

From the foreword:

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Now, the different languages may cause some problems since English speaking people usually understand neither Norwegian nor Swedish, but the symbolic value of keeping it this way must not be underestimated from our selfish point of view. ”

*Magnus Ottelid (Ed.)*


Magnus Ottelid (Red.) | **Röster om internationalisering**

# Röster om internationalisering

*Några texter som berör internationalisering och socionomutbildning vid Mittuniversitetet, University of Northern British Columbia och Høgskolen i Sør Trøndelag*

*Magnus Ottelid (Red.)*

Mittuniversitetet
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# Content

# Forword

*by Magnus Ottelid*

This volume of Pedagogiska meddelanden may be considered as somewhat unique. Not only are the contributions written in three different languages, but furthermore they represent our first organized attempt to give room for various reflections with internationalisation and our educational programme "Intercultural and International Social Work" as a wide and rather elusive starting point. Now, the different languages may cause some problems since English speaking people usually understand neither Norwegian nor Swedish, but the symbolic value of keeping it this way must not be underestimated from our selfish point of view.

The first group of 30 students enrolled in the mentioned programme in autumn 1997, were actually familiar with 27 different languages. In the light of that information the three languages in this book may seem challenging rather than problematic. However, even if Norwegian, Swedish and English doesn't cause much problem for the average Swedish academic or student it might also be interesting to note that the world (of language) is changing in the era of globalization and migration. My Swedish-Kurdish friends have good command in at least five languages. Beside Kurdish, Swedish and English it is usually also a combination of Arabic, Farsi and Turkish.

This language landscape of Sweden is not mirrored in the content of the book, and that may give us reason to reflect on several issues. For example, the fact that Swedish to a lot of social work students in Sweden nowadays is not their first language makes it more difficult to use literature in Danish and Norwegian. Furthermore, research suggests that native Swedish students do not understand and learn the content in a text in English as well as the same text in Swedish.

These two examples make it clear that universities must pay much attention to language issues and make sure that students are provided with support in different ways. One of the things needed are language courses focusing on developing skills in reading and understanding academic texts in English. Since most exchange students have English only as a second or third language, courses should be offered to them as well as Swedish students.

We are grateful to our international friends for their valuable contributions, and hope that this issue may be of some use to others than ourselves.

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Siden 2001 har hun vært sentral i oppbyggingen av Bachelorutdanning ved HiST med fordypning i interkulturelt og internasjonalt sosialt arbeid. I den sammenheng også deltatt i Norplus nettverket inter/inter.

Hun har skrevet om barns erfaringer fra foreldres skilsmisse, om internasjonalt barnerettighetsarbeid, og har utviklet kurs i sosialt arbeid for internasjonale barnerettighetsarbeidere fra Nepal, Uganda, Etiopia og Laos.

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# The the benefits and challenges of a new international social work exchange relationship

*Joanna Pierce and Glen Schmidt, University of Northern British Columbia*

## Introduction

The rapidity of globalization continues to exert a profound influence on many aspects of contemporary life. Social work has not been immune from this effect and social work has attempted to respond to globalization in ways that promote greater understanding and a wider sense of social justice (Riano-Alcala & Lacroix, 2008; Ife, 2000). The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) recognized the impact of globalization and the growing collaboration pertaining to social work education. In response to this development, the *Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training* were adopted by members (Healy, 2008). The benefits of international social work exchange relationships and international student field education placements have been described in the literature from various national perspectives (Alphonse, 2008; Findlay & Mccormack, 2007; Gilin & Young, 2009; Ottelid, 2008; Rowe et al., 2000; Saito & Johns, 2009). Educational institutions have made strong efforts to develop and promote these types of opportunities and some university social work programs have a strong and established tradition in this area. For smaller institutions the process of developing international exchange opportunities can be challenging. Some of these challenges, as well as strategies to address them, will be discussed within the context of an emerging relationship between two universities - Mid Sweden University and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). The perspective offered here represents that of UNBC faculty members and students.

## Background

British Columbia (BC) is the third largest of the ten Canadian provinces. It covers an area of 947, 800 square kilometres, which is larger than the state of Germany (Marsh, 2008). The topography of BC varies and includes immense inland plateaus, rugged mountain ranges, large lakes, fast flowing rivers, and temperate coastal rain forests. The economy is heavily dependant on resource industries, particularly forestry and mining. The oldest confirmed sites of human settlement are about 6000 to 8000 years old and date from the last ice age. The first people along the coast were somewhat sedentary, owing to the annual supply of the salmon, and they developed a complex culture that included enduring material artifacts such as totem poles and masks.

Juan Perez Hernandez, a Spanish explorer and navigator, led the first recorded European expedition along the coast of British Columbia. James Cook and George Vancouver followed closely behind the Spanish and subsequently claimed the land

for the British Crown. In 1793, Alexander Mackenzie, an explorer and fur trader with the Northwest Company, managed to travel overland and each the Pacific Ocean. This accomplishment further solidified the British claim to the region. Territorial disputes arose between the United States and Great Britain, but these were settled in 1846 with the signature of the Oregon Treaty. European settlement continued to be very limited and linked to the fur trade until the discovery of gold in 1858. This discovery prompted an influx of people of European origin and rapid development. The colony of British Columbia agreed to join the Canadian confederation in 1871 under the condition that the Canadian government construct a railroad connecting British Columbia to the rest of Canada. The Canadian Pacific Railroad was completed in 1885 and promoted further economic development and population growth.

By 2007, the population of British Columbia was 4, 402, 931 (BC Stats, 2008). It remains the third most populous province in Canada. People citing aboriginal ancestry numbered 196, 075 in the 2006 census, just under 5% of the population (BC Stats, 2008). However, the true number might be higher as there is evidence to suggest that some aboriginal people do not participate in the census (Fenlon, 2008). People that claim British ancestry are the largest ethnic group but the province is diverse and has a large Asian population. People of Chinese ethnicity comprise about 10% of BC's population and about 5% of the population claim East Indian ancestry. The population of BC tends to be concentrated in an area called the lower mainland. This is a relatively tiny geographic area in the southwest corner and it includes metropolitan Vancouver. The greater metropolitan area of Vancouver has a population of 2, 249, 725 people, over half the province's population. As is the case in many other jurisdictions, the metropolitan centre tends to dominate the communities in the far-flung hinterland. This domination involves economic and political control as well as control over education and human services.

## *The University of Northern British Columbia*

In 1994, the University of Northern British Columbia became the first new university to be opened in Canada in over 25 years. With its largest campus located in Prince George and campuses in the northeast, northwest, and south central regions of the northern part of the province, UNBC was well positioned to serve a population base of approximately 300,000 people. Expectations were high and the people of northern BC felt they had a personal investment in the institution. In part this feeling arose out of the history of UNBC as its conception and eventual construction were supported by the northern population every step of the way, including a regionally organized campaign to collect five dollar donations from northern citizens to contribute to development of "their" university.

The UNBC academic programs were designed to reflect the practical realities and needs of life in northern BC. Forestry, fisheries, health care, First Nations (aboriginal people), business, Asia Pacific links, and local government were some of the key elements addressed in program design. Approximately 11% of the UNBC students are self-declared First Nations students and UNBC serves an important function in making post secondary education more accessible to the First Nations people of

northern BC. The northern location of UNBC also resulted in circumpolar links and development of relationships with academic institutions in Alaska, Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

## *Social work at UNBC*

Social work was one of the programs developed at UNBC. Social work degrees are offered at the baccalaureate level (Bachelor of Social Work - BSW) as well as the graduate level (Master of Social Work - MSW). In any given year there are approximately 90 BSW students and approximately 25 MSW students in social work at UNBC, so it is a relatively small program, at least by Canadian standards.

Many of the social workers in northern BC are employed in the field of child welfare. The history of Canadian social work in the field of child welfare has not always been positive, especially in relation to First Nations or aboriginal people. For example, while only 5% of Canadian children are aboriginal, 17% of children reported to the child welfare system are aboriginal, and of the investigations, 22% of substantiated reports of child maltreatment involved aboriginal children, and 25% of children admitted to care were aboriginal (Trocmé, Knoke, & Blackstock, 2004). In the region of Northern British Columbia there were 1,023 children in care and 788 or 77% were aboriginal children (BC Representative for Children and Youth, 2008). Given this reality it is not surprising that social work at UNBC has developed specializations in the areas of First Nations and child welfare. The demonstrated need in these areas has consumed many of the resources available to the School of Social Work. As a result, other areas of importance were not extensively developed. One of these areas relates to international exchanges and placements. Programs of this nature are not a required component of social work education in Canada, but international opportunities certainly have the potential to enhance the quality of a social work student's educational experience (Caragata & Sanchez, 2002).

## *The relationship with Mid-Sweden University*

The development of an international exchange program is somewhat daunting given the various costs and logistical challenges. In 2005 faculty members from Mid-Sweden University and faculty members from UNBC made contact and established ongoing communication pertaining to the possibility of an exchange relationship. Mid-Sweden University has an established and well-developed program of international exchange, which sees its social work students travel to many parts of the world. Most importantly, from a UNBC perspective, Mid Sweden University was open to sharing its experience and eager to facilitate the development of the relationship. UNBC, as a small School of Social Work, welcomed the opportunity to draw on the Mid-Sweden experience and expertise.

The two universities share some characteristics. UNBC and Mid-Sweden have campuses located in a number of different towns and cities. Both universities are located in smaller communities in what might be described as the "hinterland" of larger metropolitan centres. There are also similarities in climate, topography, and

other aspects of geography. Mid-Sweden University was officially created in 1993, while UNBC was officially opened in 1994 so the current educational organizations are roughly the same age.

## *Challenges faced by UNBC*

The benefits of international exchange relationships are numerous. There is the experience of studying abroad, learning about another culture, exposure to a different educational system, a different political system, a different language, a different history, and understanding the impact of globalization. There are also the friendships and the international contacts that students can discover. All of these things have the potential to add breadth and depth to a student's educational experience. Faculty members can experience benefits related to international contact and research collaboration. However, the development of these types of international exchange relationships can also be challenging and this has certainly been the case for UNBC.

To begin with, international exchange relationships at UNBC must be largely reciprocal in nature. This is due to the university funding arrangements in Canada and British Columbia in particular. While attendance at a Canadian university is partly subsidized by government funding, universities also derive a portion of their budgets from student tuition fees. This means that the situation is somewhat like a balance of trade relationship as foreign students attending UNBC exact a cost against the university budget and in order to achieve a financial balance, exchange relationships must be equivalent in number. UNBC students that attend another university on an exchange basis pay their tuition fees to UNBC and in order to maintain a balance one UNBC student must attend Mid-Sweden University for every Mid-Sweden student who attends UNBC.

Finding Mid-Sweden social work students with a desire to attend UNBC has not been difficult. As noted, Mid-Sweden has an established history of international exchange. In contrast, social work at UNBC is a newcomer to this educational option. Fortunately, UNBC students have demonstrated an interest in the exchange even though it represents a relatively untried new experience. The number of interested UNBC students has reached a level that makes the exchange relationship viable and hopefully sustainable over the longer term. This is a UNBC institutional challenge as well as a challenge for the School of Social work at UNBC.

The School of Social Work also faced the challenge of ensuring that UNBC exchange students be able to graduate within the same time frame as their cohort of fellow students. This problem is organizational and structural in nature. An undergraduate social work degree in British Columbia is offered on what is commonly referred to as a "2 + 2 basis". This means that students typically take 2 years of liberal arts courses or a 2-year college diploma before applying to study toward a social work degree. The social work degree is awarded after two additional years of study in a university social work program. Social work programs in Canada are subject to national accreditation standards. These standards specify criteria or elements that must be present in a degree program in order to receive accreditation.

Accreditation is extremely important for a number of reasons. First, students who graduate from an unaccredited program may not be eligible for professional registration. In some instances this can restrict or severely limit employment options. Second, students who graduate from an unaccredited program may not be able to gain admission to graduate studies in social work. In practical terms, the accreditation standards require students to take only social work courses during the final two years in order to meet the minimal requirements of social work content. The practical implication is that social work students who enter an international exchange are only able to take social work courses in the receiving university. In the case of Mid-Sweden University, there are courses available in English language instruction but the number of social work courses is limited. There are many liberal arts courses available in English language instruction but UNBC social work students cannot take these courses (at least for credit toward their social work degree) due to the accreditation requirement around social work content.

This challenge is compounded by the UNBC semester system. The academic year is divided into three semesters: Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer. Many of the required core courses are offered during the Fall and Winter semesters while elective courses tend to be offered during the Spring/Summer semester. Students from UNBC who enter an exchange program at Mid-Sweden University, do so during the final Fall semester of study. This means that they are scheduled to take required core courses. Some of these courses are available on-line, but a few are delivered through face to face seminar or lecture instruction only. As a result, UNBC has had to modify delivery of required courses in order to meet the needs of exchange students. Alignment between institutions in different national locations is a challenge and points to the need for more coordination around course delivery and greater ease of transferability of courses.

Maintenance and promotion of the exchange relationship will require UNBC to make some structural and organizational modifications. In the interim, some faculty members have taken on additional work to organize required courses on a correspondence or tutorial basis. This enables the exchange students to complete the necessary course credits and graduate at the same time as their cohort of students.

## *The student experience*

In the fall of 2007, Mid Sweden University sent four students to UNBC's Prince George campus and in the fall of 2008, UNBC sent three students to Mid-Sweden University at Ostersund. The Mid-Sweden students made an excellent adjustment to northern British Columbia and UNBC. They participated enthusiastically and demonstrated openness to learning within the School of Social Work at UNBC. The students were well prepared for their educational experience. They had a reasonable idea of what to expect from the university as well as the community, though they found some of the health and social services new or unfamiliar. To address this, the Field Director spent some time with the students, taking them to a number of agencies and explaining the background and role of the organizations.

The UNBC students also had a positive experience. The students reported many similarities in the environment and also some differences. They found Sweden to be somewhat more expensive but they also appreciated the strong sense of community, a good system of public transport, and the compact nature of the community in which they resided, making it easy to get around by foot.

The international experience represented useful learning for both the Swedish students and the Canadian students. For example, the Canadian students were impressed with the nature of child welfare services in Sweden, which demonstrated a stronger commitment to family preservation and support. Many aspects of the social welfare system in Sweden are more progressive and advanced than the system in Canada. At the same time, the Swedish students admired some of the extensive immigrant settlement and support services available in northern British Columbia. The single store front operation providing everything from legal support, to counseling, to language classes was respected for its efficiency and ease of use.

The Swedish students and the Canadian students were able to learn about different systems and services designed to deal with similar issues and situations. The type of learning that comes through tangible and immediate international comparison has practical value and presents alternative approaches that might not be apparent during a traditional educational experience. In the case of the Canadian students, they were part of a larger group of international students attending social work courses at Mid-Sweden University. The contact and class discussion with students from many different countries created a unique opportunity for analysis that was global in nature.

The Swedish and Canadian students have become promoters and ambassadors for the international exchange. In the case of UNBC, the positive experience of the UNBC students translated into heightened interest among other baccalaureate students in social work. The returning students have presented information on their experience and they have made the way easier for others interested in pursuing the same opportunity.

## *The faculty experience*

Faculty members can achieve enormous benefits from international exchange relationships. These relate to instructional techniques, research opportunities, knowledge exchange, and the experience of teaching students from other nations. UNBC and Mid-Sweden University are at a preliminary phase of exchanging information and learning from each other in the area of instructional techniques. This will evolve over time.

Research collaboration is also at a preliminary phase but demonstrates promise. The institutions share a number of characteristics and this inevitably leads to opportunities for international comparative studies. It also creates a level of mutual understanding, which is an important first step in development of research ideas and applications.

The sharing of instructional techniques and the development of research collaboration, inevitably lead to knowledge exchange. As faculty members from the respective institutions increase the amount of contact and the substantive nature of that contact there is a level of knowledge exchange that can prove beneficial to both parties. To date, UNBC has been the primary beneficiary but as the relationship becomes more established it is anticipated that there will be a greater degree of reciprocity.

As noted, a number of social work students from Mid-Sweden University have attended UNBC and their contribution to social work at UNBC has been considerable. The information they bring, the different experience, and the different perspective add to the overall discussion and learning that takes place within the classroom setting. Students at UNBC who aren't able to participate in an international exchange are still able to derive some of the benefits through interaction with the Swedish students. Discussion in class and outside class, as well as social contact and friendship create many opportunities for exchange of information and learning. UNBC students attending Mid-Sweden University exert a similar impact and benefit to the educational process. The nature of the Mid Sweden exchange program allows UNBC students to meet students from a wide variety of countries.

## *The way forward*

The development of the exchange relationship has proven to be enormously beneficial to UNBC. Certainly the main beneficiaries to date have been the UNBC social work students but it is anticipated that the relationship with Mid-Sweden University will also be a benefit to UNBC faculty members.

There are issues to be resolved. Courses at UNBC and Mid-Sweden University need to be more closely articulated and more easily transferable. UNBC has to develop further on-line course delivery capacity. There is also the need to maximize the benefits of the exchange relationship. Field education opportunities represent an area that has tremendous potential. Mid-Sweden University has developed an extensive network of international field placements and UNBC can access these placements as a legitimate component of an international exchange. International field placements are complicated and difficult to develop. By joining with Mid-Sweden University UNBC will be in a better position to offer these rich experiences to social work students at UNBC.

From an instructional perspective there is opportunity to develop courses that can be jointly taught by Mid-Sweden faculty and UNBC faculty. Topics or courses such as comparative welfare or comparative child welfare practice are areas worth exploring and developing. Electronic communication supports this type of development, but the possibilities are enhanced as UNBC faculty visit Mid Sweden and Mid-Sweden faculty visit UNBC. When professional relationships are established the capacity and potential for collaboration is greatly increased.

## Conclusion

Globalization has accelerated international education exchange opportunities for social work. Indeed it can be said that international exchange experiences are indicative of a quality educational experience. However, for some smaller, isolated universities such as UNBC, the prospect of developing exchange relationships has been a challenge. The creation of a link with an established exchange program, such as the one available through Mid-Sweden University, can provide an effective support and bridge toward the development of a rich and rewarding exchange experience that benefits faculty members and students at both institutions. At the outset, this relationship has been particularly beneficial to UNBC but as the relationship evolves and develops the benefit should become mutual and reciprocal.

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# Student support and knowledge production from international field work studies

*Aina Lian Flem, Høgskolen i Sør Trøndelag, Norge*

Sor Trondelag University College Norway, has since 2001 offered a Bachelor Program with a special focus on intercultural and international social work. Many of our students choose to do international field work studies; and they most often go to a context very different from their own. These study situations represent both risks and options for professional development, and within a Nordic network of three schools[1] we have exchanged ideas on how to support these learning processes. The way our school has developed the support structure, has therefore gained valuable input from our two Nordic partners (Antczak & Johansen 2007, Ottelid 2008, Törn 2008)

Many of our students start to plan their international field work studies even before they begin their studies. Their own motivation for international experiences, especially from countries in the South, is therefore very high. This motivation is further strengthened during the first three semesters of studying. In the curriculum they learn about various issues of relevance; such as social inequality due to global economy, post colonialism and ethnicity, social work in a human rights perspective, contextualizing social work and dilemmas connected with western hegemony and control when conducting North/South exchanges (Fagplan for sosionomutdanningen ved HiST, Payne & Askeland 2008: 17; Flem 2001, Sewpaul 2003:299).

In our Bachelor Program, the students have two options for going abroad to study/practice social work. The first is when they conduct a group project during the 4th semester; the second is when they conduct an individual field work study in the 5th semester. These field related courses are developed in phases, and the students are expected to work independently during all stages of the process. The support given is therefore very much based on creating good structures for planning, working and assessment. In this paper I will first describe the support given during the group project in the 4th semester; and then the support related to the individual fieldwork studies in the 5th semester. Finally I will highlight two examples of students' knowledge production developed in the reflection sessions during and after the field work period. Both relate directly to insights gained from working in a cultural and professional setting different from the students' home context. The first example deals with universalism and relativism in social work ethics when addressing power structures within the family, and the second one, with maintaining the balance between professional distances and showing interest in the client's situation in the social work process.

1 The three schools within the Nordic network are: Sor Trondelag University College, Trondheim, Norway; Copenhagen College of Social Work, Denmark; Mid Sweden University, Ostersund, Sweden. The cooperation started with establishing a Nordplus network in 2001.

## *Student support in connection with the group project in 4th semester*

The preparation period for this course starts already at the very beginning of 3rd semester. A detailed overview of the whole process is given in Appendix 1, together with the project regulations (see Appendix 1).

First; the students themselves choose a subject relevant for social work, and a specific country of interest. They also have to get in touch with a local organisation within the chosen country[2]. The Social Work Programme guides the students in how to contact a relevant organisation. In that respect we have developed some standard letters for them to use (see two examples, appendix 2a & 2b). In addition the students are responsible for all the practicalities; applying for scholarships, getting vaccinations, visas, air tickets, insurance and accommodation.

During the Field Work, lasting for about 6 weeks, the students have to keep in touch with their appointed supervisor at the University College in Norway. And after they return from the field, they have to write up a project report under supervision of the same supervisor. The course ends with a presentation of the project reports from all the different groups. These presentations are often very interesting and colourful since the students make use of both pictures and music. The presentations are also open for students of lower classes, for inspiration and knowledge sharing.

## *Student support in connection with field work studies in 5th semester*

When the students plan their individual field work period abroad, they have to prepare themselves to take on a different role from the one in the international group project of 4th semester[3]. During this field work study, the students are expected to practice social work under supervision of a trained social worker.

At the end of 3rd semester, the students have to apply to the practice coordinator for such a placement. Most often they have by then already chosen a specific organisation and country where they want to go.

The international coordinator at the Social Work Program then contacts the organisation chosen by the student, clarifying the expectations connected with the course (see Appendix 3). If the organisation is positive to accepting the student, an initial contract is made between this organisation and the University College (see Appendix 4).

The students then have to continue preparing for the field; updating on relevant background knowledge, organising accommodation, insurances, visas and other practicalities. In that respect they also have to sign a contract with the University College (see Appendix 5).

2 Our Programme has established several international contact organisations; but many students prefer to find their own.

3 About 60 % of the students choose international field work in the group project in 4th semester, in 5th semester only 20-30 % go abroad. This number is however increasing.

Shortly before they depart for the field, they are offered a one week preparatory course where they have to reflect on various issues; how to establish their role within a new context, what they expect in regard to supervision and how to plan and assess their progress. In addition, they also have to buy relevant literature to bring to the field.

During the field work study, the appointed supervisor at the host organisation is expected to be the student's primary support. At the very beginning of the period the student and the supervisor therefore have to outline the specific learning goals together. These goals are to be assessed, both during and at the end of the period (see Appendix 6)[4]

The students also keep in touch with their contact teacher at the University College. The nature of this contact varies; sometimes very frequent, other times just once a month. The students keep in touch through mail and/ or phone. They also have to write one or two papers to send home at the end of the period.

On their return, the students are expected to follow a seminar where they have to further reflect and elaborate on their experiences together with their contact teacher and fellow students. This follow up is structured both as a compulsory teaching module for all students[5], and, if necessary, prolonged as separate group sessions for the international students.

## *Knowledge production through reflection processes*

"*Respecting others and different ways of living*", is a very common response from the students when they are asked what they've especially learnt during their international field work.

At the same time the students' respect for diversity is also challenged. This is very likely to happen when they experience emotional distress, feeling alone and being out of control of the situation. In these situations they desperately need somebody who can reach out to them and help them in sorting out their own emotions so that they are more able to reflect and learn[6]. The students therefore experience that the knowledge production during the international field work study in 5th semester, develops in stages; from difficult encounters at micro level, to gradually gaining new perspectives through reflections, writings and discussions (Payne& Askeland 2008:39).

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4 This assessment form was originally developed by colleagues at Copenhagen College of Social Work, Denmark. We are therefore indebted to their generosity in sharing their tool which has proved to be very valuable. For more information on how this tool was developed, contact field work coordinator *Johanne Gregersen at Copenhagen College of Social Work*

5 Not all the students go abroad on their field work studies. But all have to go through a compulsory seminar to assess and further develop their experiences from the field.

6 Both the local supervisor and the contact teacher at their home school can be involved in these situations during the field work process, but often the students first of all lean on their fellow students or to close friends. In the group sessions after they come home they therefore reveal experiences which have taken them some time to come to terms with.

After coming home, they often need time and space to further reflect and analyze specific situations. We therefore gather the students in groups and design a structure for reflection where we focus on their experienced challenges as critical incidents. The whole process is very much in line with *critical incident method.* This method is described as both an emotional and cognitive process, proceeding from lower to higher levels of reflection, from analysing the experiences to conceptualizing new knowledge (Fook et. al.2006, in Payne & Askeland 2008). Let us then turn to the two examples, the first dealing with social work in a human right perspective.

## *Domestic violence and social work in a human rights perspective*

One of the students' placements, a public office in Accra, Ghana, frequently received individual complaints from women who had been assaulted by their husbands. In Ghana, domestic violence is officially strongly opposed in national policies as a violation of human rights principles[7]. The public office where the student worked, was therefore given the authority to promote change processes in regard to such issues.

### *"A man has the right to discipline his wife!"*

One day the student was contacted by 5 men and 3 women. This group of visitors had not made an appointment, but just walked into her office late one afternoon. One of the men started to talk. He was obviously very annoyed since he had received a letter from the office accusing him of having been violent against one of his 6 wives. He was accompanied by his male relatives and three of his wives. The wife, who had made the accusation, was not present. The man had come to the office together with his male relatives and three wives to state that he did not want to undergo any conflict conciliation since he, as a man, "had the right to discipline his wives".

The student was overwhelmed by both the unexpected visit and the statements from the man. She acted intuitively, and politely asked all the men to wait in the waiting room while she had the chance to talk to the women….. This discussion did not, however, lead to any clarification of the situation since the three wives present were very much supporting the men.

The student sought support from her local supervisor who guided her in how to proceed further in the case. When I later spoke to this supervisor, he commented on the case and gave me a clear advice: "Teach your students not to be so quick, *social work needs time, discussions and reflections"* and added: "Especially when you get too emotional to the case; you can make too quick decisions, which does not help"[8].

7 On the national level a Domestic violence Act was passed in May 2007.

8 This conversation took place in Accra, April 2008, when two of the teachers from Sor Trondelag University College were visiting Ghana.

The student therefore reflected time and again on this incident, also in the group reflections after the field period where the following was highlighted:

### *Universalism and relativism in social work ethics*

First of all the student realized that she, when separating women from men, took for granted that they also were critical to their husband's use of force. Since she felt that the women were the most vulnerable in such a situation, she felt they had to be addressed separately so they could give their version. But in retrospect, she understood that the present issue most of all concerned the men. They were the ones to concentrate on. They represented the power structure in the family. They actively maintained a perspective and practice which could have adverse effects on the women.

From this case the student became conscious of the fact that she not only had to take into consideration a universal perspective of protecting the women. She also had to bear in mind the existing values which were very much upheld within this family structure. In other words she had to search for alternative ways of acting to make a difference. She had to find ways to both acknowledge the husband's power and authority within the family while at the same time challenging his use of violence as a legitimate way of exercising his authority. In other words; she had, as claimed by Healy, to take into account both a universal and a relativistic perspective, and from there explore new ways of structuring the working process (Healy 2007).

In spite of social work being based on universal principles of human rights, these experiences made the student realize the complexities in supporting change processes related to such issues. She therefore agreed with her supervisor who had underlined the necessity of not making hasty decisions, at least when facing issues of diverse or conflicting values. Making hasty decisions in these situations would only result in worsening conflicts instead of starting a process of conciliation and change.

### *Individual and community mobilisation as complementary interventions?*

The student also pointed out that the issue of domestic violence was very relevant to address in a Norwegian context as well. But what she really had learnt in facing such issues in the Ghanaian context; was the importance of including the family and community in the working process. To promote change she had to consider this issue as one which also required structural change. The students therefore discovered the *complementarities* between individual and community mobilisation in social work. Furthermore, this view was also strongly supported by their host agencies working from a human rights perspective. These agencies all underlined that social work interventions in a human rights perspective are not interventions on individual **or** structural level, but on both levels.

## *Facing role dilemmas in an international context*

An ongoing discussion among students in international Field Work Study concerns challenges connected with how to establish and perform their role as a social worker

in a context that differs from the one they are used to. Some report that they are given a central role with high expectations from their host organisation, others experience that they have to struggle to get into a position where they can practice social work. The students also discover disparities between themselves and their local colleagues in the way they perform their professional role. The second example will illustrate this.

A young female student was practicing at a psychiatric hospital in Accra, Ghana. She soon discovered that her Ghanaian colleagues acted in a more authoritarian manner than she was used to. From her training in Norway she put emphasis on creating informal relationships of mutual dialogue with her clients. She continued with that also in the new context. Until one day she experienced the following:

"*Do you want to marry me?*" a male client asked her…. She was startled, and thought immediately "*Oh, what have I done wrong*"? She most of all wanted to run away from the situation. But as she had learnt during her training, since she was the one responsible for the working relation, she was the one who had to clarify her professional purpose and role (Shulman 2004). And she did in a way manage to do that during the session. But afterwards she was full of mixed emotions which she had to sort out.

She started to reflect immediately. She had a dual feeling; both insecurity about whether she had been professional enough; but also relief that the client was expressing his underlying expectations and feeling– even though this was very surprising for her. But why hadn't she been able to understand what was happening in the social worker – client relationship? At first she thought this was because she herself didn't consider private and personal feelings on her part as relevant in the professional context. In fact she perceived such issues as a personal taboo.

But when reflecting further and in the group sessions after coming home, she saw new perspectives. First of all she had to understand the man's reaction within this cultural context. Now she could see that the informal mutual dialogue they had established could create confusion and different expectations. After all she was a young lady and the service user a young man, and they had been discussing his private affairs in a way that he could have interpreted as private rather than professional, since she did not act in the authoritarian manner the other members of staff did.

This experience also highlighted a central aspect in social work; how to balance between dual expectations when performing the professional role. Expectations related to a man/woman relation had to be taken into consideration. In the student's home context this would most likely remain as a hidden issue, a taboo not to be addressed. She also pointed out that this was seldom raised in the social work theory as well. In Ghana, however, this was unexpectedly raised by the client and she as a social worker had to deal with it. Through this experience the student therefore got a new understanding on how hidden expectations can be upheld by cultural norms as well as personal and professional taboos. This experience had therefore reminded her of the limitations in discovering the hidden agendas present in a well known context, as well as in a context not so familiar with.

## *Student support through structure, time and space for reflection*

"*I didn't think I had learnt much shortly after I got home"*, one of the Norwegian students expressed; *"but after the various group sessions where we role played and reflected, I now realise how much this period really has given me"*. This also corresponds with a general attitude among students from other schools who frequently express that the international experience has been one of the most important periods in their life, both personally and professionally (Thörn 2008, Ottelid 2008).

When students choose international field work studies, we consider these study situations to include both risks and options for professional development (Payne, Askeland 2008). In our Social Work Program we therefore put emphasis on supporting the learning processes. First of all the students' own motivation and initiatives are considered vital for the outcome. Our support is first of all to provide structures for planning, working and assessment. Then we also encourage the students to look upon challenging situation as critical incidents which have big potentials for learning. In the group sessions after they come home, we focus on reflecting on these incidents. These processes have been vital in supporting the students self reflection, and critical reasoning in the domain of knowledge production. (Payne & Askeland 2008:36). But most of all these processes have underlined the importance of acknowledging diversity as resources for knowledge production both for the students and for the social work profession.

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**Appendix 1**.


**Sor-Trondelag University College**
**Faculty of Health Education and Social Work, Social Work Programme**

## Project work regulation for students in the second year of the Bachelor Programme of Social Work

Project work consists of different stages; preparation, field work and the writing of a project report. The students are expected to work independently and in groups under guidance of a structured plan. Shortly before the field work period a supervisor will be appointed and will be supporting the further process with regular supervision before, during (on email) and after the field work period. Therein addition courses in science theory and research methodology will be given. A project board is appointed each year consisting of two representatives from the teaching staff, and two representatives and two substitutes from among the students. The teaching staff will chair the board. The responsibility of the board is to make an overall structure of the project process (see below), to coordinate information between students and teachers, and to make sure that the project period is being assessed.

**The project work process:**

**Part I: How to choose the subject and research field**

The subject for the project is to be chosen by the students, but has to have relevance for social work. First the students suggest a specific subject. They also have to choose whether they will study in Norway or in another country. The subjects will then be approved by the project board. Then the students can choose which subject and group they will work together with. Each group has to consist of at least 4 students. The final decision of the composition of the groups is made by the project board. If the students choose an international field, they are responsible for preparing all the practicalities as scholarship, visa, vaccination, insurance, air ticket and accommodation.

**Part II: Introduction to science theory and research methodology**

A course in science theory and research methodology is given shortly before the students go to the field. The students will also get guidance in how to structure and plan their research process.

**Part III: Supervision**

A supervisor is appointed for each group. The groups studying in Norway receive 2 hours supervision per week during the field work period. The groups going abroad will receive at least 6 hrs supervision before they leave and at least 4 hrs after they return from the field. When they are in the field they have to keep in touch with the supervisor once a week.

**Part IV: What can be studied?**

Each student group has to outline a research design before they go into the field, where the following is expected to be included:

a) Project work in Norway

- what is the subject
- Which political, juridical and organisational structures can have relevance
- Why do they want to study this subject and what is the relevance for social work?
- which research methodology is to be used

The supervisors have to approve the terms of reference and the study plan within a specific time limit.

b) International project work:

- Which subject, target group an organisation is chosen, and why?
- Describe the political, social, economical, historical and cultural structures relevant for the actual subject/ target group.
- What is the professional and ethical base of the actual organisation
- Which research methodology is planned to use.

The supervisors have to approve the term of reference and the study plan within a specific time limit.

**Part IV: The project report**

The group must submit a written project report of about 30 – 40 pages depending on the size of the group.

For students in international field work the report has to describe the focus for study within the selected organisations, and assess the challenges and options for social work. Contextualisation is considered important, and in the report a discussion on how political, economical, social and cultural factors influenced the work, should be included. The report can be written in English or Norwegian; but if written in

Norwegian, at least an English Summary must be made.
Since this is a group project, the students should be able to document how they have participated in the process. The report should also include an assessment of the group process.

**Part VI: How to assess and share the project report?**
Each group report will be assessed based on criteria approved by the Project board. Each group has to present their project report for fellow students and for teachers. The students choose themselves how they design this presentation. After the presentation the supervisor and one opponent will give direct feedback on both the written report and the presentation.

Appendix 3

**Sor-Trondelag University College, Trondheim, Norway**
**Faculty of Health Education and Social Work, Social Work Programme**

## Information on Field Work Study for Social Work Students at Sor Trondelag University College, Social Work Program

The field work study is an integral component of the curriculum of a Bachelor degree in Social work, at Sor Trøndelag University College, Norway. This study takes place during 5th semester of a three year study. Students must have passed the yearly examination before being approved for the field work study.

**Purpose and goals for fieldwork study**
The main purpose for the student is to plan, practice and reflect over social work as a professional activity in a professional service program by applying knowledge from previous taught subjects. The student is to work within public/private or volunteer services in Norway or in a foreign country. The site must be free from sanctions for ethical, licensing or other violations of legal standards.

**Specific learning goals are:**

- To integrate theoretical and practical knowledge through practicing and reflecting
- To be able to contextualize social work theory and practice.
- To reflect over ethical dilemmas
- To initiate and participate in interdisciplinary and interagency cooperation and collaboration
- To demonstrate professional behavior as a social work trainee.
- To demonstrate increasing self-awareness and maturity in professional practice.

**Suggested areas of work**

The following areas are considered especially relevant:

- Individual social work/ casework and supervision
- Social work with families and groups
- Community work
- Social administration and planning

**Duration**

The field work study lasts for 15 weeks, starting in the beginning of September and terminating around the middle of December.

**Working hours and time for study**

The student follows the working hours of the organization selected for field placement.

The student is entitled to spend one day per week for study purpose, and can use the time for reading and writing assignments required from the University College. The student may not receive payment for her/his work at the field placement agency during the field work study period. Absence of more than 10 working days during the field study will not be accepted and the placement period must be taken anew if this should happen.

**Supervision**

It is recommended that the student receives a minimum of 2 hours supervision weekly by the field placement supervisor. Time, place and content for supervision shall be agreed upon in the field placement contract. Half way through the field placement study a mid term evaluation should be carried out. Content and time for the mid term and the final evaluations are to be agreed upon in the field placement contract.

## Field placement contract, report, assessment and approval

At the beginning of the field placement study a contract between the student and student's field placement supervisor. is developed with suggested goals for learning
At the end of the field work study, a report is to be written. The report should include a description of the students' assignments and how the student has carried out and reached goals for learning. Also, the extent of absence or breech of customary norms and rules in working life should be noted.
In case the field placement supervisor is in doubt about whether to approve student's field placement study she/he must contact the field faculty liaison before 2/3 of field placement is completed.

## Honorarium to field placement supervisor

The field placement supervisor is paid the amount of 2.500 Norwegian Crowns for supervising the student. This includes time for preparing the tasks of supervision.

Yours sincerely
……
Programme Director

**All apendixes can be ordered from the author.**

# MØTER I MANGFOLD SOM MULIGHET TIL Å UTVIKLE SOSIALFAGLIG KOMPETANSE?

*Aina Lian Flem, Høgskolen i Sør Trøndelag, Norge*

Siden høsten 2001 har Program for sosionomutdanning ved Høgskolen i Sør Trøndelag, Norge, (HiST) tilbudt fordypningsstudie i interkulturelt og internasjonalt sosialt arbeid (inter/inter). Denne fordypningen, som er en del av Bachelorstudiet i sosialt arbeid, ble først tilbudt en mindre gruppe på 25 studenter. Men fra høsten 2007 ble fordypningstilbudet integrert i den ordinære fagplanen. Det betyr i praksis at alle 70 sosionomstudentene1 som studerer ved HiST vil få sosionomutdanning med "inter/ inter fordypning". Innebærer dette ett nytt og helt forskjellig studietilbud? Både nei og ja:

Nei; fordi utdanningen fortsatt bygger på sentrale grunnpillarer i sosialt arbeids teori og verdigrunnlag. Særlig legger vi vekt på at studentene forstår sosiale problem i lys av menneskers sosiale situasjon, samt utvikler handlingskompetanse for å fremme inkludering av utsatte grupper. Med andre ord; prinsipper med solide røtter i faget, som også blir understreket i den internasjonale fagdefinisjonen av 2001[2] ( Healy 2008) .

Ja; fordi vi har forsterket fagporteføljen med kunnskap som gir ny innsikt i forholdet mellom det globale og det lokale[3]. Vi legger nå større vekt på at studentene fordyper seg i eksempler på sosiale problemer blant mennesker som befinner seg i en minoritetsposisjon. Da får vi utvidet perspektiver på hvordan de strukturelle forholdene setter rammer for menneskers sosiale situasjon (Skytte 2008: 17 og 32). Studentene får dermed nye perspektiver på kjente problemstillinger knyttet til makt /avmakt; minoritet/majoritet, ekskludering / inkludering, krise / krisebearbeiding. Samtidig legger vi vekt på å få studentene til å forstå hvordan det kan *oppleves* å befinne seg i situasjoner der det er vanskelig å bli forstått og inkludert.

Men vi legger ikke bare til rette for fordypning i teoretisk kunnskap, vi legger også aktivt til rette for å utvikle kunnskap fra studentenes *egne erfaringer* fra møter med mangfold. I dette notatet vil jeg derfor redegjøre kort hvordan vi har sikret en

1 Høgskolen i Sør Trøndelag tar opp 70 studenter hver høst. I praksis starter mellom 80 og 90 studenter og vi utdanner derfor hvert år et kull på over 70 studenter.

2 Sosialarbeiderprofesjonen arbeider for sosial endring, problemløsning i forhold mellom mennesker samt myndiggjøring og frigjøring av mennesker for å forbedre deres velferd. Sosialt arbeid benytter seg av teorier om menneskelig atferd og sosiale systemer for å intervenere på de punkter hvor mennesker samhandler med sine miljøer. Menneskerettighetsprinsipper og prinsipper om sosial rettferdighet er fundamentale i sosialt arbeid (www.ifsw.org/Publications).

3 Slik forsterkning har inkludert; internasjonal politikk; global økonomi; kulturforståelse; krise, konflikt og migrasjon. Dessuten blir det lagt vekt på å utvikle studentenes forståelse av hvordan slike situasjoner kan påvirke mennesker og samfunn.

mangfoldig studentgruppe, og deretter utdype eksempler på hvordan vi skaper læringssituasjoner som tar i bruk studentenes egne erfaringer (Bertling Herberg & Johannisdottir 2007).

## Sikre mangfold i studentgruppa

Under den første planleggingen av prosjektet inter/inter, la vi vekt på å sikre mangfold i studentgruppa. Vi fikk derfor godkjenning fra daværende KUF om særskilte opptakskriterier. Da vi besluttet å videreføre tilbudet til alle studentene i 2007, la vi også vekt på å sikre studentmangfold. Vi søkte på ny om særskilte opptakskriterier, og har fått godkjent disse for 20 % av studentene4. I praksis betyr det at minst 20 % av studentene, i tillegg til vanlig studiekompetanse, også skal ha interkulturell og eller internasjonal erfaring og kompetanse.

## Læringssituasjoner for å fremme dialog og gjensidighet

Allerede da vi startet inter/inter for første gang, hadde vi et perspektiv på at studentmangfold i seg selv ikke er noen garanti for at studentene utvikler ny kompetanse. Vi kontaktet tidligere studenter med annen etnisk bakgrunn enn norsk som bekreftet denne antakelsen. De fortalte at de verken i studietiden eller i yrkeslivet hadde opplevd seg selv og sin bakgrunn som ressurs. De opplevde heller barrierer, blant annet i form av språkproblem, manglende anerkjennelse og skjulte konflikter. Vi ble dermed opptatt av å legge til rette for læringssituasjoner som fremmer dialog mellom studentene og dessuten muligheter til å arbeide med motsetninger. Et sentralt pedagogisk virkemiddel har derfor vært bruk av studentaktive læringsformer som smågruppeundervisning, seminarer og prosjektarbeid i grupper. Dessuten er det lagt vekt på dialog mellom lærer/studentgruppe og "lave terskler" slik at det var lett for studentene å kontakte lærerne når de hadde behov for å ta opp forhold som hindrer læreprosessen.

Gjennom både erfaring og ekstern evaluering, har vi allerede fått bekreftet at nettopp samarbeidet innad i studentgruppa er blitt en sentral ressurs i studietilbudet (Dalland 2008).

## Dele egne erfaringer

Ferdighetstrening i små grupper går som en rød tråd gjennom hele studiet og har som mål å utvikle handlingskompetanse i sosialt arbeid (Nordland 1997). Når studentene arbeider med konkrete oppgaver legger vi stor vekt på at de også får dele *egne erfaringer*. I denne sammenhengen er det grunn til å understreke at slike opplegg alltid har vært sentrale i sosialt arbeids undervisning. Forskjellen med inter/

4 I de nye kriteriene heter det at studentene i tillegg til generell studiekompetanse skal ha interkulturel eller internasjonal bakgrunn/erfaring gjennom egen innvandrer-/flyktningbakgrunn, eller foreldre som har innvandrer-/flyktningbakgrunn, eller ha oppholdt seg/bodd i minimum fem år etter avsluttet grunnskole i et annet land enn sitt opprinnelsesland.

inter er først og fremst at studentgruppa representerer et mangfold knyttet til for eksempel forskjellige måter å leve familie på; forskjellige perspektiver på barndom og barneoppdragelse; forskjellige måter å forstå betydningen av religiøs tilhørighet på og varierte livserfaringer knyttet til sorg og krise. Med andre ord blir de nå eksponerte for større grad av mangfold i måter å forstå og handle på og som de ikke umiddelbart har like lett for å identifisere seg med. Men slike prosesser oppleves meningsfulle, slik en student illustrerer:

> *Gjennom innsikt i andres måter å leve, tenke og forstå på, som var forskjellig fra min egen, utviklet jeg både nye måter å forstå meg selv på og samtidig økt toleranse for forskjellighet. De andres erfaringer skapte med andre ord både større åpenhet for mangfold i holdninger og væremåter, samtidig som de forsterket noen av mine egne verdier.*

## Legge et grunnlag for gjensidig åpenhet

Grunnlaget for slik åpenhet blir lagt allerede i starten av første studieår når studentene deltar i et obligatorisk introduksjonsseminar (Se vedlegg 1). Dette seminaret har som mål å knytte kontakter mellom studentene og samtidig introdusere dem til grunnbegrep i sosialt arbeid som for eksempel, sosial situasjon, makt og autoritet, anerkjennelse og støtte, forforståelse, ambivalens og sammenhengen mellom tanke, følelse og handling (Aubert & Bakk 2008). Studentene samarbeider om konkrete oppgaver der de får dele egne erfaringer og samtidig praktisere ferdigheter i sosialt arbeid, blant annet aktiv lytting. Det pedagogiske opplegget er basert på deltakende metoder (Aune et. al 2001, Chambers 2004). Slik oppsummerer en av studentene sine erfaringer fra dette opplegget:

> *Jeg var så glad i den tiden, jeg husker at jeg fikk respons, ble sett, hørt og verdsatt. Jeg oppdaget nye sider ved samarbeid og samhandling som jeg ikke hadde tenkt over før. Jeg erfarte at prosessen var like viktig som målet for samarbeidet. Alle viste interesse for hverandre, dessuten brukte vi aktiviteter og nonverbale kommunikasjonsformer. Derfor var det ikke så vanskelig å delta selv om jeg og flere andre hadde språkbarrierer.*

Fra lærerperspektiv har vi også vurdert at nettopp dette opplegget er fundamentalt for å skape ny bevissthet blant studentene om hvor lett det kan være å møte andre mennesker ut fra stereotypier (Hylland Eriksen, Sørheim & Arntsen 2006). Ved å skape en kultur med vekt på gjensidig respekt gjennom deltakelse og utveksling av erfaringer, får de allerede fra starten av innsikt i noen sentrale forutsetninger som må være til stede for å skape felles forståelse som grunnlag for samarbeid.

## Oppdage konfliktsituasjoner

Et annet sentralt prinsipp i ferdighetstreningen, er at vi legger vekt på å tematisere samarbeidsforholdene i studentgruppene. Dersom det oppstår konflikter blir disse forsøkt bearbeidet. Det som er typisk i slike situasjoner er at noen eller en av

studentene har følt seg krenket uten at andre har oppdaget det. Jeg vil derfor trekke fram et typisk eksempel på en slik konfliktsituasjon. Denne konflikten ble oppdaget da en av studentene ønsket å bytte gruppe. Hun opplevde at yngre studenter ikke viste henne den nødvendige respekt siden hun var eldre[5].

## Mekle i konfliktsituasjoner

I stedet for å bytte gruppe, ble både studenten og hele gruppa utfordret av lærer til å omskape den aktuelle situasjonen til en læringssituasjon der vi sammen skulle utforske muligheter for å forstå hverandre og samtidig komme fram til alternative handlemåter. Vi gjorde derfor avtale om å arbeide med samarbeidsklimaet i gruppa. I den sammenhengen tok læreren en meglerrolle (Nordhelle 2006). Det innebar at læreren la til rette for en god struktur.

## Trygge rammer

Klare handlingsregler for hvordan samhandle ble utviklet av gruppa i fellesskap. Vi brukte først god tid i gruppa på å drøfte hvordan de enkelte ønsket at andre skulle forholde seg til dem når de formidlet egne tanker og følelser om den aktuelle situasjonen. Særlig ble ønsket om å bli hørt og anerkjent fremhevet. Deretter fikk alle beskrive hvordan de selv hadde opplevd den konkrete situasjonen som var utgangspunkt for konflikten.

## Avdekke underliggende tema

I den videre prosessen kom det tydelig fram at samme situasjon ble opplevd svært forskjellig blant studentene; med andre ord kom et mangfold av forståelser fram. Studentene reflekterte videre over egne fordommer, normer, reaksjoner, følelser og handlinger. Gjennom disse refleksjonene fikk de særlig understreket hvor vanskelig det vår å oppdage når andre ble krenket. Slike forhold forble ofte usagte og gjorde seg dermed gjeldende som underliggende tema i samhandlingen (Shulman 2004).

## Utfordre til felles innsats

Men vi stoppet ikke der, hver enkelt student måtte også reflektere over hvordan de kunne handle annerledes når de senere møtte lignende situasjoner. De måtte sågar velge og samtidig forplikte seg på hva de ønsket å arbeide mer med. Flere bestemte seg for at de ville spørre mer i stedet for å definere skyld, og alle var innstilt på å utvikle evnen til å lytte mer aktivt til hverandre. Noen fikk også ny erkjennelse slik denne studenten uttrykte: *"kanskje må jeg reflektere mer over hvordan mine egne følelser farger oppfatningen av andre"*.

5 Den aktuelle studenten var forankret i en tradisjon der eldre ble vist respekt av de som var yngre. Derfor opplevde hun det krenkende når yngre studenter påla henne bestemte oppgaver.

Etter denne episoden, viste det seg også at studentene selv tok ansvar for å mekle i konflikter. De var med andre ord blitt inspirerte til å gjøre en innsats for fellesskapet slik denne studenten forteller:

> *Jeg kunne jo ikke bare se på hvis vi ikke hadde det bra i gruppa. Det var det som motiverte meg. Jeg husker også at min inngripen ikke nødvendigvis førte til en umiddelbar forsoning, men at vi i hvert fall oppnådde at de som var involverte, begynte å reflektere over hverandre på nye måter. Kanskje den viktigste endringen i slike sammenhenger var å bli minnet om at vi må stadig gjøre en innsats for å oppdage og praktisere gjensidig respekt og forståelse.*

## Samhold i mangfold?

Ved vår utdanning har vi hatt som mål å legge til rette for læringssituasjoner som aktivt tar i bruk studentenes egne erfaringer. Dette dreier seg både om erfaringer studentene bringer med seg fra egen bakgrunn, og erfaringer de skaper gjennom samhandling i et mangfoldig fellesskap. Ferdighetstrening i små grupper har i særlig grad gitt muligheter for å skape trygge rammer for slike læringssituasjoner.

Selv om vi tidlig vektlegger å etablere en grunnleggende tillit og gjensidighet i studentgruppa, er motsetninger uunngåelige. Ofte blir slike situasjoner enten skjult eller forklart ut fra manglende samarbeidskompetanse hos enkelte studenter. For å utforske læringspotensialene må situasjonene derfor får oppmerksomhet. Samtidig må strategier utvikles og struktureres på måter som bidrar til at de som er involverte i konfliktene klarer å oppdage hverandres ulike virkelighetsforståelser.

Ved vår utdanning har både studenter og lærere oppdaget at slike bearbeidingsprosesser har potensialer til å fremme ny erkjennelse og felles innsats. Men dette forutsetter at slike situasjoner blir strukturert og ledet ut fra grunnleggende prinsipper om gjensidig åpenhet og respekt omsatt i sosialfaglig handling. Slik tilrettelegging, initiert av enten lærer eller student, forutsetter samtidig at den som får rollen som mekler må ha ervervet seg tillit fra de involverte, utviklet gjennom kompetanse og felles erfaringer. Gjennom slike læringssituasjoner kan studentene oppdage muligheter for å utforske forutsetninger for å skape felles forståelse som grunnlag for videre samarbeid.

## Litteratur

Aubert, Anne-Marie & Bakk, Inger Marie(2008): Utvikling av relasjonskompetanse,
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Aune Liv, Foss Nina, Skåra Bjørg Berge (2001): *Fellesskap for utvikling.*
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Shulman, Lawrence (2004): *Kunsten å hjelpe***.** Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk Forlag.
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# Vedlegg: Introduksjonsseminar 2009: Lærerveiledning[6]

## DAG 1

20.08.09 og 24.08.09

HVA: Hensikten med dette seminaret er fler-sidig

- Studentene skal etablere kontakt
- Erfare samarbeidsmåter som fremmer læring i fellesskap
- Reflektere over erfaringene i lys av sentrale fagbegrep

**HVORDAN:** Seminaret er på to 4-timers dager, og på programmet står forskjellige oppgaver og øvelser som alle gruppene skal igjennom.

**RELEVANT PENSUM :**

Aune Liv, Foss Nina, Skåra Bjørg Berge (2001) komp.

Nordland (1997): kap 2, 5

Shulman(2003)kap.1 s.33-44,78-82

Chambers, Robert (2004): komp

## *ØVELSER Dag 1.*

Del 1: Å bedømme en person med utgangspunkt i førsteinntrykk.

Hensikten med første øvelse er å bli bevisst hvilken rolle førsteinntrykket spiller for vår oppfatning av en annen. Dessuten å reflektere over hvor vi får førforestillingene våre fra.

### Varighet: ca. 2 skoletimer

### Framgangsmåte:

- En deltager stiller seg opp synlig for hele gruppa og sier en kort setning som faller deg inn og blir deretter stående mens de andre skriver. Du skal ikke si noe om deg selv! Ikke navn heller!
- De andre deltagerne skal skrive svar på følgende spørsmål

6 Dette studieopplegget ble opprinnelig utviklet av høgskolelektorene Helle Annfelt og Guri Nordtømme ved Høgskolen i Sør Trøndelag. Da inter/inter tilbudet startet ble dette opplegget videreutviklet i samarbeid med førstelektor Aina Lian Flem. Siden har opplegget utviklet seg i dynamisk samspill med erfaringer fra studentgruppene og flere andre lærere som har hatt ansvar for gruppeundervisningen.

- Hvorfor har denne personen valgt å bli sosionom?
- Hvilke hobbyer har denne personen?
- Hvordan vil denne personen oppføre seg i gruppa?
- Studentene får respons enten umiddelbart eller helt til slutt. På grunn av tidsnød kan det være lurt at hver student får respons fra halvparten av gruppa. Personen som får respons skal ikke korrigere, bare lytte. (Det er lov å si hvordan det ble opplevd å være i sentrum – event. notere)

## *PAUSE*

### Del 2: Hva påvirker egen og gruppas forforståelse

Varighet: ca 2 skoletimer

*Framgangsmåte:*

- Velg en partner du ikke kjenner fra før (ikke har snakket med). Dere skal fortelle hverandre om dere selv i lys av de tre første spørsmålene.
- Velg hvem som skal snakke, og hvem som skal lytte.
- Den som snakker om seg selv korrigerer de oppfatningene som kom frem under forrige øvelse. Den andre lytter mest, men kan stille oppklarende eller utvidende spørsmål. Vis interesse for den som forteller! Den som lytter skal ikke fortelle om seg selv, men konsentrere seg om det den andre forteller.
- Etter 3-5 minutter byttes rollene – lærer tar tiden og gir beskjed. (Hvis det er 3 personer, må disse bytte etter 3 minutter.)
- Når begge/alle har snakket, skal de etter tur presentere sin partner for resten av gruppa og korrigere de inntrykkene som er kommet fram tidligere.

## *Oppsummering/refleksjon relatert til fagbegrep:*

De fagbegrep vi velger er avhengig av hva som har skjedd i prosessen, men de som blir listet opp nedenfor er som regel aktuelle:

**Ambivalens:** både ville og ikke ville. K har også det i forhold til oss**.**

- Fokuser på den betydningen relasjonen og samhandlingen har for "hvilken side av ambivalensen som vinner", og om du mestrer en situasjon eller ikke.

**Forforståelse**:

- Hvor fort vi danner oss forestillinger om hverandre og handler der etter
- Hvordan kan inntrykket av en person endre seg når vi blir kjent med

personen, og vi dermed endrer måten vi oppfører oss på.
- Hvor viktig det er for oss at vi kan korrigere et feil bilde
- Hva retten til å beskrive – seg selv, situasjonen sin og lignende – betyr for å få en god relasjon til den/de andre
- Er dette "galt" eller "riktig"? Skape orden, kan ikke leve i kaos.
- Hva tolker/kategoriserer vi ut fra, ta utgangspunkt i egne notater

    - Kultur/ samfunn, fremhev kjønn, alder, etnisitet
    - Egen erfaring
    - Situasjon/aktuell kontekst?

### Fra individ til relasjon og gruppefellesskap

Oppsummer gruppas forforståelse ved hjelp av evalueringshjul (Chambers 2004)

# DAG 2

250809 og 270809

## *Del I: Refleksjon over læring fra dag 1*

Hensikten med øvelsene er at vi skal arbeide videre med ett av grunnelementene i sosialt arbeid som omhandler samhandling og relasjonsbygging illustrert ved øvelser og tilhørende refleksjon

Varighet: ca 1 skoletime

### Framgangsmåte:

- To og to av studentene går sammen og bruker et par minutter til å utveksle hva de husker fra forrige gang. Bruk post it lapper, fest de på tavla
- Noen av studentene får ansvar for å gruppere lappene i forskjellige kategorier.
- Lærer bidrar med aktuelle fagbegrep som kan passe til de forskjellige erfaringene for eksempel: **anerkjennelse, lytte, ambivalens, forforståelse, individ i kontekst, fra individ til gruppe**.

## *Del II: Ressursfokusering*

### Framgangsmåte

- Bruk 5 min. på å tenke på: en gang du lyktes med noe; noe viktig og godt

hendte fordi "jeg gjorde et valg", "jeg gjorde noe", "jeg sa noe", "jeg tok et initiativ". Forestill deg det som hendte så konkret som mulig

- Gå gjennom hendelsen for deg selv og tenk etter: Hva var det ved denne situasjonen som fikk meg til å handle slik jeg gjorde? Hva var det som gjorde at jeg kjente mot og pågangsmot?
- Gå så sammen i grupper på 3 eller 4 personer.
- I løpet av 30 min. skal hver enkelt fortelle de andre sin historie (velg derfor en historie du ønsker å dele med andre). De andre skal lytte og ta i mot, uten kommentarer. Pass tiden – alle skal fortelle. Velg en historie fra hver gruppe som formidles i plenum
- Sammendrag – oppsummering av særtrekk ved arbeidsmåten som kan relateres til sosialt arbeid:
  - Hvorfor nødvendig å gå fra beskrivelser til analyse/vurdering
  - Hvordan se nødvendigheten av å møte både utfordring og støtte (anerkjennelse) fra andre?
  - Kan støtte bli utfordring og omvendt?
  - Hva prøver vi å få til ved å bli oppmerksom på hverandres ressurser?
  - Hva tror dere er grunnen til å gjøre det?
  - Har dere innvendinger mot å gjøre det?
  - Er det noen ganger dette ikke er en fruktbar framgangsmåte?
  - Hvordan kollokviegrupper kan bli en ressurs i arbeid med litteraturstudier og arbeidskravet?

# DAG 3

## *Gruppekontrakt*

### Målet med dagen:

**Hensikt:** Gjøre avtaler i gruppa som kan fremme medansvar i egen og andres læringsprosess

**Rolleforventninger**

Lærers rolle: Koordinere og instruere, oppsummere, støtte og utfordre

Studentenes roller: Delta i en prosess, innhente erfaringskunnskap som kan analyseres i lys av relevant teori.

## *Relevant litteratur*

Aune Liv, Foss Nina, Skåra Bjørg Berge (2001) komp
Shulman (2005): s. 23-38
Chambers, Robert(2004): komp.

## *Sentrale begrep*

- Gruppen som system for gjensidig hjelp
- Kartlegge behov
- Dele informasjon
- Gjensidig støtte og krav
- Dele opp, konkretisere problemer
- Skape felles forståelse og avtaler

## Om opplegget

1. Lærer klargjør hva som ventes av studentene som f.eks selvstudier individuelt og i gruppe, gruppearbeid under ledelse, forelesninger, skriftlige oppgaver, holde seg orientert om opplegg på its-learning mm. (få gjerne inn studentenes egen forståelse)

2. Studentene tenker over hva han/hun **frykter** og hva han/hun **håper** i forhold til disse forventningene. Bruk post-it lapper og skriv opp en ting i gangen. Fest lappene på flip-over ark under hver av overskriftene **frykt/ håp**

3. Lærer oppsummer frykt og håp sammen med gruppa, og får gruppa til å komme fram til felles oppfatning av gruppas ønsker og behov.

4. Gå sammen i grupper på 3 (tell 1,2,3 og skap en gruppe ut av dette) Diskuter i "treer-gruppa" hvordan denne gruppa kan bli en støtte i møte med disse utfordringene. Lag så **konkrete** og praktiske forslag som mulig. Bruk post – it lapper å skrive på før de klistres på et flipover ark som gruppa har til disposisjon.

5. Den som har nr 1 skriver de forskjellige forslag på post - it lapper (et forslag i gangen) og fester disse til et ark. Den som er nr 2 noterer ned forslagene på et mindre ark

6. Etter 15 – 20 minutter går den som er nr 3 til gruppa ved siden av og får med seg det arket som deltager nr. 2 har skrevet forslagene på. Det dannes nye grupper. Det nye gruppemedlemmet blir orientert om hva den nye gruppa var kommer fram til; og supplerer deretter med forslag fra sin gruppe. Ut fra

de mange forslagene skal gruppa diskutere og velge 3 forslag som de skriver opp på et nytt flip-over ark.

7. Gruppa samles og hvert flip-over ark med 3 forslag henges opp. Deretter skal hver gruppe legge fram sine forslag og begrunne disse. Denne begrunnelsen blir viktig fordi man til slutt må velge.

8. Til slutt oppfordrer lærer gruppa å velge bort så mange forslag at det gjenstår 6 forslag til sammen på en felles liste,. (Bruk matrise og binders og del ut så mange binders til hver som det skal være forslag)[7]. De 6 forslagene som får flest stemmer blir retningsgivende for gruppa. Disse forslagene skrives opp på et stort ark som gruppa tar med seg videre.

## Oppsummering – analyse av arbeidsmåter v. lærer:

Vi har lagt vekt på å strukturere arbeidet i gruppa. Dette skjer i alle grupper, men ofte vet vi ikke om at vi arbeider ut fra bestemte strukturer og vi ser ikke hva som påvirker disse. Men vi "merker" den på den måten at vi liker oss i gruppa, synes at vi er effektive, demokratiske ol.

Alle strukturer - eller framgangsmåter/øvelser – påvirker de to sidene av gruppeprosessen;

- den relasjonelle prosessen – gruppeklima, sosiale siden
- samarbeidsprosessen/oppgaveløsningsprosessen

Strukturen vi har brukt – det vil si øvelsene vi har brukt - har hatt følgende elementer;

- Samhandlingsmåter som sikrer at alle kommer til orde og blir hørt (relasjonell prosess i sosialt arbeid)
- Framgangsmåte for oppgaveløsningen har lagt vekt på å
  - få fram; ideer, innfall og refleksjoner
  - bruke øvelser som samler vurderinger
  - få gruppa til å foreta valg

7 Framgangsmåte ved bruk av matrise:
1. Alle forslagene som er skrevet på flipoverarket får et nr. 2.Ut for hvert forslag lages det så mange rubrikker som det er studenter. 3tudentene får utdelt erter/binders (like mange binders som det er forslag) 4.hver student vekter hvert forslag ved å plassere så mange eller få binders som hun/han ønsker på forslaget.5.Antall binders telles sammen for hvert forslag 6.De forslagene som får flest binders blir gruppas forslag.

## *Avslutning/ overgang mot neste gruppearbeid der to grupper skal møtes for å ha felles undervisning.*

- Hvordan vil studentene møte neste gruppe? Utfordre studentene i de to gruppene til å lage et opplegg for møte med hverandre

**All apendixes can be ordered from the author.**

# OJÄMLIKHETENS LANDSKAP OCH VÄSTERLÄNDSKA FANTASIER OM RÄDDNINGSUPPDRAG I VÄRLDEN

*Barzoo Eliassi, Mid Sweden University*

## *Att (o)rättfärdiga västerländsk dominans och räddningsuppdrag i världen*

Det är i namn av frihet, demokrati och jämställdhet som USA och Nato har fört krig mot talibaner, Al Qaida, islamister och Saddam Husseins Irak. Att alla dessa ”fiender” har haft amerikanska och europeiska stöd för deras tillblivelser och framgångar hamnar i glömskans djup när kriget rättfärdigas och världen delas upp i en förment axel av godhet och ondska, där Väst[1] bestämmer vilka som står på de godas sida och vilka som utgör faran mot världen, som i sin tur bör elimineras genom till exempel ekonomiska sanktioner, embargo, ockupation och krig. Att Saddam Husseins styre genomsyrades av en polisstat och diktatur är ett historiskt upplevt faktum som Iran, kurderna i norra Irak, shiiterna i södra Irak och Kuwait har bittra erfarenheter av. De ekonomiska sanktionerna som FN:s säkerhetsråd införde mot Irak efter dess invasion av Kuwait 1990 för att bestraffa Saddam (Irakiska befolkningen i praktiken), förorsakade en signifikant barndödlighet och uppskattningsvis 1,5 miljoner människor (varav 500, 000 barn) miste sina liv i Irak på grund av brist på mat och medicin. Utöver detta, ledde sanktionerna till analfabetismen bland vuxna och att avhopp från skolan bland irakiska barn ökade på markant sätt (Alnasrawi, 2001, p. 285 ).

Under 1980-talets så utgjorde USA en viktig ekonomisk och militär partner för Irak i kriget mot Iran och det samma gällde dåtidens afghanska ”frihetskämpar” (USA:s vänner som kämpade sida vid sida med *Rambo* mot ryssarna) och delar av dagens ”islamiska terrorister” (talibaner, USA:s fiender) i kriget mot det forna kommunistiska Sovjetunionens invasion av Afghanistan 1979.[2] Krigen mot talibanerna i Afghanistan

1 Den postkoloniala teoretikern Radhakrishnan (2003, p. 21) menar att ”the West is not one homogenous formation (there are all kind of ”differences within”), but….during colonialism the West was orchestrated as a unified effect, with telling consequences for the non-West”. Stuart Hall understryker att Väst är en idé eller ett begrepp som inbegriper föreställningar om komplexa berättelser, idéer, historiska händelser och sociala relationer. Hall betonar att begreppet Väst fungerar på flera sätt som: “1) ’allow us’ to characterize and classify societies into categories; 2) condense complex images of other societies through a *system of representation*; 3) provide a standard *model of comparison*; and 4) provide criteria of evaluation against which other societies can be ranked” (citerad i Ramji, 2009, p. 22).

2 Genom historien har vi bevittnat hur ”terrorister” som Yassir Arafat och Nelson Mandela genom den politiska och historiska dynamiken erhållit positionen av ”fredsstiftare” och ”frihetskämpar” och tilldelats Nobels fredspris. Den som har makten över definitionen och representationen bestämmer interpellationens ordning och där har Väst en ledande position.

och delvis Irak har setts bland annat som uttryck för feministiska interventioner, när de i själva verket har förborgat västerländska oljeintressen i viktiga geopolitiska områden och fördjupat den amerikanska imperialismen i världen:

> *The last time we met in this chamber, the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan were captives in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school. Today women are free /…/ (G. W. Bush, 2002)*

> *Only the terrorists and the Taliban threaten to pull out women's fingernails for wearing nail polish. The Plight of women and children in Afghanistan is a matter of deliberate human cruelty, carried out by those who seek to intimidate and control …Because of our recent military gains in much of Afghanistan, women are no longer imprisoned in their homes (L. Bush, 2001).*

Samtidigt har delar av den liberala feminismen och imperialismen/kolonialism kunnat gå hand i hand och rättfärdigat Västs dominans över icke-västerlänningar och i synnerhet muslimer. Feminismen har således blivit en integrerad del av imperiet som anses kämpa för mänskliga rättigheter och jämställdhet i världen (S. H. Razack, 2007, p. 7) där Väst associeras med genus och modernitet och resten av världen med kultur och tradition och där Väst uppmanar ”de andra” att anpassa sig och genomgå en förvandlingsprocess eller en avkulturaliseringsprocess genom till exempel ”kirurgiska” ingrepp mot Mellanösterns politiska karta som enligt Bushadminstrationen behövdes ritas om, där våld var ett omedelbart verktyg i detta imperialistiska projekt. Våld utgör historiskt sett en integrerad del av alla imperier och den amerikanska imperialismen är inget undantag. Den amerikanska dominansen har även stärkts genom den ”mjuka” imperialismen, Hollywood. Filmer görs inte i politiska och historiska vakuum utan återspeglar samtida politiska och historiska utmaningar. Historiskt sett har Hollywood varit den förlängda armen av amerikansk inrikespolitik, intern/extern kolonialism och utrikespolitik. Genom historien kan vi se i amerikanska filmer (med protagonister såsom John Wayne, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chuck Norris, Demi Moore, etc.) hur indianen, latinamerikanen, italienaren, afrikanen, afroamerikanen, kinesen, japanen, vietnamesen, ryssen och muslimen framställts som hot mot USA:s existens och den vita överhögheten och därmed rättfärdigat USA:s politik att underkuva och dominera dem. I åtskilliga amerikanska filmer avhumaniseras och nedvärderas muslimer genom stereotypa representationer där skägget, slöjan, terrorism och självmordsbombare görs till essentiella markörer för deras annanhet och därmed rättfärdigar amerikanska angrepp för att eliminera dem. Medieforskaren Jack G. Shaheen visar att av de 900 Hollywood filmer han hade studerat så framställdes “Arabs as heartless, brutal, uncivilized, religious fanatics through common depictions of Arabs kidnapping or raping a fair maiden; expressing hatred against the Jews and Christians; and demonstrating a love for wealth and power” (Shaheen, 2003, p. 171).

De notoriska sexualiserade behandlingarna av irakiska fångar i Abu Ghraib eller på Guantanamo Bay i händerna på amerikanska och brittiska soldater är också resultat av en kolonialpolitik där västerländska män och kvinnor underordnar den brunna mannen i demokratins- och frihetens namn. Det sexualiserade våldet har

således blivit en integrerad del av denna nykoloniala krigsföring. Vi lever i en värld där västerländska kroppar är mer värda än andra kroppar och där västerländska kroppar får sörjas mera än andra. När ”de andra” attackerar Väst, så är det ”terrorism”, ”hot mot den fria världen”, ”ondskans axel” och ”civilisationers kamp” och när Väst anfaller och ockuperar, så handlar det om ”frihet”, ”mänskliga rättigheter”, ”demokrati” och ”jämställdhet”. Väst bestämmer diskursens ordning eftersom Väst har makten att förverkliga sig själv som det allmänt mänskliga tillståndet som resten av världen ska eftersträva och anpassa sig till (see Radhakrishnan, 2003).

Efter 11 september 2001, ökade intresset för islam i Väst och genom att läsa om islam försökte många västerlänningar förstå varför muslimer hatar Väst eller varför de förtrycker ”sina” kvinnor. Antropologen Lila Abu-Lughod menar med hänvisning till talibanernas maktövertagande i Afghanistan att ”*the question as to why knowing about the 'culture' of the region, and particularly its religious beliefs and treatment of women, was more urgent than exploring the history of the development of repressive regimes in the region and the US role in this history*” (Abu-Lughod, 2002, p. 784). Denna nykoloniala feminism spelade en stor roll i rättfärdigandet av kriget mot Afghanistan, ett land som har slagits i spillror sedan flera decennier, en historisk ironi där världens mäktigaste land skövlar ett av världens fattigaste länder och fördjupar det afghanska folkets armod i skuggan av ”kriget mot terrorism”. Afghanska folkets val har idag begränsat sig till västerländsk imperialism, en marionettregering eller talibanernas teokratiska styre, politiska krafter som inte har erbjudit afghanerna en bättre värld utan fördärvat deras ekonomiska, politiska och kulturella situation (Ali, 2005).

Enligt Amnesty International har situationen förvärrats avsevärt för irakiska kvinnor under den amerikanska ockupationen av Irak, där våldet mot kvinnor har ökat överallt och tusentals irakiska kvinnor har utsatts för kidnappningar, våldtäkter, arresteringar, misshandel i händerna på amerikanska soldater och konservativa religiösa krafter och beväpnade grupper i Irak. När det irakiska samhällets struktur bröts samman i samband med ockupationen så har kvinnornas situation förvärrats grund av trafficking, våld, prostitution och våldtäkter (Amnesty, 2005) till en sådan hög grad att irakiska kvinnors anspråk på jämlikhet i det irakiska samhället har krympts till ”rätten att leva” (Abdul Jabbar & Sabah, 2008). Även Röda Korset i Irak hävdar att i samband med ockupationen och militarisering av Irak har irakiska kvinnors rörelse, ekonomiska, sociala och politiska situation i det offentliga rummet blivit en livsfarlig aktivitet (ICRC, 2009). Följaktligen har imperiet i den västerländska koloniala feminismens namn och löften om frihet och demokrati för det irakiska folket och i synnerhet kvinnor banat vägen för konsolidering av kvinnans utsatthet i det irakiska samhället där rasism, sexism, kolonialism och ekonomisk exploatering förhindrar många irakiska kvinnor från ett jämlikt deltagande i Irak.

Med det förmodade civilisatoriska kriget i Afghanistan och Irak i bakgrunden så ämnar jag i denna artikel först erbjuda en ingång i artikelns teoretiska ryggrad som handlar om Orientalism och sedan fokusera på två fall som gäller civilisatoriska uppdrag i Holland och Sverige; Det första fallet gäller Ayaan Hirsi Ali, en holländsk politiker (född i Somali) som har blivit ett framträdande namn för sin representation av islam inom västliga gränser. Det andra fallet gäller Rosengård och hur dess svensk-

muslimska befolkning målas upp av en rapport som regeringen under ledning av integrationsministern Nyamko Sabuni har beställt från Försvarshögskolan. Slutligen kommer jag att diskutera det sociala arbetets roll i skapandet av sociopolitisk jämlikhet gällande marginaliserade och stigmatiserade förorter.

## Orientalismens farliga muslimska män och förtryckta muslimska kvinnor

Det går inte att förstå hur bilden av islam och muslimer har formats i Väst utan att beakta orientalismens bidrag till hur Orienten har diskursivt konstruerats av västerländska forskare, skribenter, resenärer, filosofer, teologer, politiker, etc. Inom den orientalistiska representationen framställs orientaliska män som bakåtsträvande, despotiska, traditionella, efterblivna, aggressiva, fanatiska och orientaliska kvinnor som exotiska, sensuella, förtryckta och undergivna. Orienten har på en samma gång varit ett rum för politiskt avsky och en värld där olika former av sexuella fantasier kan infrias (Said, 1993; Sardar, 1999). Denna kunskapsproduktion om Orienten har haft viktiga politiska implikationer för relationen mellan Väst och Orienten eftersom Orienten, enligt Ziaudin Sardar, är alltid där som ett mått på annanhet (otherness) som bevittnar den västerländska civilisationens överlägesenhet och ge er ett evigt rättfärdigande av västerländsk dominans över icke-västliga genom interventioner och konsolidering av liberala västerländska värden i Orienten (Sardar, 1999, p. 105 ). Om den västerländska dominansen över ”De Andra” tidigare möjliggjordes genom en diskurs om inkommensurabla ”rasskillnader” så har den idag ersatts av begrepp som kultur, modernitet, jämställdhet/genusordning och liberala värden som mått på varje grupps specifika plats och kvalité i den hierarkiska och mänskliga utvecklingslinjen, där Västerlandet kontrollerar dess epistemologiska tygel och är dess främsta fanbärare.

Efter 11 september attackerna mot USA har muslimernas situation inom västliga gränser förvärrats politiskt, ekonomiskt, religiöst och kulturellt. Höga födelsetal, terrorism, ”avvikande” kultur, periodvisa paranoida fantasier om europeiska döttrar som kan förloras till Islams slöja, muslimska söner som kan rekryteras till islamiska terrornätverk, med New York, Madrid, Amsterdam och London i minnet är kännetecknande för den samtida orientalistiska diskursen i Europa om muslimer och islam. Dessutom har muslimernas närvaro och muslimska kvinnornas slöja inom Europa kommit att ses som ett uttryck för ett Europa som tros blir mindre sekulärt, kristet och liberalt (Goldberg, 2006). De anti-muslimska representationerna gällande ”kriget mot terror”, ”clash of civilisations”, farliga muslimska män och förtryckta muslimska kvinnor har resulterat i stigmatisering, övervakning, inspärrning, tortyr och bomber (Fekete, 2004; Kamali, 2009b; S. H. Razack, 2008; Sivanandan, 2006). Inom samtida europeiska integrationsdebatter så har frågan kring västerländsk jämställdhet och ”invandrarnas patriarkala kultur” blivit en symbol för den nationella och europeiska identiteten, en diskurs som fördjupar tankarna om ”Vi” och ”Dom”, som två essentiellt åtskilda identiteter. Muslimska män och kvinnor representeras ofta i essentiella termer där muslimska män anses förkroppsliga kvinnofientliga egenskaper medan kvinnan tilldelas en underordnad position som i sin tur behöver

västerländska interventioner och räddningsuppdrag. När det gäller den muslimska mannen, så behöver han, enligt den koloniala logiken, tyglas och tämjas eftersom han är en vilde som inte förstår sig på förnuft och rationalitet medan den muslimska kvinnan anses företrädesvis vara en fånge som måste befrias från orientaliska tyglar och bojor. Det västerländska subjektet enligt Meyda Yegenoglu intar ofta en maskulin position och västerländska kvinnor kan få tillträde till den universella och den suveräna subjektpositionen endast genom att inskriva sig själva i den orientalistiska fantasin om att äga den orientaliska kvinnan. Denna fantasi om att befria den muslimska kvinnan är kännetecknande för den disciplinerande och normaliserande blicken av den moderna koloniala makten. Muslimska kvinnor och män representeras som subjekt utan historia och innehåll, och det som blir det väsentliga i den koloniala diskursen är att de är fångar av en förhistorisk tid. Den orientaliska kvinnans kropp måste således *av-slöjas* och moderniseras för att underlätta deras inträde i moderniteten, en logik som befäster idén om det västerländska subjektet som överlägsen och där våld är ett viktigt medel för att uppnå detta mål (Yegenoglu, 1998).

## Ayaan Hirsi Ali: Att demonisera islam och muslimer genom ”den andra”

Ayaan Hirsi Ali[3], har utmärkt sig genom kortfilmen, *Submission* (underkastelse) som hon har regisserat tillsammans med filmregissören Theo van Gogh. I filmen Submission framställs muslimska kvinnor som halvnakna med koranverser inristade på deras kroppar. Enligt filmen är muslimska kvinnor förtryckta, Väst är frihetens vagga, islam och koranen är roten till all kvinnoförtryck och därför bör islam utmanas och avlägsnas från Västs territorium eller helst elimineras genom globala och statliga interventioner och övervakning av muslimer. Så här målar Hirsi Ali upp profeten Mohammed och den muslimska mannen:

> *Measured to our western standards, the [prophet] Mohammed is a perverse man. A tyrant. He is against the freedom of speech…Mohammed is a role model for all Muslim Men. Do you find it strange that so many Muslim men are violent? You are frightened when I say such things, but you make a mistake that most native Duch make: You forget where I'm coming from. I was a Muslim, I know what I'm talking about (citerad i de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p. 325).*

3 Hirsi Ali är författare till boken *Infidel* som på ett pregnant sätt kan beskrivas som en förvandlingsprocess där hon lämnar en förmodad slavposition och uppnår en total mental och intellektuell emancipation från islam, en saga som enligt Christopher Hitchens ”is a road that we [Westerners] must, and for own sake as well, be willing to help others to travel” (Hitchens, 2007). Hirsi Ali blev klassad av US Time Magazine som en av världens 100 mest inflytelserika människor. Hirsi Ali har också blivit inbjuden till Sverige och framställts i Sveriges Television som en symbol för ”modiga kvinnor” och blev tilldelad Folkpartiets demokratipris av Lars Leijonborg den 19 augusti 2005 för hennes kamp mot islamisk ”kvinnoförtryck och fundamentalism” och har dessutom representerats av The New York Times som ”upplysningens dotter”. Valet av Hirsi Ali i den här artikeln beror på den uppmärksamhet som hon har fått från stora delar av Västvärlden på grund av hennes representation av islam.

Profeten Mohammed reduceras ovan till en ursprungskälla för all ondska som muslimska män förmodas föra vidare till världen. Sen hänvisar Hirsi Ali till sig själv som referenspunkt för kunskapskällan, att hon *kommer från* ett muslimskt land, att hon *har varit* muslim och att detta *gör hennes kunskapsanspråk* till en mäktig auktoritet som inte kan eller bör ifrågasättas eftersom hon anses tala sanningen om den ”äkta” islam som anses prägla av våld, perversitet, tyranni och kvinnoförtryck, en total negation av Västerlandet som världen bör eftersträva. Att hennes orientalistiska diskurs om islam och muslimska män blir så attraktiv för stora delar av den västerländska publiken möjliggörs av att hon representerar sig själv och representeras av västerländska subjekt som ”the female exotic other, as insider expert, and as victim of Islamic violence” (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p. 330 ). Hennes personliga erfarenheter av våld från sin omgivning görs till en normativ utgångspunkt för alla andra muslimska kvinnors situationer och därmed avfärdar hon möjligheten av nya perspektiv och erfarenheter som kan belysa problematiken bortom en dualistisk världsbild som förmodas bestå av Västs godhet och islams onda natur. Kritik från muslimska kvinnor som inte delar hennes uppfattning om islam avfärdar Hirsi Ali med hänvisning till att muslimska kvinnor lider av ett ”falskt medvetande” och ”hjärntvättning” och att muslimska kvinnor måste öppna sina ögon och vakna:

> *In this respect the authoritative voice of the mediated self as ”other” tends to close off dialogue and turn the viewer into a passive spectator. In speaking on behalf of Muslim Women through her self as “other” (especially as victim “other”) she creates a moral closure for critical opponents (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, p. 331 ).*

Representationen av Hirsi Ali sker på två nivåer, dels anses hon representera ”den förtryckta andra” och dels är hon ”en av oss”. Sagan om den fullkomliga västerländska gemenskapen som ”den andra” verkar i blir ännu mer gripande att lyssna på då någon som inte egentligen anses tillhöra oss är redo att offra sitt liv för, en handling som befäster och fördjupar tanken om Västs exklusivitet och dess sublima värde. Hirsi Alis diskurs om oförenligheten mellan mångkulturalism och feminism konvergerar med den liberala feministen Susan Moller Okins (1999) idéer som menar att icke-västliga kulturer har ”barbariska” inslag som inte hör hemma i Väst och det är upp till den liberala feminismen att avfärda mångkulturalism och stärka kvinnors rättigheter istället. Homi Bhabha påpekar att Okin lyfter upp de mest extrema fallen (könsstympning, polygami, barnäktenskap och tvångsäktenskap) för att bekräfta sin tes och reducerar ”de andras” kulturer och religioner till dessa skändliga traditioner där Okins västerländska liberalism blir ”at once the measure and mentor of minority cultures” (Bhabha, 1999, p. 83 ). För att undvika en feministisk fundamentalism och en kulturell relativism, är det enligt Floya Anthias av stor vikt att angripa dels den ojämlika relationen *mellan* överordnade och underordnade etniska/kulturella grupper på en nationell och global nivå och dels behovet av att angripa ojämlika relationer *inom* etniska grupper utan att homogenisera och negligera de många röster och erfarenheter som kan finnas inom samma grupp (Anthias, 2002, p. 275).

Hirsi Ali anses ha den rätta kvalifikationen på grund av sin bakgrund och sina erfarenheter av våld men också hennes starka motvilja mot islam. Med dessa

kvalifikationer och erfarenheter tillåts hon att delta i spelet och framträda som ett talande subjekt och genom olika påståenden om islam och muslimska kvinnor konstruerar diskursen, diskursens objekt och diskursens subjekt. Dessa påståenden ses som outtalade teorier om sakernas tillstånd och utgör utgångspunkten för hur vi kan tala om islam och dess förhållningssätt till kvinnor på ett specifikt sätt. Frågan är inte att Hirsi Alis erfarenheter skulle vara mindre sanna eller verkliga utan hennes anspråk på sina erfarenheter som ett universellt uttryck för alla muslimska kvinnors situation tystar en myriad av andra berättelser som inte behöver vara fastlåsta i dikotoma beskrivningar av muslimska kvinnors verklighet(er) i termer av förtryck eller emancipation. Judith Butler understryker att det är en sak att utsättas för våld och en helt annan sak att använda detta faktum för att utforma en riktlinje ”in which one’s injury authorizes limitless aggression against targets that may or may not be related to the sources of one’s own suffering” (Butler, 2004, p. 9 ). Att Hirsi Ali använder sin egen smärta för att driva en anti-muslimsk politik i ett europeiskt och västerländskt sammanhang har konsekvenser både för européer/västerlänningar men också för hennes positionering gentemot ”de andra”:

> *The embodiment of Hirsi Ali as the cultural and former-Muslim female ”other”, and not the masculinist white European men, makes the politics of saving more effective by dismissing denunciations of speaking from a white masculinist position. By representing the “other”, and telling “us” that “brown women” need saving, she re-asserts the superiority of the Enlighted Self in European or Dutch society (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2005, pp. 333-334).*

När islam endast lyfts upp i Väst i generaliserande negativa termer så är det föga förvånande att det politiska klimatet hårdnar mot muslimer lokalt, regionalt, nationellt och globalt och att diskriminerande praktiker blir en del av muslimernas liv i Väst, något som har blivit ännu mer tydligt efter 11/9 (Fekete, 2004; Kamali, 2009a, 2009b; S. H. Razack, 2007; Sivanandan, 2006).

## Kunskap, makt och talet om nationella räddningsuppdrag i Rosengård

Förortens sociala problem och våldsamma protester har förorsakat en moralisk panik i Europa. Förorterna har främst genom medierna blivit territoriellt stigmatiserade/rasifierade och förknippas med kriminalitet, kvinnoförtryck, arbetslöshet, islamism och segregation. Politiska insatser har varit frånvarande för att utjämna de stora socioekonomiska ojämlikheterna och åtgärda bostädernas bedrövliga skick, trångboddhet, polisvåld som förortens befolkning upplever. Samtidigt har det inte skapats ett politiskt rum för förortens befolkning att få sin röst hörd och kunna formulera sina erfarenheter för att påverka politikens utformande (Dikeç, 2006). Denna politiska utmaning gäller inte bara Frankrikes *banlieues* utan även Sverige där Rosengård likt många andra svenska förorter har kommit att bli symbolen för nedbrytande krafter och ”badlands” inom nationens gränser som måste bevakas och tämjas genom polisen, skolan och socialtjänsten.

Det är i namn av rikets säkerhet, terrorism, jämställdhet och hot mot demokratiska värden som den nuvarande regeringen med integrationsministern Nyamko Sabuni

i spetsen beställde ett forskningsuppdrag från Magnus Ranstorp och Josefine Dos Santos verksamma vid Försvarshögskolan (Ranstorp & Dos Santos, 2009). Trots rapportens ödesdigra brister i vetenskapsteoretiska och metodologiska ansatser har rapporten försvarats av integrationsministern och därmed har gett rapporten legitimitet att bli underlag för politiska beslut och insatser. Sabuni i sin kommentar av rapporten berömmer rapporten för att visa ”det allvarliga hot mot det demokratiska samhällets grundvalar” samt ”Att det finns fundamentalistiska grupper i Rosengård som förordar barngifte, trakasserar kvinnor som inte bär slöja och uppmuntrar ungdomar att isolera sig från samhället är helt oacceptabelt. Svenska lagar, rättigheter och jämställdhet ska gälla alla, även boende i Rosengård” och slutligen förordnar Sabuni att ”Det krävs att många åtgärder sätts in samtidigt, bland annat inom skolan, socialtjänsten och polisen, för att motverka radikalisering” (Regeringskansliet, 2009). Rapporten får slagskraft i samhället eftersom dess kunskapsproduktion omhuldas av makten (regeringen) och dess ”integrationspolitik” även om rapporten har stora vetenskapliga brister. Detta kunskapsbaserade våld som forskarna och regeringen utövar mot den invandrade befolkningen har att göra med regeringens mål att hantera förorten och dess befolkning. Vi kan dra här en parallell mellan regeringens hantering av förorten med Edward Saids teoretisering om hur Västerlandet legitimerade sin dominans över Orienten genom:

> *[A]tt göra yttranden om den, auktorisera synpunkter på den, beskriva den, undervisa om den, kolonisera den, härska över den – kort sagt orientalismen som ett Västerlandets sätt att dominera, omstrukturera och utöva myndighet över Orienten (Said, 1993, pp. 65-66).*

Uppgiften för Ranstorp och Dos Santos i Rosengård har begränsats sig till att upptäcka skillnader mellan ”svenskar” och ”muslimer” och mäta dessa skillnaders potentiella fara för den svenska nationen men även hitta vad som tros vara endast en fråga om importerade skillnader (terror och kvinnoförtryck) från Mellanöstern. Uppdraget har redan förutbestämda idéer om att Rosengård är ett rum för terrorism, radikalisering och kvinnoförtryck innan datainsamlingen har ägt rum och det är synnerligen uppenbar att regeringen vill få ”vetenskaplig” legitimitet för sin repressiva politik mot muslimer (Kamali, 2009a). Ett annat problem med Rosengårdsrapporten är att intervjupersonerna är myndighetspersoner som socialarbetare, forskare (som Aje Carlbom), skolpersonal och poliser; institutionellt bemyndigade grupper som har en problematisk och konfliktfylld relation till den invandrade befolkning och är delaktiga i diskrimineringens institutionella praktik. Sedan påstår sig rapporten vara en ”lägesbild från Malmö” medan den handlar endast om det redan territoriellt stigmatiserade och rasifierade Rosengård. Rapportens slutsatser konvergerar med de dominerande representationerna om Rosengård som i sin tur erbjuder ideologiska grunder för reproducering av sociala ojämlikheter. Samtidigt framställs Rosengårdsbefolkning som avvikande (männen och manliga ungdomar) och offer (kvinnor och barn), därmed inskriver rapporten Rosengård inom de redan existerande samhälleliga representationerna och bidrar till dessas konsolidering.

Skillnader och makt är grundläggande för rasistiska och diskriminerande praktiker (Fredrickson, 2003). Att skillnader finns överallt i världen är en ontologisk påtaglighet

men problemet består i när vissa skillnader favoriseras och somliga skillnader demoniseras och nedvärderas på ett godtyckligt sätt. Vilkas skillnader identifierar sig ”svensken” med när en vit engelsman och en arab bryter på svenska? Sådana skillnader som brytning till exempel kan inte inordnas inom ramen för objektiva rankingsystem utan är ideologiskt konstruerade där det skapas ett brett kontinuum av önskvärda och icke-önskvärda skillnader för att bestämma en grupps närhet (acceptans och välkomnande) och distans (avvisning, motvilja eller diskriminering) till ”oss”. Genom historien så kan vi bevittna hur pseudovetenskap har bidragit till att underordna olika etniska grupper; det må gälla judar, samer, indianer, afrikaner, orientaler, romer, osv. När det gäller situationen av ”de andra”, behöver vi tydligen inte ens forskning utan spekulationer och stereotypa framställningar av de andra. Rasismens grundläggande filosofi utgår ifrån premissen att muslimen *blir till* innan *hon handlar*, en abstraktion utanför den konkreta historiska och politiska situationen, där spår av muslimers olika levnadsöden inte får möjlighet att återges (jfr Said, 1993). En ansats som utgår ifrån idén om att vi vet på förhand vad en muslim står för och vad vi kan förvänta oss av henne/honom. Hotbilder och konstruktion av rädsla, ängslan och otrygghet är framgångsrika strategier som olika politiska partier använder sig av i Europa för att fiska invandrarfientliga röster men även att befästa anti-muslimska stämningar. Det hörs emellanåt röster från journalister, politiker, forskare och ”vanliga” svenskar inom det offentliga rummet om att svenskarna inte får säga ”sanningen” om invandrarna. Själva idén om att det finns ett entydigt och symfoniskt kollektiv som kan kallas för ”invandrare” är just en produkt av den politiska makten som bestämmer deras annanhet och deras icke-tillhörighet till Sverige. Idéhistorikern Michael Azar visar på ett lysande sätt hur denna strategi fungerar när journalister eller politiker utnämner sig själva till ”sanningssägare” och som:

> *[T]ar på sig ansvaret att äntligen säga det som alla tänker, att ge namn åt de plågor som bekymrar nationen, genom att gripa ordet och högt inför alla konstatera att invandrarna faktiskt är en börda för samhället…Den inledande och öppnande gesten är alltid detsamma: sanningssägarna påstår sig komma med ”obekväma sanningar”, förklarar att någon måste ta på sig den svåra uppgiften att ”lyfta på locket”, att ”tystnad ändå inte kommer att lösa problemen”, att det inte längre går att ”dölja sanningen”. Strategin är retoriskt lysande eftersom den skriver in författaren i ett slags hjälteposition: äntligen vågar någon stå upp för sanningen och säga det som den rådande strutspolitiken inte vågat uttala. Och det spelar här ingen roll som helst om det tvärtom är så att sanningssägaren säger precis det som alla säger, eftersom själva gesten ramar in det sagda som vore det censurerat av ett konspiratoriskt ”etablissemang”. /…/ Sanningssägaren rycker åt sig problemformuleringsprivilegiet genom att förvandla sig till ett språkrör för det äkta och oskyldiga folket (de äkta svenskarna) som kräver rätten att säga vad de egentligen tycker om främlingarna (Azar, 2006, p. 105).*

Det är mot bakgrund av ovanstående diskurs som populistiska, rasistiska och islamofoba åsikter vädras i det offentliga rummet, där till exempel Sverigedemokraterna (SD) utropar sig själv till svenskarnas sanna och äkta röst bortom etablissemangets förmodade partiintressen. Islam och muslimerna *en masse* representeras allt ofta i problematiska och orientalistiska termer inom ramen för liberala diskurser

om demokrati och yttrande- och åsiktsfrihet, en diskurs som i sin tur omfamnar högerradikala gruppers islamofoba agenda med Sverigedemokraterna och Jimmy Åkesson i spetsen som menar att ”Den omfattande muslimska invandringen till Sverige har bevisligen lett till etniska enklaver, sociala problem, kriminalitet och ökad svenskfientlighet och antisemitism” (Åkesson, 2008). Precis som i Danmark börjar det gradvis bli rumsrent i Sverige med den västerländska sporten gällande konkurrensen om skändandet av islam och demonisering av muslimer där muslimen per automatik anses förkroppsliga terrorism, kvinnoförtryck, intolerans, osv. Att det ibland väcks frågor om att muslimer inte borde tillåtas ha slöja eller bygga moskéer förborgar den viktiga frågan huruvida muslimerna ska accepteras och erkännas som fullvärdiga samhällsmedlemmar i Europa eller inte.

Det marginaliserade Rosengård har under den senaste tiden framställts som en djungel och ett rum för koloniala fantasier om Rosengårds befolkning som ett hot mot den nationella svenska identiteten. Förorter anses ha blivit ett säte för islamisk extremism som utnyttjar ungdomarnas utsatta situation i förorten. När Ove Sernhede manade den politiska makten i Sverige att lyssna på den territoriellt stigmatiserade förortens röst samt uppmärksamma de växande strukturella ojämlikheterna i Sverige (Sernhede, 2009) så reducerade Lars Åberg i en replik till Sernhede, hela problematiken kring Rosengård till en fråga om hot som kommer från islamister samt ”en anmärkningsvärd passivitet hos myndigheterna i förhållande till utsatta barn och kvinnor, och en hållningslös lyhördhet för religiösa särkrav” (Åberg, 2009). Socialantropologen Aje Carlbom delar genomgående Åbergs åsikter och menar att Rosengård inte är Sverige kulturellt utan Mellanöstern, Afrika och Österuropa, med värden om inte anses höra hemma i Sverige:

> *Många familjer vill att de tillägnar sig patriarkala normer och blir auktoriteter som försörjer och bestämmer över kvinnor och minderåriga. Muslimska församlingar försöker locka in dem till sina verksamheter, som syftar till att få dem att följa religiösa normer. Kriminella nätverk rycker och drar i pojkarna. Till detta kommer skolan och sociala myndigheter som vill överföra svenska värderingar om jämställdhet. Vem går segrande ur den här moraliska konkurrensen? Hur skall det svenska samhället agera för att vinna? (Carlbom, 2009).*

Carlbom ansluter sig till myndighetsvärldens disciplinerande praktiker med den nationella ordning som en idealisk, naturlig och normativ utgångspunkt. Dessutom implicerar Carbloms premisser att invandraren eller muslimen är i grund och botten ett främmande och störande element som briserar folkhemmets idylliska och harmoniska tillvaro. Det finns även en tendens hos denna forskningsström och journalistisk att beskriva sig själva som realister med förmågan att beskriva den *faktiska* världen där bland annat Åberg betonar att ”Medier och forskare pratar gärna om bilden av förorten istället för att diskutera de faktiska problemen som kan finnas” (Åberg, 2009). De faktiska problemen begränsas till islamism och barn- och kvinnoförtryck i Åbergs verklighetsbeskrivning där samhälleliga problem som diskriminering av ”invandrare” inom alla samhälleliga sfärer är en fråga om ”bilder” utan förankring i den *faktiska* världen. Som vi ser ovan så finns det en slående konvergens mellan Sverigedemokraterna, Åberg och Carlbom gällande deras syn på

muslimer och Rosengård. Den diskursiva diskrimineringen av muslimer inbegriper tre dimensioner i dessa aktörers framställning av muslimer:

- De namnger de sociala aktörerna som *muslimer, islamister, invandrare, kriminella nätverk* trots det faktum att många av dessa personer är svenska medborgare och har andra tillhörigheter som är lika viktiga i deras liv[4].
- De tillskriver aktörerna/muslimerna negativa attribut i generaliserande termer och utesluter en myriad av andra möjliga positiva och neutrala erfarenheter hos personer med muslimsk bakgrund: *patriarkat, kriminalitet, barn- och kvinnoförtryck, förtryckande och auktoritära muslimska församlingar, förtryckande islam, osv.*
- De lägger fram argument och förslag för att rättfärdiga en uteslutningspolitik och diskriminerande praktiker: *Eftersom kvinnor och barn är utsatta för förtryck av muslimska män så behövs ingripande och övervakning från myndigheter som socialtjänsten att disciplinera Rosengårds manliga befolkning som inte anpassar sig till svenska medelklassmiljöer. Detsamma gäller en övervakning av muslimska församlingar.*

## Socialt arbete och (o)jämlikhetspolitik

Det sociala arbetet som många andra samhällsvetenskapliga discipliner också har haft en kolonial och disciplinerande historia där arbetarklassen, invandrarna, etniska grupper, ”ursprungsbefolkningar” rangordnades som ”avvikande” och oftast utgjorde objekt för det sociala arbetets praktiker som emanerade från medelklassens oro för ett samhälleligt förfall. Det är av stor vikt att socialarbetare är medvetna om denna historia eftersom:

> *Social work in not innocent of historical abuses associated with colonial practices, especially and foremost among Aboriginal peoples. It therefore follows that we incorporate a dominant ideology that is tinged with the stain of colonialism and imperialism. Knowledge of our history allows us to make concerned efforts to avoid its repetition in our work with others, whether on a local or a global terrain (N. Razack, 2009, pp. 11-12).*

Razacks insiktsfulla ingång om länken mellan det socialt arbetes historia och kolonialism är en frånvarande och tystad berättelse i undervisningen vid många svenska socionomutbildningar som ser svenskt och västerländskt socialt arbete som normativa utgångspunkter (oftast västcentrerade kurslitteratur) för hur resten av världen ska förstås. Dessutom är det viktigt att länka samman den koloniala ideologin med hur migranter betraktas i den postkoloniala situationen inom ramen för socialt

4 Att vara svensk medborgare innebär inte i vardagslivet att individen kan eller får göra legitima anspråk på svenskhet eftersom det görs en distinktion mellan ärvd svenskhet (informella kriterier där vithet, utseende och kristendom utgör huvudmarkörer för denna identitet) och förvärvad svenskhet (formella kriterier där individen anses endast vara ”svensk på pappret”). De formella och informella kriterierna kolliderar således i vardagliga konstruktioner av svenskhet där föreställningar om blodsband, religion, kultur och utseende väger mer än medborgarskapsbeviset.

arbete. En sådan länk gör Tabitha Wright Nielsen som visar i sin doktorsavhandling hur begreppet empowerment används i praktiken inom ramen för ett språk- och integrationsprojekt som riktar sig mot kvinnor med flykting- och invandrarbakgrund i en liten svensk kommun. Empowermentbegreppet inom socialt arbete enligt Wright Nielsen är ”caught up in a dichotomous universe of empowerment vs. Paternalism, liberation vs. Force, oppression vs. Emancipation” (Wright Nielsen, 2009, p. 216). Dessa kvinnors kulturella bakgrund enligt Wright Nielsen problematiseras genomgående inom ramen för projektets empowermentarbete och projektets mål handlar i stor utsträckning om att göra ingrepp i kvinnornas subjektiviteter där empowerment blir likställd med att rädda kvinnorna från sin kultur som anses vara avvikande från en svensk norm. En sådan förståelse av empowerment:

> *[R]educes the social inequalities experienced by the women to an essentially cultural problem that can not be related to the other inequality producing power structures in society. /…/ the problematization of the women creates the women as subjects with certain characteristics. Through this problematization, the Swedish self-perception and identity as emancipated and modern women, is created. In this way empowerment contributes to produces a norm of Swedishness (Wright Nielsen, 2009, p. 217).*

Svensk integrationspolitik har således en problematisk förståelse av ”de andras” kulturer och det är inom ramen för denna problematisering som olika politik och verksamheter kring integration formuleras och bedrivs för att möjliggöra en förvandlingsprocess för ”de andra” att bli som ett föreställt ”oss”. Det är i ljuset av denna oro och politik som vi också kan förstå de diskriminerande praktiker som SD, Åberg och Carlbom stipulerar för att *besegra* Rosengårds befolkning som om det vore en kamp mellan det förment goda (det svenska) och det förment onda (det muslimska). En manikeisk retorik som är välkänd från Bushadministrationens krig mot ”terrorister” (Antingen är ni med oss eller mot oss). Hos Åberg och Carlbom finns en parallell till den koloniala fantasin om ett räddningsuppdrag där den vita mannen/kvinnan ska skickas på räddningsuppdrag i Rosengårds förmodade laglösa och rasifierade djungel för att rädda barnen och kvinnorna från förmenta barbariska muslimska män, en demoniserande idé som befäster tanken om västerländsk överlägsenhet och rättfärdigar västerländsk dominans över ”de andra”. En sådan politik skapar ett belägringstillstånd hos befolkningen i Rosengård och skapar motstånd samt ger upphov till en misstänksamhetens politik där socialtjänsten inte kan bli en trovärdig partner i skapandet av ett inkluderande samhälle, utan kommer att ses som statens disciplinerande och bestraffande arm mot demoniserade Rosengårdsbo. Det är en enkel match för socialtjänsten att knacka på dörren hos familjer med invandrarbakgrund och granska deras barnuppfostran, något som svårligen kan ske på samma sätt hos välbärgade svenska familjer eftersom socialtjänstens disciplinerande praktiker kan lättare appliceras på utsatta grupper eftersom de inte besitter tillräckligt med materiella och symboliska maktresurser för att göra motstånd mot socialtjänstens lagstadgade makt. Omhändertagande av barn och hot om omhändertagande är ett faktum för många familjer i stigmatiserade och marginaliserade områden. Socialtjänsten kan också använda sig av ekonomiska sanktioner och dra in bidrag till en del behövande och fattiga familjer för att visa

vem det är som bestämmer i Sverige. Det sociala arbetet i Sverige och i synnerhet i marginaliserade områden kan ta en annan väg bortom disciplinering och söka istället mekanismerna bakom de strukturella ojämlikheter som den invandrade befolkningen erfar och åtgärda dem i samverkan med befolkningen i dessa stigmatiserade och marginaliserade områden genom konkreta politiska åtgärder för att utjämna de rådande ekonomiska, kulturella och politiska ojämlikheterna i Sverige.

## *Reflektioner*

Samtida ”integrationspolitik” utgår ifrån föreställningen om att de forna koloniala subjekten med sina förmodade ”barbariska” kulturer finns nu bland ”oss”, en defensiv europeisk integrationspolitik som går ut på att fixera de postkoloniala subjekten vid sina underordnade positioner genom övervakningssamhället à la Foucault och diskriminering via diskurser om inkommensurabla eller oförenliga kulturer. Om det tidigare har funnits en diskurs i Sverige och i övriga delar av Europa om att samhället är på väg mot ett mångkulturellt eller pluralt samhälle så har den nyliberala hegemonin återinfört explicit assimilationismens idé om den nationella identitetens sublima plats i våra liv där botemedlet mot det plurala samhället är politiska förslag om ”svenska värden”, ”värdegrund”, ”körkort i svenskhet”, ”medborgarskapstest”, ”språktest”, åtgärder och krav som är avsedda för ”de andra”. Den patologiserande effekten av dessa politiska förslag som riktas mot ”de andra” blir uppenbar då politiker från olika svenska partier betonar ”att i Sverige gäller svenska regler och lagar” för att stärka diskursen om invandrarna som en sjukförklarad och avvikande grupp som måste övervakas, civiliseras och normaliseras genom botemedlet ”svenska värderingar” och därmed bekräfta idén om svenskhetens överlägsenhet utan att på ett djupare plan undersöka de åtskilliga sätten svenskheten kan komma till uttryck bortom essentialistiska föreställningar om en homogen svenskhet. Den nya riktning som svensk ”integrationspolitik” har tagit formuleras kärnfullt av Stefan Jonsson:

> *År 2006 skulle vara mångkulturens år. Det blev i stället året då landet tycktes få nog av den (Jonsson, 2008).*

Om det är islamister som skrämmer det förment harmoniska nationella livet på liberala debattörer, forskare och journalister så kan de istället plädera för ett Sverige och en värld där den dominanta gruppen delar de samhälleliga resurserna med de underordnade grupperna för att undvika radikalisering som kan bli en tillflyktsort för individer och grupper som finner en mening med sin uteslutna tillvaro. Dessutom är det viktigt att ha i åtanken, för att parafrasera Aleksandra Ålund (1997), att den värld som utesluter en kan själva komma att bli utesluten. Den bristande integrationen inom arbetsmarknaden, politiken, medier, bostadsmarknaden kan svårligen skyllas på islamister där den dominanta gruppen har ett strukturellt övertag i relation till underordnade grupper som inte har så mycket inflytande över samhällets resursfördelning. Att kalla Rosengård för icke-svenskt som forskaren Carlbom gör när han får tillgång till offentliga diskurser är knappast vägledande för en inkluderande politik utan fördjupar ytterligare idéer om muslimernas annanhet och känslan av icke-tillhörighet. Att kalla ungdomarna i Rosengård för ”Apjävel” och ”Blattejävlar”

som piketpoliserna gjorde i Malmö gentemot Rosengårds ungdomar, visar bara på den rasistiska människosyn som den institutionella rasismen ger uttryck bortom individuell patologi. Konkreta politiska åtgärder möjliggörs då den politiska makten erbjuder Rosengårds ungdomar eller befolkning ett politiskt rum som låter dem få tillgång till diskursen om deras liv och de åtskilliga utmaningar som präglar deras liv. Den avhumaniserade och objektifierande diskursen som är så vanligt hos medier och politiker gälland förorter i Europa underminerar politiska krafter att frambringa och implementera en jämlikhetspolitik. En inkluderande integrationspolitik/ jämlikhetspolitik förutsätter att sagan om den svenska gemenskapen ständigt återberättas på ett sätt som återspeglar Sveriges pluralistiska konstellation bortom romantiska föreställningar om nationell homogenitet och dess avsaknad av politiska antagonismer (om bara ”de andra” inte skulle vare bland ”oss”, så skulle ”vi” ha det harmoniskt) där dominanta subjekt inte blir de självklara subjekten som bestämmer dagordning och manar ”de andra” att anpassa sig till den nationella leden. Vi behöver även en inkluderingspolitik med en avkoloniseringsprocess inom alla samhälleliga arenor (politiken, medier, bostadsmarknaden, arbetsmarknaden, utbildning, osv.) som reproducerar ojämlika maktrelationer mellan dominanta subjekt och underordnade grupper.

Det sociala arbetet kan inte längre stänga in sig i nationalstatens snäva fält utan socialarbetarna kan bidra globalt till att undanröja förtryck i världen. Globala ojämlikheter kan inbegripa allt ifrån imperialism, krig, rasism, våld mot kvinnor, minoriteter och barn, svält, avsaknad av utbildningsmöjligheter, miljöförstörelse, AIDS, storföretagens exploatering av barn och kvinnor. Det sociala arbetet som är statscentrerat i Sverige under parollen välfärdspolitik eller socialpolitik blir begränsande när det ska verka i globala sammanhang och därför bör innehållet i socionomutbildningen ordnas på ett sätt som kan överskrida och utmana nationalstatens sätt att föreställa sig socialt arbete bortom myndighetsvärldens disciplinering och bevakning av underordnade grupper, som utgör en viktig förutsättning för att få service. Det är även dags att göra upp med den unkna fantasin om att den brunna kvinnan behöver räddas av Västvärlden både globalt och nationellt vilket innebär att den västerländska blicken måste avkoloniseras från koloniala fantasier om sin överlägsenhet och andras underlägsenhet för att en jämlik relation ska kunna etableras mellan olika grupper i världen.

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# International field training and intercultural communication

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This section covers two matters. Firstly, how international field training can be prepared and followed up in the social work programme in Sweden. Secondly, it contains reflections over the terms "culture" and "intercultural communication".

## International field training

There is a long tradition of international field training in social work education. Although some was written earlier, the book *"Broadening horizons: International exchanges in social work"* (Dominelli & Bernard, 2003) probably represents the first attempt to summarize and draw attention to the matter. Over the past ten years, published articles on international field training have grown in number and specificity, reporting on different aspects and projects. However, Samantha Wehbi still feels that relatively little is published in academic journals (Wehbi, 2009).

### *Who, were and why?*

Already in early contributions from the 1970s, fundamental questions were raised when it comes to the way that the education programmes handle international field training. A final solution has still not been found for these questions. This applies to, for example, *who travels where and why*.

International field training in social work programmes is usually a matter of students from the "West" travelling to countries outside of their own region, "the global South"1 as it is sometimes called (Abram, Slosar, & Walls, 2005; Norman & Hintze, 2005; Pettys, Panos, Cox, & Oosthuysen, 2005; Rai, 2004; Razack, 2009; Tesoriero, 2006). This statement itself should give pause for reflection. To what degree can and should *reciprocity* be an undertaking for us? How much work do we put into making it possible for students from "the global South" to travel here and study social work with us? I think the answer is obvious: Not enough.

Another matter is how much we as education providers can and should guide our own *students' choice of both country and field training posts*. As may be expected, students prefer countries where they feel they can handle the language. In practice, most students opt for English and countries where this can used. Being able to speak Spanish has opened up options for a small percentage of students, while those who actually speak languages such as Arabic, Farsi or Kurdish seldom use this when choosing their country for field training. This shows that it is not only language skills

1 The difficulty in naming the countries that should be discussed in this context demonstrates how unproductive it is to think in simple, dichotomic terms like East/West, North/South, developed/undeveloped, etc. This is significant in many contexts.

which play a determining role. It is therefore necessary for everyone working with international field training to *regularly analyze the motives of the students and the aims of the programme*. In the article "*Deconstructing motivations: Challenging international social work placements*", Wehbi (2009) claims that we must challenge and examine our own work in this area in order to "*foster the internationalization of social work without reproducing inequitable North/South relations*" (a.a., p. 49).

When it comes to the work areas of the field training posts, there are many factors that affect the outcome. Students' specific interests, programme requirements and a number of practical matters must all be carefully considered. It is both sensible and reasonable for those responsible for the programme to have viewpoints in this matter. Both the quality (opportunity to gain relevant knowledge and experience) and the synchronization with the programme in general (topics such as children and families, addiction, fighting poverty, prevention, social justice, migration or human rights) should be included in the evaluation.

## *Preparatory course*

Implementing an actual *course with preparations for international field training* was a major achievement for our programme. This serves to gather students in small seminar groups and gets them to reflect over both current and crucial issues in a clear manner. Among other things, it gives them the opportunity to consider their own motives and how these are related to trends and ideologies. With a graded course, field training is given a more noticeable position in the programmes and is raised to a higher status. The information and the actual search process also play an obvious role in relation to courses and studies.

The content of the course should in part be about "*…knowledge of the specific country: its history, population, government, geography, religion, cultural aspects, industry, social welfare system, social policies, social work and so on*" (Ottelid, 2008a).[2]

Another significant portion should cover "*… ethics, attitudes, values and matters of conduct and behaviour*". It is definitely necessary to work in small groups and in a personally involved manner to concretize and examine the students' own motives for going abroad, discuss the relationship between "West" and "the global South", rich and poor, white and black, power in social work, gender issues, and so forth.

The examination part can focus on these two areas: concrete knowledge of the country in question and the critical review of one's own position in relation to central, basic social work issues, such as power, gender, ethnicity and class.

Narda Razack encourages us to also be aware of *how* we teach about these things: "*Critical attention is needed to understand how we teach global issues, how we introduce content on particular topics, how students interpret and integrate the knowledge, whose voices are silenced and, more importantly, what gets discussed and what is erased."* (Razack, 2009)

Obviously, this is not only about how an individual course works. It is instead how the entire education milieu in different ways fosters and supports critical

2 This is covered further in the next section on intercultural communication

thinking regarding social work, its role and possibilities. Thus, it is not solely about individual lecturers or specific courses. It is about the entire organization and its various functions.

Another very concrete matter that may not affect all students, but may depend on where in the world the student intends to travel, is *preparations for personal safety*. The university has a responsibility in this regard and should in one way or another give students information and knowledge of e.g. various ways of protecting oneself. This can be anything from risk of illness to avoiding being robbed and understanding the safety conditions in the country in question.

## Supervision

It is by no means an easy task to ensure a good *supervision situation for students* during the field training period. Despite intense work to pre-assess the quality of the field training and supervision situation, the facts are as follows: the distance is great, communication methods are often complicated, the course co-ordinator at the university has limited opportunity to travel and the risk of a "bad" placement can be substantial if the student does not choose a proven location. However, really unsuccessful field training periods seem to be the rare exception and even if the student chose a relatively unknown field study location, being involved in and taking responsibility for the process often gave the student a realistic view of the content, quality and supervision. This makes you feel like you learned a lot, even though you may have critical viewpoints of how things worked as a whole.

There is probably great development potential in work to ensure the supervision situation, but this requires significant resources in the form of both time and money. Nevertheless, the resources must be invested. Internet-based technology, such as blogs and video calls can surely be utilized more than you might think.

Those in charge of placement should have extensive experience in visiting international field training posts. This is a quality indicator that must not be underestimated. At the same time, the university's prospects of fully taking responsibility for the individual student cultivating basic experiences linked to privileged position, power, ethnicity or gender are always limited. For this reason, great emphasis must be placed on both preparation and follow-up.

## Follow-up

*Follow-up work* can take different forms. At Mid Sweden University, we have long used a model with seminars along with the International Day, which is open to the public (Mid Sweden University, 2009). Both the education and the students must be at a high level in this area, as it plays such a large role in development. Instead of having follow-up being something separate from the courses offered after the field training, such parts should be integrated in these courses, expressed in learning objectives and also graded. There is no other way to safeguard and legitimize the entire process. That

this really is a chain of learning, from preparation to follow-up, seems self-evident. This must be visible and emphasized in basic, official documents in order to gain the necessary status.

The process also sets demands on use as educators to critical review activities, since there is no guarantee that students' experiences and encounters will lead to positive results – for them or for social work in general. The matter rests on how encounters and experiences are interpreted and understood. It is here that we have a great responsibility.

A more in depth description of how we carry out this work on a daily basis at Mid Sweden University can be found in Pedagogiska Meddelanden nr 3 (Thörn, 2010). Carina Thörn is course coordinator for practice placement abroad at the Department of Social Work.

# Intercultural communication – speaking with peasants as a peasant but using Latin with scholars

The Swedish poet and writer Erik Axel Karlfeldt (b. 1864) did not have the term "intercultural communication" in mind when writing his verse on Fridolin (Karlfeldt, 1898/1995). The society of Karlfeldt's day was completely different. Tradition played a greater role and a "shoemaker stuck to his last". Changes in class and profession were not as common as they are today. Fridolin did not fit the typical image of a peasant since he could "speak with peasants as a peasant, but use Latin with scholars". With this verse, the writer Karlfeldt implies distinct boundaries between categories of people when it comes to communicating. "Peasants" are a clearly defined group with a specific way of being and communicating. The same applies to "scholars".

Discussions of so-called "intercultural communication" have become increasingly interesting considering globalization and use of the term culture in certain contexts as a type of replacement for the more biology-based term "race" (Kjeldstadli, 2008). This area definitely deserves attention in a university education programme that intends to train students to be able to "*develop and perform social work from a pluralistic and international perspective*" (Mid Sweden University, 2007). The question is just *how* attention should be paid to this. What skills and abilities should be tied to "intercultural communication"?

In order to be able to discuss intercultural communication at all, you must first discuss what the word culture could mean in this context.

In everyday use, culture is sometimes thought of as something people "belong to" or "are". The fact that many say "are" indicates that there is a link to the term identity. "She is really un-Swedish." "He's a Kurd," "They're typical Smålanders." "Those Norrlanders are a quiet bunch."[3]

3 Naturally, there are many ways of interpreting the term culture and it is not always understood the same way. A translation of an excerpt from the Swedish "Nationalencyklopedin" is as follows: "... culture should denote a procedural context. ⇒

You will have a different view of the term intercultural communication depending on how you view these things. Here are two diametrically opposed ideas:

1. People are born into cultures, culture is (or becomes) an inherent characteristic of people, cultures are stable over a long period of time, they are homogeneous and have clear boundaries with other cultures, they can be tied to nationalities, nations and geographic locations, they "clash" with each other if they are too unlike, cultures are can be seen as boxes with people inside, in the "multicultural society" different cultures live side by side in their own enclaves (which some consider "healthy" and good because it prevents "clashes")
2. There are cultures, but they should be seen as social constructions, they change constantly and sometimes rapidly, life expectancy can vary greatly, all are individuals, each "culture" is extremely heterogeneous, culture can be viewed as social actions – a practice, national cultures are a thing of the past, the world is globalized and cultures are along with it, it is talk about cultures that creates categorization, not the other way around.

It is obvious that the first stance in particular (or variations of it) has had a great influence in Swedish daily life. It is not always evident. It is often hidden in discussions and actions, like an understood framework of thoughts. Even the former party secretary of "Sverigedemokraterna"[4] seems to have a balanced perception of the term "Swedish culture":

> *You could say that there is no Swedish culture, if you define culture as something clearly definable, unique and unchanging... There is one, even if it is hard to define. An important and obvious element is, naturally, the Swedish language.*
>
> *Other elements are feelings, values and behaviours. Self-images and expectations – as well as understanding – of each other. Concrete examples (in no particular order and with no claim of being a complete list): – we are often silent – we are rather law-abiding – we wait our turn in queue – we arrive on time and keep our word – we have a sense of democracy – we don't come for a visit unexpectedly – we avoid public displays of emotion – we dislike conflicts and prefer to find a compromise – we like to believe that man is basically good and can be naive on the verge of going over into stupidity. WARNING: a) these do not apply to all Swedes b) they are not necessarily traits exclusive to Swedes c) there is no guarantee that they are unchangeable in us.* (Milld, 2003) (My translation)

The translated quotation and its origins show that shady opinions and ideologies can sometimes hide behind "reasonable" explanations, "balanced" expressions and "well-founded" formulations. Word and deed should be viewed in context to understand reality.

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In this, socioeconomic conditions, cultural products (e.g. thought patterns) and individuals are in constant interactions, with history also playing a part. A consequence of this outlook is that research must take into account that there is not just *one* culture. There are also subcultures (e.g. class and gender), which also have their own subcultures. Thus, at a certain level, the culture is a conglomerate of subcultures, which have both similarities and dissimilarities to each other." (Nationalencyklopedin, 2009)

4 Swedish political party, by many considered being racist and islamofobic.

Stolcke (1995) states that the contemporary *cultural fundamentalism*, as she calls it, is based on two fundamental premises that are interconnected: that different cultures are *incompatible* and that because of innate ethnocentricity they are *hostile to each other by nature*. When you discover this "natural constant", the element of predetermined *hostility towards foreigners*, you also see that cultural fundamentalism is just like the less politically acceptable racism. According to Stolcke, the natural constant (hostility towards foreigners and race/skin colour, respectively) attempts in a similar manner to lend credibility to the respective ideology.

When it comes to those who can be called radical constructivists or relativists, Norwegian historian Kjeldstadli (2008) writes that they might be exaggerating the inconstancy of cultures, even though they do it with the good intention of not making differences between people out to be too great. But, he also says that even if you maintain that there is a degree of constancy in a culture, this does not mean that it is uniform or unchanging over time. In this, he seems to agree with Stolcke, who says that she does not for one second want to deny that there are "*different ways of organizing the business of life and different systems of meaning*" (1995, p. 12). But, she emphasizes that people have always been moving around (both physically and mentally) and that cultures have shown themselves to be both "*fluid and flexible*". She claims that her subject, anthropology, should not pay too much attention to cultural differences as such, but look more at how political context and relationships give them significance. History provides us many examples of how the relationship between different cultures can shift from unproblematic coexistence to ferocious hostility. Culture, according to Stolcke, can be made dramatically important to people in situations of political dominance and conflict. Thus, you should consider *differences as something produced* in specific political and historic context. This is an important conclusion.

In the post-modern discussion of *identity* and *culture* there is a lot that points to the necessity of understanding the terms based on movement, process, transforming, boundary breaking and including rather than something static and set in stone. Movement and change are something we can see all around us. If you take a look at the menu of a roadside restaurant outside of Luleå®, the heading "Traditional Swedish dishes" will contain not only pancakes, beef and onions, hash and meatballs, but also kebab in various forms. The fact that pizza, lasagne and noodles have become staples of our family menus also shows how "Swedish culture" embraces and welcomes new impulses, which then become identity material that forms the perception of what is "Swedish".

Pathak reports and critically discusses Oommen's message that Indian identity – and thereby Indian culture – does not exist (Oommen, 1997; Pathak, 2006). According to Oommen, India would not be able to give anyone a cultural identity, only citizenship. Pathak responds to this by saying that India is much more than a political state. India is a part of Indians' collective conscious and is "*a perpetual process of becoming*" (Pathak, 2006, p. 129). He gives examples of different everyday items and behaviours that unite and goes on to say that the people have a continual and strong desire "*to broaden one's horizon and universe*". Just as cultures are neither homogenous nor static, identities should also be seen from a perspective of change. According to Pathak, instead of letting cultural/social identities limit us, we should instead perceive

identity as "*fluid and inclusive, and engage in a process of creative/dialogic assimilation*" (Pathak, 2006, p. 113).

Pathak's remark is important and shows that in many respects it is our own relationship to identities and "cultural association" that determine whether openness and curiosity with others is possible. Pathak also includes gender as a part of cultural/social identities. These are not innate, they are "*socially constructed through cultural practices and socialization*". Realizing this frees us from what he calls "*limiting identities".* Such limiting identities can also be used, according to Pathak, to stir up hostilities between nations, people and religious or political groups. Pathak describes vivid examples from Gandhi's life and his own life to show how man can transform and develop in relation to his cultural and social identities.

> *"…my identity is not something fixed – defined once and for all; it is perpetually evolving and experimenting with itself. I am a Bengali. My wife is a Maithili. And my daughter may grow up as more than a mere Bengali or Maithili – an Indian, or even more than that, possibly a universal being!"* (Pathak, 2006, p. 129 ff)

Bhabha (2004) presents similar arguments when he discusses cultures and tries to find alternatives to "multiculturalism" as a term and historic phenomenon. He claims that it has lost its intellectual legitimacy and represents an incorrect and even (post)colonial perspective of cultures. "Multicultural", "multiculturalism" and "cultural diversity" are thus terms based on "*the recognition of pre-given cultural contents and customs*" and thereby are based on the notion of an essential identity. In order to become free of dichotomic thinking, or "*negative polarities*" – us/them, like/unlike, the one/the other – Bhabha instead want to talk about *negotiation* and *a meeting* in what he calls "Third Space". This space is characterized by ambivalence and new interpretation. Barlow (2007) uses this term to describe what some Canadian social work students during international field training in India encountered when confronted with environments, people and situations that were foreign to them. This Third Space acts like a threshold ("a liminal space"), a "betwixt and between state", where words like negotiation, hybrid, tension, transformation, ambivalence and (new) interpretation have great significance.

Another aspect of the language and the words we use to describe (and interpret) reality is that we can only understand the significance of words in their *context* – political, cultural and historical. It is with this understanding that one should reflect over the argument laid out by Bhabha (2004) in his book "*The Location of Culture"*. He advocates the following:

> *"The language of critique is effective not because it keeps forever separate the terms of the master and the slave, the mercantilist and the Marxist, but to the extent to which it overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation: a place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics. The challenge lies in conceiving of the time of political action and understanding as opening up a space*

*that can accept and regulate the differential structure of the moment of intervention without rushing to produce a unity of the social antagonism or contradiction. This is a sign that history is happening - within the pages of theory, within the systems and structures we construct to figure the passage of the historical."*(ibid., p. 200)

The media and everyday language are bursting with examples of how people – more or less consciously – express their view of cultures as "boxes" with a fixed and determined content where everyone in that culture is lumped together: "culture clash", "meet other cultures", "We Swedes", "typical Swedish", "in Islam", "among foreigners", "in certain cultures" and so on. I had the following observations after a seminar with students from semester five of the social work programme.

*"It is hard to talk about 'cultures' without using language that indicates that they are essential boxes with homogeneous content. E.g.: 'It sometimes feels like it is taboo to criticize certain cultures.' In the following discussion, it became clear that the seminar participants both understood and felt that 'cultures' are not boxes or that there should be uniform content in them. E.g.: 'Is men hitting women a part of Swedish culture?' In the continued discussion, it became apparent that seminar participants understood that it is common for 'Swedish' women to be subjected to violence and for 'Swedish' men to quite often get away with it without consequences. Thus, it can be considered a part of 'Swedish culture'. At the same time, there are many (e.g. everyone at the seminar) who are also representatives of 'the Swedish culture' and who condemn violence against women. This makes it obvious that all seminar participants (actually) understood the basic premise of the topic and that the reasoning above naturally applies to 'other cultures' as well.*

*However, despite this understanding, it is hard not to express oneself without it sounding wrong. Nonetheless, one must try. Otherwise, we reproduce unfair conditions through language, even if this is not our intention. Words are important. As well as how they are said."* (Ottelid, 2008b)

In my opinion, at a university we cannot teach about "intercultural communication" without putting quotation marks around the term and starting the discussion by problematizing and critically looking at the term culture, how it is used and how it can be understood. "Intercultural communication" is a term which, if used uncritically, helps to establish problematic images of "the Others" who "belong to a different culture".

But, as previously mentioned, you must admit that there are "*different ways of organizing the business of life and different systems of meaning*" (Stolcke, 1995, p. 12). Should instruction then contain "facts" about how people from "other cultures" act, speak, think and behave? Should one teach about appropriate ways to act and speak when meeting "the Others"?

It is easy to see that we are dealing with a problematic field of literature and thinking when confronted with books that make a big deal about describing such things. Accordingly, Lewis (2006), for example, advises people who are confronted with "the Swedes" to smile when the Swedes smile, to give a humorous speech during

dinner (because Swedes appreciate that), to be diplomatic rather than outspoken and to always try to compromise. Lewis also teaches us that "*Swedes don't understand that in some cultures compromise has the negative meaning of surrendering one's principles*." (ibid., p. 344)

Lewis also advises readers to avoid discussing Israel and Iraq with "Arabs" and to not question "Islamic taboos" regarding alcohol and pork.

This type of "knowledge" about different cultures is based on and sells, more or less clearly, a view of cultures as homogeneous and clearly defined units. This is obviously problematic and in the long term helps to establish stereotypes that serve as the basis for excluding and discriminating against such groups, which at present can serve as targets in a community. Stereotypes are unreasonable and uncritical generalizations that do not belong in university education other than as illustrations of an ideology based on exclusion and institutional racism.

Here, racism refers to *a mechanism that allows a certain population to be closed in and arranged according to certain principles for exclusion and admission* (Jonsson, 2004, p. 53). Thus, the term is not linked to a "race", which in most scientific circles has been rejected as a basis for categorizing humans. There is no factual reason to suggest that there are races of humans, even though we are rather different in terms of appearance. Jonsson's description can be linked to Dominelli (2008), which indicates three levels of racism: "*individual or personal racism, institutional racism and cultural racism*". According to Dominelli, these three components interact and serve as the basis for social exclusion.

## *Taking the bull by the horns*

Despite difficulties and risks, it is reasonable for an intercultural and international social work programme to in one way or another take on the issue of "intercultural communication". Avoiding this would be devastating. Naturally, it should not be based on learning to speak with "the Others". It should instead be based on *a genuine interest in understanding how people live and think and facilitates interactions in which all parties can feel respected and seen for what they perceive themselves to be*. Naturally, it is never wrong to learn something about customs and practices, traditions, way of life and daily life of a country if one is considering doing social work field training there. On the contrary, it is a necessity. As mentioned previously, it is a matter of ensuring that students have "*…knowledge of the specific country: its history, population, government, geography, religion, cultural aspects, industry, social welfare system, social policies, social work and so on*" (Ottelid, 2008a). Young Swedish students in general tend to be a group with a lot of travel experience, but confusing this with them having a lot of knowledge about other countries would be a mistake.

The most reasonable, and probably least problematic, approach to *cultural aspects* is to let go of the culture term and instead think "daily life". Doing so in no way prevents one from reflecting over *shared* thought patterns, *common* religious and ideological ideas, *common* traditions or behaviours, but may help free thought and language from the idea that people "belong" to specific "cultures". This pragmatic approach does not

make it impossible to observe how some people identify themselves more strongly with a specific idea or group association or to reflect on how one can understand this.

The term "daily life" becomes so obviously linked to gender, class and generation since it is easy to see that the daily life of, for example, poor Indian women living out in the country has hardly any similarities to the daily life of prosperous, middle-class Indian men in the cities. Thus, in a manner of speaking there is no "Indian daily life" or "Swedish daily life". There are a great number and great variety of Swedish and Indian daily lives. A number of factors limit or open up the opportunities we have to shape our daily life, and knowledge of such circumstances is central in social work.

A critical and updated attitude to the terms culture, identity and globalization must always exist as a basis for all learning about people's daily lives, regardless of their location in the world and their position in society. Naturally, it is good to take the time to think about matters of daily life in a teaching context. This applies in particular to students who themselves have no link to a specific country or any relevant experience in general. The differences between Sweden, India, South Africa, Jamaica, etc. can be significant. Students will have reflections and thoughts regardless of what is done in the programme. It is better for these thoughts to be outspoken and made conscious to students. Then they can be reviewed with a critical eye.

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