af global perspektivering og kritisk refleksion. Et eksempel fra tre skandinaviske socialrådgiveruddannelser

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ABSTRACT

Increasing globalisation, reorganisation of the Scandinavian welfare regimes and the awareness of increasing global roots of local social problems necessitated change in the curriculum of social work in three Scandinavian schools of social work in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Recent global transformations, increasing global inequalities, increasing forced migration and the emergence of glocal social problems make the traditional education and methods of social work ineffective and in some cases harmful for people in need of social work intervention. This article examines the need to provide critical, global and multilevel perspectives in social work education in order to prepare social work students for the increasing social problems with global roots. The article, which is based on cross-national collaborations in social work education between three Scandinavian countries, addresses global and critical components in theoretical courses, professional training and field practice in the social work education of the countries in question. It is argued that social work education should move beyond the old division of classical and international/intercultural toward including global and critical perspectives in an integrative manner in all programs.

KEYWORDS

Critical consciousness; glocal social problems; intersectionalism; Scandinavian welfare state; social work curriculum

NØKKELOORD

kritisk bevissthet; globale sosiale problem; interseksjonalitet; Skandinaviske velferdsstater; sosialarbeiderutdanning

NYCKELORD

kritiskt medvetande; globala sociala problem; interseksjonalitet; Skandinaviska välfärdsstater; socialarbetarutbildning

ABSTRAKT

Globalisering, reorganisering av de skandinaviske velferdsstater og økt oppmerksomhet om sosiale problem med globale røtter, nødvendiggjorde endringer i studieplanene ved tre skandinaviske sosialarbeiderutdanninger i Danmark, Norge og Sverige. Globale endringer med økende global ulikhet, tvungen migrasjon og framveksten av globale sosiale problem gjør tradisjonelle metoder og utdanningstilbud i sosialt arbeid ineffektive og i noen tilfeller skadelige for mennesker med behov for sosiale tjenester. Denne artikkelen utforsker nødvendigheten av å forsterke globale, kritiske og fler nivå—perspektiver i utdanningene for å forberede studentene på å møte sosiale problem med globale røtter. Artikkelen som er basert på et samarbeid mellom sosialarbeiderutdanningene i tre skandinaviske land, reiser spørsmål om nødvendigheten av globale og kritiske komponenter i teoretiske emner, i ferdighetstrening og i praksis i sosialarbeiderutdanningene i landene det er snakk om. Det argumenteres for at sosialarbeiderutdanninger bør overskride den gamle oppdelingen mellom en klassisk og en Interkulturell/internasjonalt utdanning, og inkludere globale og kritiske perspektiver på en integrerende måte i alle sosialarbeiderutdanningene.

ABSTRAKT

Globalisering, omorganiseringen av de skandinaviske välfärdsstaterna och en ökad medvetenhet kring sociala problem med globala rötter, nödvändiggjorde revideringar i utbildnings- och kursplaner vid tre socialarbetarutbildningar i Danmark, Norge och Sverige. Globala transformationer med ökade globala ojämlikheter, ofrivillig migration och framväxten av globala sociala problem gör det sociala arbetets traditionella utbildning och metoder ineffektiv och i några fall även skadlig för människor i behov av det sociala arbetets stöd och insatser. Denna artikel utforskar nödvändigheten av att förstärka globala och kritiska och flernivå-perspektiv i det sociala arbetets utbildning för att förbereda socionomstuderande på att möta sociala problem med globala rötter. Artikeln som är baserad på ett samarbete mellan socialarbetarutbildningar i tre skandinaviska länder, reser frågor om nödvändigheten av globala och kritiska komponenter i teoretiska ämnen, i färdighetsträning och praktik i socialarbetarutbildningar i de aktuella länderna. Artikeln argumenterar för att socialarbetarutbildningar bör gå bortom en uppdelning mellan en 'klassisk' och en 'interkulturell/internationell' utbildning, och inkludera globala och kritiska perspektiv på ett integrerat sätt i alla socialarbetarutbildningar.

ABSTRAKT

Den stigende globalisering, reorganisering af de skandinaviske velfærdsregimer og opmærksomheden på globale rødders vækst som årsag til sociale problemer, gjorde det nødvendigt at forandre studieordningerne i tre skandinaviske skoler for socialt arbejde i Danmark, Norge og Sverige. Globale forandringer, stigende global ulighed, øget tvungen migration og væksten af globale sociale problemer gjorde den traditionelle uddannelse og metoder i socialt arbejde ineffektive og i nogle tilfælde skadelige for mennesker med behov for social støtte. Denne artikel, udforsker nødvendigheden af at tilføre uddannelse til socialt arbejde kritiske, globale og perspektiver på mange niveauer for at forberede socialrådgiverstuderende på de stigende problemer med globale rødder. Artiklen, som er baseret på nordisk samarbejde mellem undervisere i tre skandinaviske lande, og behandler globale og kritiske komponenter i teoretiske kurser, praksis og praktik i socialrådgiveruddannelsen i de tre omtalte lande. Der argumenteres for, at socialrådgiveruddannelse bør gå videre end den gamle opdeling af klassisk og international/interkulturel mod inkludering af globale og kritiske perspektiver i alle uddannelsesretninger.

NØGLEORD

kritisk bevidsthed; sociale problemer i et 'glocal' perspektiv; intersektionistiske perspektiver; skandinavisk velfærdsstat; socialrådgiveruddannelse

Introduction

During the last decade, three Scandinavian schools of social work in Denmark, Norway and Sweden have strengthened the global and critical dimensions of their Bachelor's curricula in order to address the changes of the welfare regimes, and the emergence of new local social problems with global roots. This started when the three schools established intercultural and international social work curricula, called 'inter/inter programs', as comprehensive Bachelor's programs parallel to the 'classical' Bachelor's programs mainly focusing on the welfare states in the Scandinavian countries.¹ For the first time, a special international/intercultural focus was introduced in social work education, and the three schools entered into a network in order to improve the curriculum development.

The schools were also encouraged by the 'Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training,' formulated by International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (www.iassw-aiets.org 2004). In this comprehensive document, it is argued that schools for social work education should aspire toward a critical understanding of how socio-structural inadequacies, discrimination, oppression, and social, political and economic injustices, impact human functioning and development at all levels, including the global.

The initial purpose of establishing the 'inter/inter' programs was to prepare the students for intercultural social work practice in their local community as well as for international social work² (Cox & Pawar, 2013). International fieldwork in countries inside and outside Europe was, already before the new curricula, a component the educations shared. Confrontation with social problems among people with immigrant backgrounds and vulnerable groups in international contexts resulted in a growing awareness of how social problems in local contexts are linked to the global structures and institutional arrangements of any society (Payne & Askeland, 2008). The global/local dialectic underlines the interconnectedness of global changes in all societies, also called glocalisation processes (Robertson, 1995). A need to further understand and respond to the local impact of global forces developed.

During the process of developing these curricula, a wish to bridge the classical and inter/inter programs emerged. The schools have addressed this challenge differently: The Norwegian and Swedish schools have combined the 'old' division of classical and inter/inter programs into a single program of social work including an intercultural and international profile (Alseth & Flem, 2012; Jönsson, 2015a). The Danish school continues to run two separate Bachelor's programs; in addition, new elective modules that focus on international and comparative social work³ have been developed and are offered to students from both programs.

The authors of this article share a strong commitment to include global and critical perspectives in an integrative manner in social work education. By implementing these perspectives, we have experienced challenges often linked to neoliberal educational policy (Alseth & Flem, 2012; Askeland & Strauss, 2014). Representatives from the three Scandinavian schools decided to conduct a more systematic review of teaching modules within their current inter/inter syllabus, guided by global and critical perspectives,⁴ in order to explore new options for further development and implementation of these perspectives.

In this article, we are aiming to unfold some theoretical perspectives in support of this position and share some examples of how global and critical components in the social work syllabus can prepare students for the glocal field of social work. The following questions have guided our study:

- How can global and critical perspectives be addressed in theoretical courses?
- How can global and critical perspectives be addressed in professional training?
- How can global and critical perspectives be addressed in field training?

Methods

The comparative method used in this article is what is called a 'means of descriptive features,' which claims to enhance knowledge about a phenomenon as a *process* (Macridis & Burg, 1991). It is mainly the analyses of a small number of cases that is called 'small N' (Lijphart Arend, 1971).

Because of the few cases under study, it was necessary to make in-depth studies of selected aspects of the educational contents of the three schools. The method of qualitative content analysis was chosen based on the different national context and content of the three educational institutions.

The qualitative content analysis is a method often used to study 'social artifacts' containing information about the society where these artifacts are generated (Altheide, 1997; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Patton, 2002). In this article, the current curriculum of social work in the three countries form the basis of the study. The selection criteria focused on two main parts of the social work programs in the three countries, namely the theoretical and training courses. The materials were gathered from the educational programs' current curriculum and the description and the syllabus of the courses that were considered relevant for the study, such as 'theoretical perspectives in social work,' 'laws and regulations influencing social work' and 'professional role and training in social work.' The following themes were generated and used in the process of abstraction of the categories under study: 'Global and critical perspectives in theoretical courses,' 'Global and critical perspectives in professional role and training' and 'global and critical perspectives in field training'.

The aim has been to study both the manifest and the latent content of the text (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The latent content is often 'hidden' and implied, but not presented (Babbie, 1992; Morse & Field, 1995). Studying the latent content of the curriculum has been a central issue in the communication between the authors from the three countries. Because of their different origins, there was a need to explain the 'latent' and 'hidden curriculum' to the colleagues from the two other countries; it was not as self-explanatory as between colleagues from the same school. The analysis of the different themes was guided by the theoretical perspectives of post-colonialism, intersectionalism, globalisation and anti-discrimination, which should structure the international and intercultural educations in the three countries.

Global and critical perspectives in social work education

The need to develop new theoretical frameworks and methods of practices in social work education in the Scandinavian countries has to be understood in relation to the recent increasing globalisation and neoliberal reorganisation of the welfare states in the countries in question.

Social work in Scandinavian countries has historically been organised by the nation state as an inseparable part of the welfare states. The Scandinavian model of the welfare state is characterised by a strong and active state, a regulated labour market, a broad spectrum of welfare and social insurance based on the principles of equal opportunities, social solidarity and social security (Dølvik, 2013; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Petersen, Petersen, & Petersen, 2007).

Although the Scandinavian countries are still at the top of most international rankings, with social outcomes that set them apart from other countries, it is to a lesser extent than before (Dølvik, Fløtten, Hippe, & Jordfald, 2014). According to the NordMod country studies,⁵ since the economic crises the combined Scandinavian unemployment level has exceeded the national levels of Germany and the UK, and the inequality gap is widening:

The growth in income inequality for example tells us that disparities in access to work have increased, that wage coordination system have failed to moderate inequalities in market income, and that tax systems are not preventing the richest in society from taking a larger share of the pie. (Dølvik et al., 2014, 132)

These developments in the Scandinavian countries represent a changing context for social work. This especially since during the last decades the Scandinavian welfare states have, like other European countries, been undergoing reorganisation of governmental interventions followed by neoliberal management, which has been established in the policies and practices of social work (Jönsson, 2015b; Kuivalainen & Nelson, 2011; Lorentz, 2005; Matthies, 2013; Røysum, 2013; Skjefstad, 2013). Both between and within the Scandinavian countries, there has been variation in how the reorganisation has been implemented, but it is clear that increasing use of market principles has spread through the core welfare-services (Dølvik et al., 2014; Spolander et al., 2014). Such changes have

challenged social work education and practice, and the core values and principles of social work, to benefit the 'managerial ideology' and discourses of quality and efficiency, using the criterion of economy.

Increasing numbers of individuals and families are making their way to the Scandinavian countries and Danish, Norwegian and Swedish social services as a result of problems rooted in global inequality, such as poverty and instability in many non-Western countries, which forces many people to leave their countries of origin and come to Scandinavian countries in search for a better and a more secure life. New glocal vulnerable groups such as people with immigrant backgrounds in marginalised areas, undocumented immigrants, long-term unemployed, victims of trafficking, war and conflicts and environmental disasters necessitate new perspectives and practices in social work education to prepare future social workers address complexities in a globalised world. Many newcomers to Scandinavia are facing marginalisation, unemployment, exclusion and discrimination (Andersen, 2009; Dølvik et al., 2014; Ejrnæs & Strauss, 2014; Hansen, Hansen, & og Husain, 2009; Jensen, 2011; Jönsson, 2013; Jönsson & Kamali, 2012; Kamali, 2008; Kaya & Fauske, 2014; Olwig, 2011). Globalisation, migration and global social problems increasingly challenge the national basis of social work and create a tension between the universal declarations of human rights and social justice in the Statement of Ethical Principles of Social Work and Scandinavian social work as the strongest and most inclusive social welfare regimes in Europe (Ejrnæs & Strauss, 2014; Jönsson, 2014; Overland, Guribye, & Lie, 2014).

Social workers need to consider the double-edged consequences of the recent changes of the reorganisation of the welfare regimes, on the one hand, and the emergence of new local social problems with global roots, on the other. This challenges social work education to broaden 'the scope of the curriculum in order to address issues that arise in the interstices between the local and the global' (Dominelli, 2010, p. 172).

The international organisations of social work [IFSW, IASSW, and International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW)] have addressed these challenges. It is clearly articulated in the Global Standards for the Education and Training, which declares that 'social work does not operate in a vacuum, the [social work education] program should take account of the impact of interacting cultural, economic, communication, social, political and psychological global factors' and standards with regard to program curricula including field education declare that ensuring that the curricula help social work students to develop skills of critical thinking and scholarly attitudes of reasoning, openness to new experiences and paradigms, and commitment to life-long learning (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). Also the strategic document, 'The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Commitment to Action (2012)', published by IFSW, IASSW and ICSW, encourages educators and practitioners of social work to respond to the local impact of global forces. It states that 'it is important to promote education and practice standards in social work and social development that enable workers to facilitate sustainable social development outcomes.'

Despite some recognition of global transformations and increasing global social problems that influence local communities, there are still many discrepancies between the established traditions and the national basis of social work on the one hand, and the increasing complexities of localised social problems with global roots on the other (Alseth & Flem, 2012; Antczak & Johansen, 2015; Jönsson, 2014). This is partly dependent on the marginalisation of critical and global theories and practices in the established nationalised social work education. Nationalised social work education and practices in Scandinavian countries are, for example, generally not related to the global history of colonialism, wars and exploitation (Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2011) and current global inequalities and social problems (Kamali, 2015). For a long period of time, social work has been dominated by nationalised and West-centric theoretical legacies with their concepts and categories rooted in the colonial past (Dominelli, 2010; Gray, Coates, Yellow Bird, & Hetherington, 2013; Kamali, 2015; Sewpaul, 2007). The otherisation of non-Western immigrants is part of a colonial discourse that has shaped the understandings and images of people with immigrant backgrounds (Eliassi, 2013; Jönsson, 2013; Kamali, 2002; Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2011).

Although people with immigrant backgrounds are highly heterogeneous in terms of class, gender and ethnicity, which forms the socioeconomic and cultural place of each individual, their social problems often become individualised and culturalised. Discriminatory discourses and practices such as culturalisation of social problems has been an integrated part of otherisation of people with immigrant background in order to compensate for the shortcomings of the welfare state in Scandinavian countries in tackling the challenges of globalised and plural Scandinavian societies (Eliassi, 2006; Jönsson, 2013; Kamali, 2002; Kasin, 2012; Schierup, 1994). Intersectional perspectives compensate for these shortcomings by including critical discussions of the structural and institutional mechanisms at the intersections of class, ethnicity and gender among other power relations in society and at the global level (de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2005; Gosh, 2007; Pringle, 2010; Mattsson, 2014).

The need for such an approach is also highlighted in the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training, putting forward the importance of the 'preparation of social workers within a holistic framework, with skills to enable practice in a range of contexts with diverse ethnic, cultural, "racial" and gender groups, and other forms of diversities' (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005).

In this respect, and as articulated in the Global Standards for Education and Training of the social work profession, social workers need to be anti-discriminatory, address inequality and strive for the civil and human rights and social justice of people. This includes awareness of values and ethical principles of social work (IFSW & IASSW, 2004) underlining the importance of principles of social justice, human rights, human dignity, collective responsibility and respect for diversity. According to the curricula, students should be familiar with the global definition of social work (IASSW & IFSW, 2014) provided by the global social work organisations (IASSW & IFSW, 2014).

In the following, we will provide examples from the different schools where we have implemented global and critical perspectives in the Bachelor programs of social work.

Global and critical perspectives in theoretical courses

The three schools have to varying degrees introduced new *theoretical perspectives* in order to adapt the education to new global conditions. We will begin by illustrating shared components of these changes.

Laws and regulations influencing social work: National laws and rules frame social work and social work education in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. In addition to the national law and regulations framing social work in the three countries, new components, such as 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,' 'European Convention on Human Rights,' 'The Convention of the Rights of the Child' and the Global Statements of Ethical Principles of Social Work, have been included in the education. Such courses serve to enable students to consider the importance of international conventions as legitimate sources of law in daily social work at the national level. It also strengthens the student's awareness of existing conflicts between such declarations and the implementation of national laws and regulations, which occasionally violates international declarations and conventions (Antczak & Johansen, 2015; Jönsson, 2014; Overland et al., 2014). Knowledge about the core principles that constitute such international documents also serves to strengthen the student's professional value base as an important supplement to, for example, national codes of ethics.

The knowledge of glocal social problems: Changing the political conditions of the welfare state, the increasing influence of the ideology of neoliberalism and increasing social problems with global roots (glocal social problems) strengthen the need to include new critical perspectives in the education of social work in the three countries. When students are exposed to international experiences, they are challenged to move beyond learning from 'difference' in both the local and the international contexts. Exchanging experiences with our colleagues and/or among students in and outside Europe on how to handle social problems connected with global social problems and neoliberal policies in the different contexts is highly valued. This requires attention to common global challenges in order to improve students' global awareness and critical reflections on their values and beliefs in terms of how to understand and find solutions to social problems in increasing globalised societies

(Flem, 2014; Mohan, 2008; Sewpaul, 2007). One example provided by the Danish school is the 10-week module 'Social work with youth in a comparative perspective,' recruiting students from different European countries. The focus is on youth, and how social problems can develop in a plural societal context at the intersection of age, gender, ethnicity and living conditions. Problems related to formation of youth identity, conflicts resolution, family patterns, local community and sub-cultures are addressed. The students are introduced to narrative, social constructionist perspectives on identity and culture. The living conditions of different groups of young adults in a globalised society, including aspects of citizenship, poverty and multiculturalism, are examined. Social problems linked to radicalisation, gangs and crimes are therefore addressed in a global perspective.

Students are also introduced to theoretical perspectives on social problems as a result of the world's colonial past, postcolonial present, globalisation, increasing inequalities, war, conflict, climate change, and increasing forced migration. The educations have included an intersectional perspective on social problems with global roots. The curriculum has changed to address the local and global circumstances behind forced migration and marginalisation of new groups in need of social work intervention. Another example from the Danish school addresses the complexities of localised social problems with global roots in an elective module called 'International social work.' Here, the students are introduced to theoretical perspectives on social problems as a result of globalisation, urban and rural poverty, war, conflict, catastrophes, climate change, environment and health. In groups, the students examine a specific social problem from a geographic region (Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania or South America) and critically analyse how this local social problem is connected to global problems. The students have to suggest a process on how to address the problems by using a multilevel approach, to promote social inclusion in the local context. During the module, the student groups present three posters in plenary sessions explaining their findings and analyses. In this way, they share the knowledge they have acquired. At the same time, the presentation also serves as a tool for improvement of their critical analysis when commented on by fellow students and teachers.

In the Scandinavian countries, undocumented immigrants are denied welfare subsidies or health care based on their citizenship and legal status. Social workers are then challenged to try to influence political decision-making to change such discriminatory laws and regulations, while simultaneously being involved in improving the living conditions of undocumented individuals and families (Jönsson, 2014; Overland et al., 2014). In other words, becoming a social worker means that students need to be prepared for working at both macro and micro level, integrating a multilevel perspective for social work practice. Therefore, courses need to include global and critical perspectives in order to address the social problems of vulnerable and marginalised groups, individuals and families, who do not fit into the welfare system, and are not especially prioritised by the national government.

Global and critical perspectives in social work in the three Scandinavian countries are also implemented in other components of the education, such as 'professional role and training' and 'field training.'

Global and critical perspectives in professional training

The three inter/inter curricula put emphasis on *professional role and training* in order to prepare students to learn about and tackle the social problems of the 'others' with new insights. When developing teaching approaches to practise social work among people with immigrant backgrounds in the Scandinavian contexts and during field training in other countries, critical perspectives have been imperative to prevent individualisation and culturalisation of social problems. When facing social problems in these contexts, the students have to address challenges of understanding the construction of differences. The three curricula address relational aspects of these construction processes and encourage students to take into account how their own power position and perceptions influence their understandings of difference (Ploesser & Mecheril, 2011). In addition, they gain new perspectives about the global/local dialectic through knowledge about structural power imbalances, globally

as well as locally, and how these may construct stereotypes of otherness. In this respect, the different schools try to address differences and taken-for-granted privileges by focusing students' analysis on addressing the students' privileges and how they affect their own social work practices in different ways.

One example provided by the Norwegian school explains how these challenges can be addressed at the very beginning of the study when students are learning basic skills in developing working relations. One of their assignments is to prepare and role-play a meeting with a service user with immigrant background. During the preparation and shared reflections following this role-play, the students have to examine their preconceptions of how they understand the social situation of the service user and reflect on how their power position as representative of a welfare agency will be an obstacle in the relation-building. These experiences create lively discussions and willingness from students to revise their preconceptions and search for new questions. During the same course, when they learn more about social aspects of immigrant people's needs and options in a cultural intersectional perspective (de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2005; Gosh, 2007, Pringle 2010, Mattsson, 2014), they seem to develop a new openness toward people representing difference. At the end of her first semester, one social work student says:

When meeting people on the bus toward whom I was previously often sceptical to, even judged, I now start to wonder about all that I don't know about this person, and how my position and societal definitions create misunderstandings. In other words I've become more open-minded and reflexive.

In order to emphasize the training of students' skills in anti-oppressive practices, the three schools build on a long tradition of skills training established before the inter/inter programs started. One example from Mid Sweden University is the 'skills lab' (*PPU-labbet*), where students are trained in communication skills with individuals and families in social work practice underpinning intersectional theoretical perspectives beyond otherisation based on ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality and functionality. The skills laboratory take in different aspects of skills training such as group discussions on discriminatory practices in social work based on role-play and meetings between social workers and 'clients,' training in decision-making in relation to the 'service user's' gender, class, ethnicity, and developing skills in intersectional analysis and practices in social work. It serves to develop students' understanding of the principles of anti-discriminatory practice related to the process of assessment in social work and to develop students' critical reflection in relation to social workers' privileges and power positions. Closely supervised, the students train to improve their critical awareness, ethical awareness, and critical reflections on own values and beliefs. Processes which require understanding of the self on a deeper level, together with analyses of hidden power and privileges, challenge the power dynamics that frame practice and uncover the hegemonic assumptions (Brookfield, 2009; Fisher-Borne, Montana Cain, & Martin, 2015).

The authors of this article find that discussing discrimination with the students is often connected with taboos and strong feelings and therefore difficult to practise and to reflect upon. The three Scandinavian schools use minority/majority issues experienced by the students as useful learning opportunities. According to Razak (2009), decolonisation of the pedagogy and practice is necessary and possible. Questioning the traditional contradictions between us/them and good/bad could develop a 'new openness' for what constitutes differences, inclusion and exclusion in the classroom and in society. Shared experiences from students with various minority backgrounds can open up for the hidden obstacles that prevent inclusion. That is what this example from a minority student when discussing processes of marginalisation in society shows: 'I've done everything you should to be integrated, I've mastered Norwegian, I have Norwegian friends, I've mastered school, but I will never be considered Norwegian by the Norwegians.' She reminded the students of the complexity of the obstacles for inclusion in society. Being included among peers and in school was necessary, but the power of global structural barriers still creates challenges. These discussions take us beyond simplistic discussions about processes of inclusion, while at the same time reminding the

students to continue to ask questions and be open to others representing difference (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015).

Global and critical perspectives in field training

When studying examples of field training in the three Scandinavian schools, the development of the syllabus of international fieldwork was found of special relevance for this study. Traditionally, fieldwork has been divided into two parts: (1) the national context of Scandinavian countries, mainly within governmental and municipal social work organisations and (2) international context/field training in other countries. This division has been challenged by the perspectives of globalised and plural societies: what we call glocalisation (Robertson, 1995). This highlights the importance of global and critical awareness regardless of which country the field training in social work takes place.

Therefore, we do not have to send students to other countries for inter/inter training, but can encourage students to do their training in a national context. Based on this, the Swedish school provides an example called the 'Botkyrka project', which was established in one of the largest marginalised areas in Stockholm. By both living and working in the local community, the students can gain a better understanding of the living conditions and social problems of marginalised people, and can more easily establish contact with the inhabitants through different social programs and activities.

The three schools still encourage students to conduct international fieldwork and consider this as an excellent opportunity for professional development relevant for their home contexts. Although Western social work has a long tradition of engagement in non-Western countries, it has been part of the colonial control and intervention of these countries (Dominelli, 2010; Gray et al., 2013; Haug, 2005; Midgley, 1981). When preparing to work in contexts, locally or internationally, that are different from their own, the students have to be updated on the context as well as reflect critically on challenges encountered. In the fieldwork syllabus, the three schools therefore put emphasis on training students to consider how the colonial historical past and postcolonial present create their own privileges in a global context. This includes 'examining how own biases, assumptions and cultural worldviews affect the ways they perceive differences and power dynamics' (Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005, p. 441).

Summary and concluding remarks

The recent reorganisation of the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish welfare states and neoliberal influences have created new conditions for the organisation, education and practices of social work. Since social work education has traditionally been the responsibility of the government, the change in governmental policies has also influenced the education of social work in the Scandinavian countries. Social work education based on individualisation and managerialism is not sufficient for newly educated social workers, who in their practice increasingly face challenges in the form of the diversities of social problems with global roots (Lorentz, 2005). They also need critical knowledge of the interconnectedness between global and local social problems, in order to understand local problems. Global awareness requires a curriculum for social work that includes knowledge of global structural transformations and their human consequences.

In this article, we have demonstrated some examples of how social work education can include global and critical perspectives in Bachelor's programs of social work. *First* we include global and critical perspectives theoretically by (i) introducing international conventions of human rights, (ii) increasing the focus on the core values of social work as elaborated in the Global Statement of Ethical Principles of Social work (IFSW, IASSW, & ICSW, 2012) and (iii) introducing intersectional perspectives in relation to how different structural changes influence people locally and globally. *Secondly*, in skills training we have a special focus on how students can adopt an anti-discriminatory social work practice through enhancing critical reflections on the students' power position, values and beliefs. Decolonising our pedagogy through active participation and dialog are important tools here. *Finally* we

have discussed examples of how critical and global perspectives can be implemented in field training by preparing the students for the complexity of localised social problems both in a national and international context. Using critical perspectives, they will be better able to challenge the welfare states policies and strategies as well as social injustices and inhumane practices. With these elements in the curriculum, we think future social workers will be better prepared to address local and global social problems and to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.

We argue that global and critical perspectives should be included in an integrative manner in all courses of a Bachelor's program in social work. However, even if this is not always possible, these perspectives can still be implemented by elective modules parallel to the classical program, as illustrated in this article. The important issue is to introduce and inspire students of social work to 'act locally and think globally.'

Notes

1. Mid Sweden University, Östersund, Sweden from 1997, Metropolitan University College, Copenhagen, Denmark from 1999; Sør Trøndelag University College, Trondheim, Norway from 2001.
2. 'International social work is the promotion of social work education and practice globally and locally, with the purpose of building a truly integrated international profession that reflects social work's capacity to respond appropriately and effectively, in education and practice terms, to the various global challenges that are having a significant impact on the well-being of large sections of the world's population. This global and local promotion of social work education and practice is based on an integrated-perspectives approach that synthesizes global, human rights, ecological and social development perspectives of international situations and responses to them' (Cox & Pawar 2013).
3. Three elective modules were developed at the Danish school: international social work, social work with youth in a comparative perspective, and innovative social work. The last two are taught in English and therefore recruiting students from different European countries.
4. This project has received financial grants from NASSW (Nordic Association of Schools of Social Work).
5. The Nordmod country studies are comparing not only the three Scandinavian countries, but also Finland and Island, that is the five Nordic countries (Dølvik et al., 2014).

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