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On the Side of the Angels?

- A qualitative study on Swedish and Australian social work students', -teachers' and -Directors of Studies' attitudes towards social work and multiculturalism.

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Abstract

The objective of this thesis was, on the basis of the Theory of Residualist Conversion, to examine if students in social work education were trained to maintain the structures in society by converting social problems into personal problems of the people they serve. I chose 'the multicultural society' as an example of an issue that is often perceived as a social problem.

The research questions were; how do the Schools/ Directors of Studies', teachers and students view the education and its purpose, the role of the social worker and the multicultural society?

The thesis was based on primary data in form of qualitative interviews with students, teachers and Directors of Studies' from the social work educations in Lund, Sweden and Brisbane (S:t Lucia Campus), Australia, as well as secondary data, consisting mainly of literature on multiculturalism, social work and social work education.

The main conclusion was that the students of the social work educations did not learn explicitly to convert social problems into personal problems, but neither did they learn how to avoid this. Social work and the role of the social worker were not critically examined and discussed during the education. Another conclusion is that knowledge about the importance of culture and the dominance of the 'Swedish' and 'Australian' culture lacked in the educations.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Stating the Problem

The role of social work in society is something that is shifting due to politics, trends, economic systems etc. Malcolm Payne (1997) says that what is considered to be a client, a social worker or social work differs from country to country and depend on the viewpoint and perspective society and the social worker take. According to Anna Meeuwisse et. al. (2000), social work can be said to administrate, reproduce and construct social problems. The question is if the social worker primarily should be in the service of society or the client (p 141).

Most people today would probably say that the role of the social worker is to help people who needs help, and my experience from social work students is that everybody wants to 'do good', to help others in some way. But what it really meant by doing good and helping others, is not as obvious as it might seem, and how it is interpreted has a crucial effect on how social work is performed and viewed upon. During one of the interviews I was doing for this thesis, the respondents remarked that social workers are supposed to be on the side of the angels, but the problem is, he said, that the clients are not angels. This illustrated the problem of defining social work, social workers and the 'client', and the consequences of different definitions.

As a social work student I realized that this is in some way the most important question we are dealing with, as it decides how we think, what we do and what we don't. I therefor wanted to go deeper into this and investigate what values and views that are prevailing in social work education.

The social work education could be supposed to lay the basis of the social workers attitude to social work practice. The role of the social worker is something that all social work educations constantly are dealing with, both explicitly and implicitly. A kindred issue is the construction of social problems and how this is related to social work practice. Kate Martin has elaborated on these issue in her thesis *The Social Work Dilemma; Individual or Society*. According to her, social work education is involved in training graduates what to think and how to practice rather than providing them with an education which allows them to critically question and challenge the practice of social work. Students receive an education whereby problems are defined as belonging to the psychological makeup of the individuals, and the link between the political, economical and social structures and the way in which they impinge on the lives of people, are not made (p 31).

Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) express similar views in *Sociology of Social Problems*. They claim social workers convert social problems into the personal problems of the people they serve and in that way legitimating the social problems that society is unwilling or incapable of solving. Thus, the real aim of social work practice is not the improvement of the 'clients' situation, and a more equal society, but to control the clients and maintain the (oppressive) structures in society (p 54-58).

This conversion of social problems into personal problems, and enforcement of the power structures in society, is something the social work students are taught in the education, according to the authors. In my own experience, most of the students of social work want to change society, but do not have the knowledge nor tools to carry it out. I therefore wanted to investigate how people involved in social work education experience the education, what they think is the social workers' role in society etc. To get a wider picture I thought it would be interesting to compare two social work education in two different countries, and I decided on Sweden and Australia (due to different reasons discussed in chapter 2).

What is considered a social problem differs, Anna Meeuwisse et al (2000) mean that a social problem should be seen as a relation, as a distance between what in a certain society at a certain time is regarded as socially 'normal' and 'acceptable', and what is regarded as problematic, as an unwanted condition or phenomena. In the same way as what is regarded normal or acceptable changes over time, what is regarded a social problem will too change. (p 143)

According to Jamrozik and Nocella (1998), all social problems are intrinsically political, that is, they are intrinsic to the structure of power in society and constitute a 'negative residue' of the pursuit of the dominant values and interests in that structure. In order to maintain the structure and its legitimacy, the problems are converted first into administrative problems, and then into the 'problems of individuals' who experience the effects of the problems. Through this process social problems are effectively removed from the social sphere, thus legitimising the existing structure of power.

When trying to find out if social work students are taught to convert social problems into personal problems I thought applying this on a social problem would be illustrative and make the theory clearer. An issue that is perceived as a social problem in many contemporary societies, and that is getting a lot of attention in politics, media and to a certain extent in social work education, is immigration and its consequence, the multicultural society.

There are many reasons why I chose the multicultural society as an example. Partly because I think it is a good example as it touches upon the very essence of social work, that is human worth and how you view people. Also because I am concerned about how immigrants and minorities are treated and looked upon within social work, and at the time of deciding the direction of my thesis I studied a course with focus on culture and integration.

When talking about the multicultural society, an understanding of the concept culture is necessary, as the multicultural society refers to a society consisting of not only one culture but many. According to the ethnologist Karl-Olov Arnstberg, a culture include a collection of rules, values and symbols that a group of people maintain and cherish (Roth, 1996, p 12).

Ulf Hannerz concept of culture shows a more dynamic and changeable character. He sees culture as ideas, experiences and emotions that are expressed in different ways. Culture is the meaning that people create as members of a collective. At the same time people are themselves created by this meaning. He means that even if you can sense the structure of a culture, it is totally dependent on an ongoing process (Soydan, 1999, p 22). In this thesis I have chosen Hannerz's definition.

In *Towards an emancipatory pedagogy?* Charlotte Williams (2002) discuss social work education in Europe from a multicultural, multi-ethnic perspective. She brings up a survey committed by the Council of Europe in 1994 of twenty-seven countries across Europe that looked at 'the human right dimension and minority issues' in social work education and professional practices. In this survey they found a widespread lack of explicit attention to these issues, lack of appropriate study materials, low involvement of minority ethnic people as tutors or students and a social work education that is fundamentally ethnocentric (p 212).

In the thesis I also wanted to examine if the different actors of social work education have ethnocentric views in relation to social work, as that would be an example of how a problem created by society is transformed into a problem of a certain group or individual, in this case immigrants/minorities.

1.2 Purpose

My purpose is to investigate, on the basis of the Theory of Residualist Conversion, if students in social work education are trained to maintain the structures in society by converting social problems into personal problems.

1.3 Research Questions

- How do the Schools/ Directors of Studies', teachers and students view the education and its purpose?
- How do the Schools/ Directors of Studies', teachers and students view the role of the social worker?
- What ideas do the Directors of Studies', teachers and students have about the multicultural society?

1.4 Disposition

The draw up of this thesis is as follows:

- Chapter 1 – this is an introduction of the topics discussed in the thesis; the role of social work in society, the aim of social work education, and the multicultural society as a social problem. Further, I describe the purpose of the thesis, and the comprehensive research questions.
- Chapter 2 – here I give an account of the methods used when gathering material and analyzing it. The chapter deals with how the interviews were carried out, methodology problems and how I handle them, how the schools and respondents were chosen, and a discussion on the credibility of the results.
- Chapter 3 – this chapter deals with (the lack of) previous research in this area. Two surveys of social work educations are mentioned and a thesis by K. Martin that bring up problems in social work education.
- Chapter 4 – here the theoretical framework used in the thesis is presented. I begin with the main theory, the Theory of Residualist Conversion -'invented' by A. Jamrozik & L. Nocella, and continue with N. Thompson discussions on anti-discriminatory social work practice, M. Payne on the bias of Western social work, and finally C. Williams suggestions for an emancipatory social work education. Further I explain why these authors (critical) thoughts and/or theories on social work and multiculturalism are suitable for the analysis of the empirical material.
- Chapter 5 – this chapter consists of results and analysis. The material is divided up into four themes, The Social Work Education, The (Social) Work Life, Immigration and Multiculturalism and The Influence of the Society. Each part begins with a resume of what the authors have said, related to this specific topic, and then the empirical material is presented and analyzed, using the different authors thoughts and theories when doing this.
- Chapter 6 – in this chapter I discuss the results, differences and similarities between Sweden and Australia and between the respondents, and submit proposals for further studies.

2. The Conduct of the Study

When I was trying to decide what to examine in this thesis, I had recently read 'Sociology of Social Problems', and was very inspired and by that book. I also wanted to write something about immigrants and their position in society. Finally I decided to compare the Swedish and the Australian social work education from a multicultural perspective. I contacted Adam Jamrozik and asked if it was possible for me to come and visit to conduct part of my research in Australia. After a couple of days I received a very welcoming invitation, where he told me he would take care of me and that I could stay at a close friend of his, Ruth Errey (also a social worker). As both I and my supervisors in Sweden were enthusiastic about it, I quickly decided to go to Australia. Before I went I read Jamrozik's other book published in Sweden, 'Social Transformation in Australia', and some literature concerning multicultural issues, social work and social problems, national character, and the immigration history and -policies of Sweden and Australia.

I stayed in Australia for four weeks and learnt a great deal by spending a lot of time with Adam and Ruth in Adelaide, both at work and at home, discussing different topics concerning the Australian society, immigration politics, social work education, the state of the world, politics, social work, globalization etc. I also spent seven days in all in Brisbane, where Luisa Nocella took care of me. There we continued discussing similar issues.

To prepare for the interviews and get a deeper understanding of Australian society and -social work, I interviewed Janetta Pavlovitch, PhD-student and teacher at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia, on these issues before I decided what questions to ask the students, teachers and Director of Studies', and had an ongoing discussion with Adam Jamrozik and Luisa Nocella during my stay in Australia. I also interviewed Kate Martin, PhD-student, tutor and placement officer at School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia.

What I wanted to ascertain in this study is if social workers are taught to convert social problems into personal problems during social work education. I have chosen The Theory of Residualist Conversion of Social Problems as my main theory. In my analysis of the interviews I have focused on how the respondents talk about social work and multiculturalism (and what they choose to talk about). It is the respondents' personal experiences and thoughts I have wanted to examine. Therefore I have not looked into what is taught in the educations, the curricula etc. When going through the interviews I tried to find common features in their answers to be able to analyze the material in a fruitful way. After trying many different ways of categorizing and sorting the interview material I decided to divide it up into four themes; The Social Work Education, The (Social) Work Life, Immigration and Multiculturalism, and The Influence of Society. In the analysis of the interviews I have connected these themes to the Theory of Residualist Conversion of Social Problems to test its hypotheses. I have also used the writings of Charlotte Williams, Malcolm Payne and Neil Thompson in my analysis of the material.

2.1 Literature

I have studied mainly European and Australian literature on culture, multiculturalism, immigration, social work education, social work, social problems and social change. I have also examined relevant government reports, research monographs and related statistics, the history of immigration in both countries, the issues of identities, attitudes and myths. It was difficult to find literature critically examining social work education, and I could not find anything about the particular field this thesis is concerned with.

2.2 Empirical Material

The main empirical part of the thesis consists of qualitative, semi-structured interviews with nine persons involved in social work education, four in Sweden and five in Australia.

The interviews lasted between 60 and 120 minutes, and took place in different locations. The interviews with Inger Farm and Jill Wilson took place in their offices, and so did the interview with Lars B Ohlsson. The interview with John May took place in the University's cafeteria, and the interview with Luisa Nocella took place in her home. The interview with Joanne Duff and Brenda Gillingham took place at Saint Lucia's Campus. The interviews with Björn Lönnberg and Kerstin Lennander took place in their homes. The interview places might have helped the respondents to feel comfortable during the interview, as all of them were interviewed in familiar places. What might have affected the answers is the fact that I interviewed the Australian respondents during the semester, while the Swedish respondents were interviewed during the summer, after the semester had ended. How you experience a course can be different (especially as a student) if you are in the end of the semester or if it has ended. Maybe the fact that the Swedish students were more critical to the education could to some extent be explained by this. It is also a well known phenomena that it is easier to remember things if your in the 'right' environment, in this case, the university environment. But during the interviews I found all the respondents engaged in the issues we were discussing and all of them gave the impression of having thought these issues out before, and I did not notice any difference between the Swedish and the Australian respondents in this aspect.

While interviewing I took notes and after the interviews I read through the notes, made complementary additions and typed it out. I chose not to use a tape recorder, because listening to recordings and transcribing the interviews is very time consuming and I considered I did not have that time. This is the reason why I use summaries of the interviews and no quotations. I am aware of me taking notes during the interviews might have affected my concentration and that some information might have gotten lost. But I still think the interviews went well, the respondents won time to think while waiting for me to finish writing, I felt I got a good contact with all the respondents during the interviews, and I believe I caught the essence of the respondents' views and thoughts in my notes.

In social research it is important to try to understand the reality from different perspectives. One has to try to grasp how other people view and experience reality. Rosmari Eliasson (1995) implies that it is easier to understand a perspective that is closer to oneself, for example in terms of age and experience (p 27). According to Eliasson it would be easier for me to understand the students, especially the Swedish students, since their perspective is closer to me as a person. To get a better understanding of the Australian respondents I made two pre-interviews with two Australian PhD students in social work, who were also teaching/tutoring undergraduate students, and who are engaged in the issues which are dealt with in this thesis. Since I have been interested in these issues for some time I have also read and discussed it quite a deal with different persons in Sweden and Australia. During the interviews I tried to be open-minded and ask the respondents what they meant if I was not sure, so I think I was able to catch the respondents perspectives in a satisfactory way.

The fact that five of the respondents are Australians and four are Swedish like me, may have influenced the answers I received. The Swedish respondent may have assumed that I understood what they were saying, while the Australian respondents may have explained their views more thoroughly.

Since the time for writing this thesis was limited I was only able to make nine interviews. It is important to be aware of that the respondents answers is their own thoughts and experiences and should be seen as examples of how students, teachers and Directors of Studies experience social work education. As well as their views do not represent the 'objective' reality, my interpretation and analysis

of the interviews and theories is influenced by my own values and experiences. But as I chose a qualitative way of conduct in this study, I do not view this subjectivity as a problem as it is inevitable, objectivity is an impossibility (as there is no objective reality). What is important is to be aware of this, and to be open to other perspectives and ways of thinking. But still, the respondents have different but central positions in the social work educations, and in particular what the teachers and Directors of Studies' think and say, have great influence on the social work educations. So I do believe the results of this research are generalizable in the way that they illustrate what different attitudes and practices that prevail in social work educations.

It is difficult to know whether the students who I interviewed held views that are representative for most of the social work students, or if they differ much from the 'average' student. To get a grasp of this, I asked them if they thought the other students agreed with them or not.

The Australian students, Brenda and Joanne, said they thought their views are widely shared. Joanne said her class is a very concentrated group and have been educated to these views and that people who do not hold these views are uneducated.

The Swedish students related to this question in different ways. Björn said that some students share his views, quite a few. The others have an insufficient analytical capacity because of shortcomings in the education. Kerstin said well-off middle class people who study social work do not have the same views as she does and thought they will have a hard time when they get out.

The way the interview questions were formulated may also have affected their answers. To avoid affecting the respondents answers in a certain way, I chose questions that are wide and let the respondents interpret them themselves.

My interviews were based on a flexible model. They were semi-structured and I used an interview guide (appendix 1), that had different topics. Semi-structured interviews have predetermined questions, which can, however, be altered during the interview. Some questions were therefore omitted if they seemed unnecessary, while other questions were added (Robson 2002, p 270).

2.3 The Selection Procedure

To investigate what happens in the social work education, I decided to compare two social work educations, one in Sweden and one in Australia. Both countries have a relatively high intake of immigrants and are both committed to a policy of 'multiculturalism', although with different approaches to that policy.

I have chosen a social work education in Brisbane (St Lucia Campus), Australia and one in Lund, Sweden, to compare similarities and differences. Both educations give courses on multicultural issues, and the students and teachers chosen are all participating in these courses. I have examined the (different) views about social work, social work education and multiculturalism among students, teachers/coordinators, and Directors of Studies in social work education.

The respondents are all involved in social work education but have different experiences and views of the education and of social work. This is partly because their different roles as student, teacher or Director of Studies and all that this bring about. The reason why I chose to interview students, teachers/coordinators and the Director of Studies is that I thought that it would be interesting to see if their different roles influenced the way they responded to my questions. Their different roles also give them specific knowledge about the education that the others do not have and that is of interest in this study.

I contacted and interviewed the Director of Studies, Jill Wilson (in Australia) and Inger Farm (in Sweden), the coordinators of the 'multicultural' courses, Luisa Nocella (in Australia) and Lars B

Ohlsson (in Sweden), and a social work teacher in Australia, John May, to 'fill up' for the Australian Director of Studies who did not have time to answer all questions. Erika Petersson, student at the 'multicultural course' in Sweden, and Luisa Nocella asked the students in 'their' classes if they had time and were interested in participating. Two Australian students, Brenda Gillingham and Joanne Duff, and two Swedish students, Kerstin Lennander and Björn Lönnberg, volunteered and were interviewed.

A specific problem when choosing the respondents, and what might be a bit confusing to the reader, is that one of the brains behind *the Theory of Residualist Conversion*, Luisa Nocella, is also one of my respondents. It might seem obvious that she has all the 'right' answers. On the other hand, it is interesting to see how one of the authors of the book I use as theoretical framework, answers to my questions compared to the other respondents. This says something about if I asked the 'right' questions, i.e. if the thesis could be considered valid. And even though she is one of the authors, she is also teaching and responsible for this course on multicultural issues, and that is the main reason why I wanted her as one of the respondents. In my view, the fact that she has, together with Adam Jamrozik, written *The Sociology of Social Problems*, does not disqualify her as a respondent, although it sometimes, above all in the analysis, become a bit odd to compare what she says in the interviews with what she has written in their book.

3. Previous Research

In this chapter my aim is to present relevant research on social work education, although the sources are meagre, to say the least. I have had difficulties in finding relevant literature concerning social work education, and to my knowledge, there have not been made any qualitative comparative study on social work education. Some authors mentions comparative studies of social work education concerning multicultural/minority issues, but I have not been able to get hold of any of them.

Charlotte Williams (2002) mentions one survey committed by the Council of Europe in 1994 of twenty-seven countries across Europe that looked at 'the human right dimension and minority issues' in social work education and professional practices. In this survey they found a widespread lack of explicit attention to these issues, lack of appropriate study materials, low involvement of minority ethnic people as tutors or students and a social work education that is fundamentally ethnocentric. Healy's work (1988, 1992 and 1995) on the internationalising of social work educational courses world wide comes to a similar conclusion (p 212).

Kate Martin (1998) has written a thesis on social work and social work education, *The Social Work Dilemma; Individual or Society*, where she argues that social work education trains the students what to think and how to practice rather than providing them with an education which allows them opportunities to critically question and challenge the practice of social work. Although social work education involves subjects which focus on macro issues to highlight the political nature of social work practice, these subjects are not incorporated into subjects which focus on social work practice. As a result, the link between the political, economical and social structures and their effect on the lives of people, are not made. (p 31) Students receive an education whereby problems are defined as belonging to the psychological makeup of the individuals, and methods of intervention offered teach students how to communicate at an individual level without moving to any form of collective action. Martin refers to Fook's study (1991) on social work curriculum in Australia, who found that casework was a strong component of social work education, and that social and environmental elements of social work practice were being neglected. (p 33).

Martin also brings up Ife (1997), who says that within most social work placements undertaken, students come to a great understanding of the agency's policies and practices, and are able to work with clients on an individual level, but unfortunately, few are encouraged to develop a critical approach towards the agency and its practices (p 35). This uncritical approach to agency practice is a worrying feature of social work practice, in Martin's point of view. If students are not taught within their education how to develop a critical approach to practice, then it is hard to see how they will develop this once they begin their working life.

Martin points out that the division between social worker and the ones they are working with makes it difficult for social work students to gain an understanding of how these issues which affect people's lives are caused by the political, economical and social structures of society, which in turn call for intervention at this level. (p 37) Social work education needs to educate students into being able to acknowledge that the problems and issues faced by those whom it assist are caused primarily by the inequalities in social, political and economical structures of society, and not by any individual flaw within people. (p 40)

Martin's argumentation is influenced by radical social work theory, and is similar to what Jamrozik & Nocella bring up in '*The Sociology of Social Problems*'.

Martin's thesis and the surveys of social work education show a social work education that individualize social problems and is ethnocentric in its foundations, and seem to confirm the Theory of Residualist Conversion, drawn up by Jamrozik & Nocella. In the next chapter, this theory, as well as others thoughts on social work education and multiculturalism, will be more fully presented.

4. Theory

In this thesis I have chosen to use Jamrozik & Nocella's book *The Sociology of Social Problems* and *the Theory of Residualist Conversion* presented in their book, as my theoretical basis. I have also used the writings of Malcolm Payne, Neil Thompson and Charlotte Williams. The reason why I chose these five authors, is that they all have a critical approach to social work practice and -education, they all discuss different aspects of multiculturalism in relation to social work, and that their ideas are, in my opinion, very inspiring and thought-provoking.

4.1 How Social Problems are Transformed into Personal Problems

Jamrozik's & Nocella's main theoretical assumption in *The Sociology of Social Problems* (1998) is that the so-called pathological conditions that are usually referred to as social problems, logically emerge from dominant values, interests and corresponding goals desired in society (p 5). The dominant structure of power in society is preserved by mechanisms that makes it possible to convert problems in the public sphere, i.e. social problems, into a 'residue' in the form of personal problems of the negatively affected populations. The 'residue' is then controlled by intervention methods, performed by social workers and other helping professions, that help the affected population to adjust to their situation. The power structure in society is in turn legitimated by the obedience of the affected population, by demonstrating that the structure and its organization have the means and methods to control the 'negative residue' without any improper disturbance to the social order (p 204).

Jamrozik & Nocella describes how the perception of, interpretation of, and methods of intervention in social problems are influenced by political considerations of governments and of dominant interests in society. Potentially effective solutions might not be taken because they may create other problems

more threatening to the existing structural arrangements than the original problems themselves. Therefore, social problems need to be perceived in the framework of society's structure of power. This structure can be seen as an interrelated three-level activity of social organisation: political, administrative and operational. In this perspective, the activities that take place at one level of the structure are perceived as a form of social action that affects the actions at the other two levels. Social problems may emerge at any or all of the three levels, and the intervention methods may also be directed at the relevant level or levels. However, the perception of social problems is different at each level. Consequently, any remedial measures devised to control, alleviate or solve the problem will also be different at each level (p 9f).

In the **political/social sphere**, social problems arise as a 'negative residue' from pursuit of dominant values and interests, and the methods of intervention are structural change, legislation, and allocation of resources.

In the **administrative sphere**, problems are converted into technical problems for administrative attention. The methods of intervention on this level are applied research and use of technical expertise.

In the **operative sphere**, problems are converted into personal problems of the affected population, and the methods of intervention are personal intervention (e.g counselling, therapy, surveillance) by helping professions, such as social workers (p 50).

Different political and social influences come into play at each level. These differences often result in incompatible orientations, interests and interpretations of given policies.

Activities at the operative level are the most visible, so the translation of social problems into problems of individuals or certain social groupings means a fundamental shift in perception from social to personal and from collective to individual.(p 53).

According to Jamrozik & Nocella, the intervention methods in social work are largely driven by what may be called 'practice theory' or 'practice wisdom'. Practice wisdom is the attitude a person develops in an organizational environment under the influence of the organization's internal culture, dominant values and history. It is a form of 'theory' that guides the activity of the organization and that is constantly reinforced by fulfilled expectations or, rather more often, by self-fulfilling prophecies. Practice wisdom is particularly prevalent among occupations employed in human services whose intervention methods have a weak theoretical base, and whose evaluation criteria for the effectiveness of the service provided are difficult to establish (p 56). Social work is the foremost profession engaged in services aimed to solve, attenuate or control social problems. It is also an occupation that claims professional status but that operates with a weak theoretical base. There are also views among social workers that the social sciences and the theories they generate are of little value to the field of social work practice, which (it is argued) takes place in the 'real world'. Because the methods of service delivery in social work are highly individualistic and person-focused, the social perspective tends to disappear in practice. Practice theory or practice wisdom then takes over. The potential of practice wisdom to contribute to the enhancement of knowledge in social work is limited, especially as it tends to be an unrecorded 'personal knowledge' or 'practice folklore', known to the individual or passed around through word of mouth, but not subjected to any evaluations. Practice wisdom has little to offer in terms of solving or reducing problems, it rather tends to serve as a means of legitimating the social problems that society or its government are unwilling or incapable of solving. In effect, practice wisdom is a conservative force, and its use by social workers makes social work a conservative profession (p 58).

Jamrozik & Nocella aim in their book to demonstrate the value of sociology to intervention methods practiced by the 'helping professions' such as social work. At present, the input of societal knowledge into the education curricula of these professions is either minimal or non-existent. If there is some

sociological input, it is usually limited to the presentation of certain theories at a level of abstraction that makes it difficult for students to see the theories' relevance or usefulness in relation to professional practice. The gap between theory and practice seems to remain as large as ever, Jamrozik & Nocella argue, continuing the difficulties of applying theories formulated at the macro-level to problems encountered by the helping professions at the level of individuals or small social groupings (p 9). Jamrozik & Nocella stress that social workers and other professionals must abandon the remedial mode and their focus on the preservation of the informal structures in society. This paradigm shift would first require a shift at the level of theorizing and teaching in professional courses. Jamrozik & Nocella claim that the trend in the educational curricula of the helping professions, especially in social work, is to focus on the development of more effective methods of intervention in social problems at the operative level, where the problems are perceived as personal pathologies (p 102). A better use of the social sciences, especially sociology, would widen social workers' perspectives on social phenomena, thus enabling them to develop intervention methods that have much greater effectiveness than the current individualistic methods, and to participate in the analysis of (and thus influence) social and economic policy. It would also enable them to better identify the sources of the problems their clients encounter, and communicate this knowledge to society through reports, literature and public debate, according to Jamrozik & Nocella (p 213). In the currently dominant political and economic climate it will not be easy, but such a climate will not remain forever because the human cost it create will soon become too great for society to bear. Sociologist and the helping professions must speed up the process of change (p 218f). Jamrozik & Nocella points out that the helping professions have become an integrated part of the formal social control structure. These professions exercise considerable power over the subjects of their attention, but this power tends to be anarchic and unpredictable. The power of the helping professionals lies in their authoritative knowledge of identification, definition, interpretation and attempted solutions of social problems. But a problem is that they often lack awareness or deny this power (p 75). The most significant effect of the helping professions' involvement in the formal structure of social control is the legitimation of the dominant power structure. Still, the social workers believe the work they do helps the poor and the disadvantaged, and reduce the inequalities of the system, which social workers, in reality, serve to legitimate, Jamrozik & Nocella argue (p 212).

Jamrozik & Nocella discuss the kinds of social problems that are created by the contemporary industrialized 'free' market society, and points out that we need to be conscious that the market is the dominant force. The market demonstrates success by ever-greater and more diverse consumption, while at the same time an increasing number of people become excluded from the market because of their inability to pay. It is this 'human residue' of the market economy that the state expects the helping professions to control through specialized knowledge and skills. This prevents the residue from becoming too troublesome, and minimize the need for open coercion (p 215f). In the coming years, if the present trends in world politics and economy continue, the pressure of the helping professions to play a controlling, remedial and legitimating role will increase. With the likely continued increase in social inequalities, social workers will be expected to contain the resentment of the 'surplus population', the 'human residue', or 'underclass', and act as instruments of social control through methods of 'helpful' intervention and surveillance (p 213).

Jamrozik & Nocella bring up cultural diversity as an issue that acquires the characteristics of a social problem in many contemporary societies. The problem may be manifest simply in the differences in certain attitudes, habits or pursuits, which leads to communication difficulties and tension in some public institutions. However, the problem may also explode into violence and open warfare. This happens when one ethnic or cultural group either remains or seeks to become dominant in political and

social institutions through its command over material resources in business, industry, employment access, and/or the culture of the society, Jamrozik & Nocella explain. A social problem becomes manifest in the conflict between the dominant and the dominated, where each side perceives a threat from the other in regard to their own relative position in society. Social conflicts of this nature are multidimensional, in that they may include political, economic, religious or language issues, and in a broader perspective may be perceived as cultural (p 107ff).

Jamrozik & Nocella point out that ethnic and cultural diversity have a potential for creating a socially uniting society under the umbrella of multiculturalism. The perceived threat in such diversity is the threat of social change, through which the dominance and advantages of one group might be reduced in relation to those of other ethnic and cultural groups.

Jamrozik & Nocella talk about if the multicultural nature of Australia is a social problem and how this, in that case, manifests itself and what the effects are. They claim that one manifestation is 'Australia's symbolic universe', that consists of a core of social institutions and corresponding beliefs, values and interests inherited from colonial times, which have remained largely monocultural both in structure and in personnel. Particularly those from non-English speaking backgrounds are not well represented in the government. This is equally so in parliamentary representation, in statutory bodies, and in the public service generally. The structure of political and cultural power is largely monocultural, being surrounded by a periphery of multicultural population. According to Jamrozik & Nocella, the method of intervention in the (perceived) social problem of multiculturalism is the conversion of its intrinsically political nature into technical problems. (s 110f).

4.2 Racist Social Work -and its Cure

Neil Thompson (1997) focuses on anti-discriminatory social work practice, and the lack of knowledge about this in social work and social work education. He points out that one very clear implication to be drawn from the literature on racism and social work is that traditional social work has seriously neglected the racial dimension of social problems and the impact of racism on ethnic minorities.

Thompson claims that it even goes beyond this to the point where social work practice is itself racist, whether deliberately or unwittingly. Thompson thinks Rooney (1980) captures this point well. He says 'it is hard to accept that in the work we do daily, with its humanitarian and Christian ethics, we may be part of a process of institutionalised racism. But hard though that may be, it is too easy to dissociate ourselves in clear conscience from the part that we play in the subtle, sophisticated strategies of racial discrimination, which despite apparent well-meaning and good intent at every level, still leaves black worse off by the time the process works its way through'.

Thompson calls attention to that at one level, it is hard to believe that 'nice people' such as social workers could contribute so strongly to discrimination and oppression. However, at another level social workers are part of a wider framework which reflects power and privilege differences and which depend on social division. This brings us to the point that if you're not part of the solution, you are part of the problem, Thompson argues. When we become aware of the racism inherent in the culture and institutions of social work, our own actions will either reflect, reinforce and strengthen such racism, or may go at least some small way towards challenging and undermining it. There can be no neutral territory, according to Thompson (p 65f).

Thompson emphasises that the first step towards anti-racism is to recognize, and eradicate, our own racism. This is an acknowledgement of the structural and cultural influences on our behaviour and attitudes. He says anti-racist social work must be premised on more than just good intentions. There must be a real commitment to tackle these difficult and painful issues. Combating racism includes challenging racist actions or attitudes in others, and creating anti-racist alliances. From a collective position it is then possible to tackle racist structures and institutional practices in social work. But anti-discriminatory practice is not only the responsibility of practitioners but also of managers and

educators, Thompson emphasizes. Managers have a role to play in setting an appropriate agenda, supporting staff in establishing and maintaining anti-racist social work and so on. Similarly, social work educators have a crucial role to play in helping social workers and social work students to understand the nature of racist oppression and to begin to develop strategies for combating it, according to Thompson. Anti-racism should be a fundamental dimension of social work and permeate policy, practice, management and training rather than being an optional extra, Thompson stresses (p 80 ff).

4.3 The Relativity of Social Work

In his well renowned book, *Modern Social Work Theory* (1997), Malcolm Payne says that what is considered to be a client, a social worker or social work differs from country to country and depend on the viewpoint and perspective society and the social worker take. Is the aim of social work for example to achieve social change on an individual basis or to change society as a whole to achieve equality between different groups? Is it in the interest of the individual, different groups or the society? Depending on the perspective, theories and methods are chosen to justify and define social work and whom to consider as clients. Social work is complex and varies in different cultures and can only be understood in its social and cultural context. Theories about social work must be products of the context in which they arise. Payne means that most theories on social work developed in Christian or Jewish societies in the democratic Western countries. According to Payne this involves a problem as the cultural differences between different countries are important to take into consideration when deciding a theory's usefulness. The theories developed in the Western world may be useless in countries that emphasize other cultural values in society and where another religion and family values prevail. Different societies also confront different problems. (p 1-25) Value and cultural bases of different societies may be incompatible with assumptions and prescriptions within Western social work. Western social work is based on importance of the individual, with the kindred concept of individual rights. These individualistic assumptions would not hold true in societies, that give importance to interdependence within families and respect for authority. Here, the responsibilities of being part of a network of family relationships are central. So for example, Western assumptions that the aim of work with young people is to prepare them for interdependence, might be inappropriate. Payne refers to Canda who found out in her study that there is a range of personal and social objectives which influence ethnic minorities in Western societies but might usefully influence Western thought more. Examples are the effort of improving oneself alongside seeking to help others, and the value of cultivating one's mind and thoughts for the benefit of society (p 7f). There are also concerns about cultural imperialism and the history of oppressive colonialism when discussing social work theory and practice. The countries where most social work ideas come from achieved economic development through exploitative power over countries which remain poor. Western ideas gain influence because poor countries have had their own cultures and systems destroyed by colonial influence (p 10). But Payne also emphasizes that these conflicts and difficulties about transferring ideas internationally in social work are not a conflict of two inconsistent blocs of ideas. These days most countries are ethnically and culturally pluralist and must therefore create services and practice methods to meet needs among among different ethnic and cultural groups. Ideas from non-Western countries may gain influence as Western countries become sensitive to minorities' needs, and there is evidence from different countries around the world that useful mutual exchange can be achieved, Payne points out (p 11f).

4.4 An All-Inclusive Social Work Education?

In *Towards an emancipatory pedagogy? Social work education for a multicultural, multi-ethnic Europe*, Charlotte Williams (2002) discuss social work education in Europe from a multicultural, multi-ethnic perspective. She brings up a survey committed by the Council of Europe in 1994 of twenty-seven countries across Europe that looked at 'the human right dimension and minority issues' in education and professional practices. In this survey they found a widespread lack of explicit attention to these issues, lack of appropriate study materials, low involvement of minority ethnic people as tutors or students and a social work education that is fundamentally ethnocentric. Healy's work (1988, 1992 and 1995) on the internationalising of social work educational courses world wide comes to a similar conclusion, says Williams. This inevitably raises questions as to why educational institutions have been very slow to consider the social and cultural plurality of society and why increased attention is being paid to these issues now. At one level the answer to these questions lie in the different immigration histories of various European countries, in their differing social policies and not least in the nature of and organization of social work itself. However, it may equally lie something of the fundamental ambivalence of Europe to its minorities and an unquestioning approach to the eurocentric discourses of Europe, Williams argues (p 212).

According to Williams, oppressed minorities will not be appropriately serviced simply by developing students' understanding of cultural needs. A broader approach to education is required, an education that works towards the liberation of oppressed groups. Williams suggests some principles for social work education:

- Recognition of the way in which welfare can reproduce and construct major social divisions and maintain the stigmatized position of certain groups and foster exclusion.
- A development of the curriculum that involves a critical rereading of the 'knowledge of use' and the theories, models and approaches of social work.
- The preparation of students to reflect critically on their own culture as well as learning from the culture of others.
- Teaching and learning strategies that empower *all* students and strategies for intercultural education that involve *all* staff and permeate *all* knowledge areas.
- Acknowledgement of racism as a pan-European phenomenon that affects the lives of oppressed minorities.
- The development of systematic research and evaluation of approaches in use and their efficacy in preparing students to meet the needs of oppressed communities and for active citizenship.

Williams stresses that the scale of this challenge to the curriculum and the processes of education inevitably produce resistance and fear as this represents real challenges to existing power bases and the status quo. The processes of transformation can be slow and painful and produce conflicts and at times contradictions. Students need to be supported to acknowledge these fears and overcome them in their education towards critical consciousness. Challenging the dominant paradigm of the academy and of the bureaucracy will produce resistance as powerful interests are protected. These conflicts will be reproduced both within and outside the profession as opinions vary as to the role of social work and the role of education (p 225 ff).

4.5 Conclusions

As reasoned in the beginning of this chapter, these five authors illustrates different aspects of social work, social work education and multicultural issues related to social work, and I hope and believe that they will be a useful instrument in the analysis of the interviews. In chapter 5, 'Results and Analysis', I will describe shortly the thoughts of the authors again, divided into four themes ('The Social Work Education', 'The (Social) Work Life', 'Immigration and Multiculturalism' and 'The Influence of Society'), and then connect their ideas to the interview answers.

5. Results and Analysis

In this chapter, the interviews are presented and analysed currently in the text. The basis of the analysis is my theoretical framework, i.e. *The Theory of Residualist Conversion of Social Problems*. I also use the writings of Malcolm Payne, Neil Thompson and Charlotte Williams in the analysis of the interviews. These thoughts and theories are more thoroughly presented in chapter 4.

In able to make difference between the authors and the respondents in the analysis, I use the authors surnames when referring to them, and the first name of the respondents when referring to them.

5.1 The Social Work Education

5.1.1 Theory

According to Jamrozik and Nocella (1998), greater sociological input into the educational curricula of the helping professions, especially social work, has great potential to strengthen the development of intervention methods that have much greater effectiveness than the current individualistic methods. They claim that at present, the input of societal knowledge into the social work education curricula is either minimal or non-existent. If there is some sociological input, it is usually limited to the presentation of certain theories at a level of abstraction that makes it difficult for students to see the theories' relevance or usefulness in applications to professional practice. Jamrozik and Nocella emphasize the relevance and value of sociology to current societal issues and to intervention methods practiced by the social workers.

Payne (1997) points at another problem, namely that most theories on social work developed in Christian or Jewish societies in the democratic Western countries. According to Payne this involves a problem as the cultural differences between different countries are important to take into consideration when deciding a theory's usefulness. The theories developed in the Western world may be useless in countries that emphasize other cultural values in society and where another religion and family values prevail. Different societies also confront different problems.

Furthermore, Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) mean that the gap between theory and practice seems to remain as large as ever, making it difficult to apply theories formulated at the macro-level of social organization to problems encountered by the helping professions at the level of individuals or social groupings.

Jamrozik and Nocella assert that the trend in the educational curricula of the helping professions, especially in social work, is to focus on the development of more efficient and more effective methods of intervention in social problems at the operative level, where the problems are perceived as personal pathologies. And the more successful these professions become in their intervention methods at that level, the more their success serve to legitimize the system of values and resource allocations that produces these pathologies.

Social workers and other professionals must abandon the remedial mode and their focus on the maintenance and reinforcement of the informal structures in society. This paradigm shift would first require a shift at the level of theorizing and teaching in professional courses.

Thompson (1997) also brings this up. He says that social work educators have a crucial role to play by helping students to understand the nature of racist oppression and to begin to develop strategies for combating it. According to Thompson, there is a lack of knowledge about anti-discriminatory social work practice in social work education. He argues that traditional social work has seriously neglected the racial dimension of social problems and the impact of racism on ethnic minority communities. Issues of anti-racism should permeate policy, practice, management and training rather than be 'tagged on' as an additional consideration. Anti-racism should not be an optional extra but rather a fundamental dimension of social work, Thomson argues.

Williams (2002) agrees with that and points out that in a survey of social work education about human rights and minority issues they found a widespread lack of explicit attention to these issues and a social work education that is fundamentally ethnocentric.

According to Williams, oppressed minorities will not be appropriately serviced simply by developing students' understanding of cultural needs. A broader approach to education is required, an education that works towards the liberation of oppressed groups. Williams suggests some principles for social work education:

- Recognition of the way in which welfare can reproduce and construct major social divisions and maintain the stigmatized position of certain groups and foster exclusion.
- A development of the curriculum that involves a critical rereading of the 'knowledge of use' and the theories, models and approaches of social work.
- The preparation of students to reflect critically on their own culture as well as learning from the culture of others.
- Teaching and learning strategies that empower *all* students and strategies for intercultural education that involve *all* staff and permeate *all* knowledge areas.
- Acknowledgement of racism as a pan-European phenomenon that affects the lives of oppressed minorities.
- The development of systematic research and evaluation of approaches in use and their efficacy in preparing students to meet the needs of oppressed communities and for active citizenship.

Williams stresses that the scale of this challenge to the curriculum and the processes of education inevitably produce resistance and fear as this represents real challenges to existing power bases and the status quo. Students need to be supported to acknowledge these fears and overcome them in their education towards critical consciousness.

5.1.2 Analysis of the Interviews

- The importance of sociology;

Jamrozik & Nocella emphasize the importance of sociology in social work education.

The only one who explicitly mentions sociology and the value of it is Lars, who agrees with the authors about the necessity of a sociological input in social work education.

Lars says he wants to teach the students how to think sociologically, to widen their perspectives, to step outside themselves and their own little world. That they should learn to understand how the society and the individual work in the post-modern world. The Post-modern discussion permeates all research about society, so if you are to educate people the educative institutions must make this discussion

available, according to Lars. Lars focuses on what he want the students to learn and does not say anything about a lack of sociology in the education.

A reasonable explanation of why Lars mentions sociology and the others do not, is that he teaches sociology and therefore, when asked what he wants the students to learn, naturally answers he want them to learn about sociology (among other things). And also, the other respondents talk about the importance of changing and understanding society, which could be interpreted as a confirmation of the importance of sociology.

- The multicultural inputs in the educations;

If we relate the tendency in social work educations to focus on interventions in social problems at the operative level, as Jamrozik & Nocella claim, to the issue of multiculturalism, the conclusion is that the student in a monocultural, ethnocentric education, would learn, implicitly and explicitly, to convert social problems related to multiculturalism into technical or individual problems. According to Williams the social work education is fundamentally ethnocentric, and Thompson says that knowledge about anti-discriminatory social work practice is lacking in social work education. Both Williams and Thompson stress the importance of intercultural/anti-racist issues to permeate all aspects of the education.

So what do the respondents have to say about this, is 'their' education dealing with multicultural issues, in what way, why or why not.

John, Luisa and Lars agree that this is what happens, that the education is ethnocentric and individualize social problems, but that they are fighting against this. They all think more 'multicultural knowledge' is needed, and Lars and Luisa say that students also have asked for more. John talks mainly about shortcomings in the education, while Luisa focuses on what the students need to learn to avoid racist/oppressive practices. Lars emphasize the importance of integrating multiculturalism in all courses.

***John** claims the education is uniform, using mainstream literature from Anglo-Saxon countries, while the student group is multicultural. The staff isn't multicultural either. He means that the curriculum has failed completely to embrace and value different cultures, and that the subject is marginalized. Social work in Australia and the social work education in this school are traditionalistic, according to John, with focus on the individual, not the structures. The pathologizing of individuals is a big problem. John has fought big battles to get social policy and 'working with volunteers' into the curriculum.*

***Luisa** emphasizes the importance of getting students to challenge the cultural dominant perspective in social work, but this is, according to her, a difficult task after three years of monocultural studies. She says that the course intends to challenge students and it does, some students have said to her that when they came to the course thinking they were not racists but realizing during the course that they were. Furthermore she says that students will practice in monocultural institutions, and even if students have incorporated multiculturalism, they will be bound into the monocultural institution so the students must learn to fight these structures. Luisa means that the students need to acknowledge the extent to which they operate from a culturally dominant position, and expand their practices to be more fitting and appropriate in working with people with a non Anglo-Saxon origin.*

According to Luisa, many students think that the 'Human Services in a Multicultural Society' course is important but comes too late in the education, that they are unprepared and ill equipped to work in a multicultural environment. They think they don't learn enough about intervention methods and what

methods to use in different situations, that the course helps but that it's not enough. Other students think that it's not their field.

Lars says the problem is that the education is not upgraded to what the society looks like today, and that the education is patriarchal. It is important not to get stuck in learning about immigrants, ethnicity etc, but to have a broad perspective connected to changes in society. Multiculturalism issues are getting more and more attention though, people realize that something is missing. Lars has wanted to include this perspective for a long time, and students and some teachers have asked for it too. He stresses that gender and multicultural issues should permeate everything, it is not enough to have special courses in these subjects and go on with the rest as usual.

Jill and Inger think that it is difficult to integrate multicultural issues in the education because of student and/or teachers are lacking interest in these questions. This is an aspect of the resistance to change, as Williams talks about, among teachers, students and themselves. They both think that more inputs on multicultural issues are needed, but are quite satisfied with how it looks. They are the only ones' who mentions the importance of the students wishes and needs, and that the education has to meet these demands.

Jill says that the education does not prepare the student for working in a multicultural society as well as it could but we do a fairly good job, it is difficult if the students aren't interested, and they don't have enough knowledge about different cultures. Learning a new language would sensitize the students, there is a bias in monolingualism. The education should help students to really understand effects of culture and teach them effective ways of how to work with multiculturalism. She explains that field coordinators are asked to pay attention to multicultural issues, but they don't think it is important as 'In Australia everybody is different'. It is hard to get it together if they are not engaged, so it is much up to the student. Many students go their own way and it is difficult to force them into learning and doing certain things, says Jill. The new curriculum is meant to give students more choices.

Inger means that if the students use everything that the education has to give, it prepares them for working in a multicultural society. But it is much up to the student to take an active part in what is going on, political discussions, lectures etc. Inger has tried to get this perspective in earlier, but it is hard to find relevant and good literature. There are not much interest in these issues among teachers, she thinks that would have made it easier as they could have inspired each other then. Inger explains that this new course 'Social Work with Focus on Culture and Integration' started in spring 2001, and more of this is still needed but there's sluggishness in the organization. Before they had 'immigration-knowledge' -history of immigration, how to work with interpreter etc. Inger taught this subject, and no other teacher were particularly interested then. This course was withdrawn in 1990, it was said that it should be integrated in all courses but in reality it disappeared, according to Inger. The education must be so broad that it can meet different needs and wishes from the students.

In my opinion, Inger and Jill underestimate or deny their power and importance in affecting the shaping of the education, the curricula and its implementation. As both educations have been criticized of not having enough inputs to students about multiculturalism (in Australia by AASW, Australian Association of Social Workers, in 1998, and in Sweden by HSV, Högskoleverket, in 2003), this is indeed an important issue that should be paid greater importance by the management of the educations, which the Directors of Studies' are part of.

Both Joanne and Brenda think the education has made them more aware about multicultural issues and how to work in a multicultural society, though Joanne says that more is needed. Björn believes the students are well prepared for working in a multicultural society, and that the education does not need any adjustment to the multicultural society. According to Payne, Williams and Thompson this is not true, they claim that multicultural issues must permeate the education, and that many theories and practices used are ethnocentric and even racist. Kerstin, on the other hand, do not think the students know enough about multicultural issues and wants a focus on the bigger sociological context.

*According to **Joanne**, the education has prepared her how to deal with all sorts of differences, and this is applicable on all sorts of groups, ethnic and cultural groups for example, she says. She has 'Human Services in a Multicultural Society' course. Joanne thinks there should be more courses like that, and that it should have come earlier, before the placement.*

***Brenda** thinks they have some elements of multicultural aspects in all courses, about awareness and respectfulness. They have brought out the focus on multiculturalism and made her more conscious about these issues.*

***Björn** says they have discussed cultures, group processes etc during the 'Social Work with Focus on Culture and Integration'-course, and he thinks they are well prepared to work in a multicultural environment but could be better. But according to Björn, the education does not have to be adjusted to the multicultural society, as there have always existed different cultures in society. The theories they have learnt in psychology, sociology etc will help them as social workers in the multicultural society, Björn thinks. He believes that if they are prepared in education to meet people with different needs, cultures, opportunities, they are capable of treating everybody. The needs are quite similar, in Björn's point of view.*

*According to **Kerstin**, the education prepares for working in a multicultural society. The 'Social Work with Focus on Culture and Integration'-course should be compulsory, she says, otherwise it is people already gone on the subject that choose that course. It is not 'immigrant-knowledge' that is needed she points out, but the bigger sociological context.*

It is interesting that the teachers and students have very different views of the education in this aspect, the teachers are very critical while the students, except for Kerstin, are quite satisfied with the multicultural input. As mentioned earlier, both educations have been criticised for the lack of multicultural inputs. The question is if this is a sign of failure (or success, depending on what you aim for), that the students learn not to take these issues too seriously, and therefore are content with the little knowledge gained. Maybe this is due to a lack of interest among students about these issues, as Inger and Jill claim. Williams stresses that it is not enough to develop the students' understanding of cultural need, but that an education that work towards the liberation of oppressed groups is required. It might be that the teachers want this liberating education, while the student and Directors of Studies are satisfied with the first step, to learn about cultural needs. Maybe you have to learn more about multicultural issues to become aware of its' importance. The question is then who is responsible of the content of the education, who has the power to change it and implement it? If the management of the social work educations do not take or recognize this responsibility, it is not surprising that the educations continue by habit to be traditionalistic and ethnocentric. Maybe it is the same as in other social work practice, that the social workers are not aware of or deny their power, as Jamrozik & Nocella argue. This will make it difficult to create an anti-oppressive, critically reflexive education.

- Critical approach in the education;

To be able to handle the power intrinsic in professional social work, and use this power not to adjust people to oppressive structures but instead changing these structures, self awareness (or professional awareness) and critical reflection are of great importance. A connection between theoretical and practical knowledge is also essential, many of the authors emphasize. Williams says that the social work education must recognize the way social work can construct major social divisions and foster exclusion. A critical rereading of the 'knowledge of use' and the theories and models used and taught in education, and preparing the students to reflect critically on their own culture as well as learning from the culture of others is also essential, according to Williams.

What do the respondents say about self awareness and critical thinking, do the students learn this during the education? And do the students learn how to apply (sociological) theories in practical social work and critically examine theories and methods used?

The teachers and Director of Studies do not talk so much about what the students learn, but mostly what they want the students to learn (hopefully, but not necessary the same thing). They all stress the importance of understanding the society and social work. The teachers focus mainly on self-reflection, the inherent problems of social work and how to resist the structures and really help the clients, which implies an understanding of how to 'practice' sociological theories. The Director of Studies want to give the students a broad perspective and do not mention any dilemmas of social work practice.

***John** wants the students to learn what it means to be human, compassionate, politically active and non-judgmental. They need to learn not to do things for people, but to be there for them and use their knowledge to help people go where they want to go. The students must realize that they should not adjust people to the system, but change the system to fit the people, stresses John.*

***Luisa** argues that the education should encourage the students to reflect on their views of social work, the purpose of social work, the fact that they are steeped in the ideology of the dominant culture and what implications it has for the relation between the client and the social worker. The students also need to reflect on what the consequences of their state-sanctioned authority and the class differences between client-social worker are.*

***Lars** wants the students to become aware and analytical. He wants to create awareness about the intrinsic problems of social work, but also possibilities and space of action. To find modes of action that are possible and that help the people you intend to help. It is important to discuss moral and ethics, practical knowledge you can learn later. There is a conflict among students about what to focus on though, Lars mentions.*

***Jill** wants the students to reflect on what they are doing, become professional, acquire skills, engage in learning, make them engaged in core issues of social work, and acquire a strong sense of social justice.*

***Inger** says that the most important is that the students get a grasp of the greater whole, an overall view of society and how it works. A firm ground so they feel capable of working with a little of everything. She wants the students to always ask questions and not be prejudiced or speculate too much. Nobody really know what a social worker needs to know, it is much up to the student, the education is just a basis, says Inger.*

None of the Swedish students think the education has a critical viewpoint. They both bring up the need of discussions in education to promote critical thinking, and acknowledge the lack of a connection between (sociological) theories and practical social work as a problem.

According to Björn, the education is 'theoretically critical', they learn to question theories, but not to question the way social work is carried out. He says they read about criticism of society and critical sociological theories when studied sociology, but there were no discussions and the lectures were not critical really, more about what is 'good' and 'right'. During the field practice in India, they had a lot of such discussions though, because of the Indian supervisor who thought this was important. When studying 'Social Work with Focus on Culture and Integration' there were some discussions and literature on this issue too, but not enough. Björn emphasizes the importance of discussions to promote critical thinking, he says they have had discussion about the social worker's role but that it has been more about how to relate to he clients and not much about how to relate to society and its structures.

Kerstin says there is not any critical standpoint in education, but that the sociology course was a bit critical, and the end of the social work course. She tells they had no contact with the school during field practice, and no discussion about how social work is carried out and it is consequences. If you haven't been thinking that much before you might swallow what is taught uncritically. Kerstin says more room for discussions in the education is needed. There are many competent persons that could come and teach, but there is a resistance to this among the school staff, Kerstin claims.

The Australian students, on the other hand, are more content with their education. They both think the education has changed their view of society and that their critical thinking have developed.

Joanne says that education has made her to a different person. Before she was unaware of social issues and politics, and did not't care much about disadvantaged people. Her whole philosophy and lifestyle have changed, she is questioning things now, and critically analyze everything. She thinks it is a lot of room in the education and that the lecturers are open-minded. According to her, there is a lot of encouragement from the teachers to challenge what they experienced during the placement and it is a good thing to come back after placement and critically examine what they did there.

Brenda's answers are similar to Joanne's. She says that education definitely has changed her way of thinking, and that she now tries to see the world through other persons eyes, she has become more cynical and skeptical about the Government, bigger businesses, globalization etc. She is questioning more now, and tries to see the motives behind policies and politics. She thinks she has gained a greater awareness and an increased sensitivity during the education. In Brenda's view, the school allows a critical approach and teaches the students to reflect on themselves.

The Australian education seem to have succeeded to a greater extent to encourage critical thinking and to connect theory to practice. While Kerstin bring up the lack of critical discussion and that there was no contact with the school during the field practice, Joanne says they were encouraged by their teachers to critically examine their field practice experiences. According to the Australian students, their education seem to have, to some extent at least, obtained what Williams points out as important aspects of a non-oppressive social work education.

To use the students field experiences when discussing and critically examine social work practice makes it easier to understand how different theories and methods (or lack of it) effect the way social work is performed, give the discussions a connection with reality, and can help reducing the gap between theory and practice, that according to Jamrozik & Nocella remain as large as ever. But

according to the Swedish student both discussions connected to the field practice, as well as a critical discussions about social work practice in general, are missing. If this is the case, the Swedish education is missing a golden opportunity to connect theory to practice, and to help the students to question and challenge traditional social work.

5.1.3 Summary

This part focuses on the role of social work education and what the authors and respondents have expressed about this. Jamrozik & Nocella emphasize the importance of a sociological input in social work education and claim that there is a gap between theory and practice that need to be bridged over. Payne, Thompson and Williams bring up the problem of an ethnocentric viewpoint, and say that there is a lack of knowledge about anti-discriminatory practice in social work education.

The interviewed teachers say the education is ethnocentric and need to change. They talk about the need of self-reflection among social work students and social workers and of resisting to maintain oppressive structures when working as a social worker.

The Directors of Studies' think it is difficult to integrate multicultural issues in the education, because of lack of interest among teachers and students. They want the students to reflect on what they are doing and to get a broad perspective of society.

The students are quite satisfied with the multicultural input, although it could be better. The Australian students think their education has a critical viewpoint and say that they have examined social work practice critically, while the Swedish students claim the opposite, namely that their education lacks a critical viewpoint and that there is no critical discussion about social work practice.

5.2 The (Social) Work Life

5.2.1 Theory

Jamrozik & Nocella (1998) examine different aspects of social work practice that are presented in the theory chapter. Their main point is that the intervention methods employed by social workers (and other helping professions) convert social problems into the personal problems of the people they serve. Even when there is some acknowledgment of structural or external causes of the problem, intervention remains in these cases at the operative level. The greater the success of the helping professions in carrying out the task of conversion, the less intervention is needed at the administrative and/or political level.

According to Jamrozik & Nocella, social work has become an instrument of the dominant power structure and its policies of economic rationalism, and exercise a considerable power over their 'clients'. The most significant effect of the helping professions' involvement in the formal structure of social control is the legitimation of the dominant power structure. Still, the social workers' believe the work they do helps the poor and the disadvantaged, and reduces the inequalities of the system, which in reality, social workers serve to legitimate. The acknowledgment of this contradiction is the essential first step towards the possibility of change.

Relating this to the multicultural society, Thompson (1997) remarks that traditional social work has seriously neglected the racial dimension of social problems and the impact of racism on ethnic minority communities. It even goes beyond this to the point where social work practice is itself racist. Thompson emphasizes that the first step towards anti-racism is to recognize, and eradicate, our own racism. This is an acknowledgment of the structural and cultural influences on our behavior and attitudes. He says anti-racist social work must be premised on more than just good intentions. There must be a real commitment to tackle some difficult and painful issues. Anti-racism should be a fundamental dimension of social work and permeate policy, practice, management and training, Thompson stresses.

Williams (2002) points at the obstacles of transforming social work practice, and says that challenging the dominant paradigm of the academy and of the bureaucracy will produce resistance as powerful interests are protected. These conflicts will be reproduced both within and outside the profession as opinions vary as to the role of social work and the role of education, Williams argues.

Payne (1997) shows that Western social work is based on importance of the individual, with the kindred concept of individual rights. These individualistic assumptions would not hold true in societies, that give importance to interdependence within families and respect for authority. Here, the responsibilities of being part of a network of family relationships are central. The social workers must take this into consideration when working with people from non-Western cultures, Payne point out.

Jamrozik & Nocella (1998) assert that the power of the helping professionals lies in their authoritative knowledge of identification, definition, interpretation and attempted solutions of social problems. However, the helping professions often lack awareness or acknowledgment of this power, and this is a problem in itself.

According to Jamrozik & Nocella, the intervention methods in social work are largely driven by what may be called 'practice theory' or 'practice wisdom'. Practice wisdom is the attitude a person develops in an organizational environment under the influence of the organization's internal culture, dominant values and history. It is a form of 'theory' that guides the organization's activity and that is constantly reinforced by self-fulfilling prophecies. The authors claim that because the methods of service delivery in social work are highly individualistic and person-focused, the 'social' part tends to disappear in practice. Practice theory or practice wisdom then takes over. Practice wisdom tends to serve as a means of legitimating the social problems that society or its government are unwilling or incapable of solving. And is in effect, a conservative force.

Many social workers believe that the social sciences and the theories they generate are of little value to social work practice, which takes place in the 'real world'.

Jamrozik & Nocella emphasize that the social workers have to widen their perspectives on social phenomena, and abandon the remedial mode and their focus on the maintenance of the power structures in society. And they need to re-assess their role in the social sciences, especially in sociology, and develop effective means of operationalizing these theories in their methods of intervention, and participate in the analysis of (and thus influence) social and economic policy. This would help them to better identify the sources of the problems their clients encounter, and communicate this knowledge to society through reports, literature and public debate.

5.2.2 Analysis of the Interviews

- Problems of social work (and how to solve them);

The respondents express different views about the problems of social work and how you could solve/handle them. All respondents mentions problems at the work places that must have a serious effect of the social work performed. Relating this to the authors' assertions, some of these obstacles could be interpreted as problems arising from converting social problems into personal problems, and/or using the 'wrong' methods i.e. ethnocentric methods or practice wisdom, or resistance at the workplaces to change. Many of the respondents take up that the social worker feel they are not able to help the client the way they want, due to different reasons.

Joanne are one of them. She believes the problems has to do with the /new/ social worker wants to work differently than the way work is performed in the agency and feel she is not heard, there is not

enough funding, people (the clients) do not get the help they need and there is a lot of time wasting. Social workers are seen as martyrs and are not very well respected, and people do not see the need for social workers, according to Joanne. She says the ideal social work is not around, there are clashes between ideal and reality. You have to accept the structures at the work place or protest, and that depend on what you are aiming for.

She does not explicitly mention any solution to the problem but says that the social worker need strength and devotion to stick up with all this.

Kerstin have similar thoughts. She says most people who choose to study social work want to help others, they have visions of a better world. Then they come out to a workplace where there is a tight budget, a big workload and a culture you have to blend in to. You can't help your clients, and it feels meaningless to continue trying.

Kerstin does not either have any real solution to the problem, but says you need a rich spare time not to get burnt out. Supervision is also important.

According to **Inger**, many social workers work so hard that they do not manage to deal with the real problem. They do not have time with structural, preventive work. The work you do is often invisible and it is hard to see results, it is a difficult occupation, says Inger. New social worker know and want so much, but do not get enough support, and are given too many and too difficult tasks. Colleagues work in a certain way, and there is no time for discussion or learning. You see where the problems lie, but are not allowed to do anything about it.

When talking about how to tackle these problems, Inger says new social workers need supervision the first year, that you have to be committed as a social worker, and that it is crucial to discuss a lot with your colleagues.

In **Brenda's** point of view, student become disillusioned at the workplace much because of youth, when they come straight to university from school and then start working without any experience. When your older you know you can't change the world, Brenda says. Often you want more than you can do, and then it is easy to push yourself and do not take care of yourself. The work places often do not have appropriate care taking, according to Brenda. Experience and better care-taking at the work place are Brenda's solutions to the problems.

Björn have a different point of view. He says that social workers start working as idealists but do not have enough time for every client to do a good job, instead it hardly relieves the clients. The solution is to work more structural, change the oppressive structures and solve the problems behind, instead of individualizing the problems.

Lars means there is a gap between education, visions and reality. When the students start working they meet rigid, outdated, inert systems and tired, cynical social workers.

Social work is strongly politicized, according to Lars, and the social workers get caught in moral dilemmas all the time. Lars says you need to have a comprehensive and visionary commitment to cope with this situation, it can be difficult not to adjust and loose your ideals. The most important is to have a broad perspective, and to know how the power structures in society work, how hard it is to resist the structures, and their effect on the individual. Otherwise you will get disappointed, cynical and burnt-out, Lars stresses.

Joanne, Kerstin, Inger and Björn all bring up that the social workers are not able to help the client because of the way the social work is organized, there is something at the workplace that hinders them

from helping the client. It is only Björn though that has a solution to this problem, i.e. changing the oppressive structures. Lars is also talking about rigid structures at the work places, but the solution he gives is focused on understanding the situation, not changing it. The reason why most of respondents do not see any real solution to the problem might be that as a new social worker, the most likely way of dealing with problems at the work place is probably not changing the foundation of the social work practice, but trying to cope with the situation and adjust to the work place in some way. John also mentions this, he says that social work has both good and bad sides in reality and that the social worker has to adjust to the work they get. The question is however, who decides how much and what kind of adjustment you have to make; is it the practice wisdom that rules at the work place and forms the way you are supposed to work, is it the law, the official rules of the organization, or your own courage and/or knowledge that set the limits? As Williams points out, it is not an easy task to change the power bases of social work as powerful interests are protected.

Kerstin, Inger and Björn all say that the social workers have too much work, and that they therefore are not able to deal with the 'real problem'. An interpretation of this is that the social part of practice has disappeared at the work place, social problems are converted into personal problems of the clients they meet (so the 'real problem' are not dealt with), and practice wisdom and/or ethnocentric oppressive practices has taken over. And as Jamrozik & Nocella say, even when there is some acknowledgment of structural or causes of the problem, intervention remain at the operative level. None of the Australian respondents mention anything about social workers having too much work. This difference is interesting, is it because the Australian social work is differently organized, is it that the public/social debate differs in Sweden and Australia and other groups have the power to define what the problems in social work are, or is it something else?

Luisa points at the problem that social work operates from an Anglo-Saxon way of helping, and says that model may fit an Anglo-Saxon population, but it is inappropriate in a cultural diverse milieu. The solutions she mentions to this is that the cultural dominant perspective in social work has to be challenged and different non-western assessment and intervention methods adapted.

This is a problem that can be related to the social workers' power of defining social problems, social work etc, and the lack of awareness of what these definitions lead to -in this case an ethnocentric social work practice not adjusted to the multicultural society. This is a common problem in social work according to all the authors. Still, Luisa is the only respondent who has a strong focus on this issue.

John, who is teaching 'working with volunteers', focuses mainly on the problem of volunteers in social work, who are not trained and that are exploited. He explains that there are 3,5 millions volunteers in all areas of the Australian society, and they are of critical importance for the civil society, so it's very important for social workers to learn how to work with them, John points out. It's crucial to support and educate volunteers as they are so important in our system, but instead they are exploited and asked to do very difficult things without any training, according to John.

This is an issue not touched upon by any of the other respondents, but that must have a great influence on how social work is performed in Australia, and that is becoming more and more significant in Swedish social work too. It is somewhat surprising, that no one else mention this during the interviews, especially the Australian respondents. This might have to do with the questions (of course) and that it is hard to keep a number of perspectives in your head at the same time. And as the focus of the interviews were mainly on social work education and multiculturalism, the respondents might have forgotten this aspect of social work, or thought it was irrelevant in this context. Or, maybe the volunteers are not part

of the social work discourse, and are made invisible in the discussions about social work education and social work practice as they are not 'real' social workers, and therefore do not count. In this case, it is similar to the way the differences between clients are ignored in traditional social work. It is difficult to say what effect the invisibility of volunteers might have on social work practice, but the probability that this reinforces the rule of practice wisdom at the work places and weakens the clients (and the social workers who work for change) position is quite likely.

- The role of the social worker (individual versus society);
All respondents agree of the importance of understanding the client, and that the social worker should be on the side of the client. Luisa and Kerstin talk about obstacles in achieving this, but where Luisa focus on the differences, Kerstin focuses on the similarities between social worker and the client. Thompson stresses the importance of acknowledging our own racism and the structural and cultural influences on our behaviour and attitudes to be able to help the client and change oppressive practices. Payne throw light on the difference between individualistic and collectivistic cultures and that social workers must take these differences into consideration in social work practice.

Joanne says a 'good' social worker got to understand persons conditions, be non-judgmental, got to listen and find out what the client want, walk beside the clients. Some people have no one else to talk to, explains Joanne.

Brenda talks about the silent people, and that a good social worker should represent them, and be the voice of the (silent) people.

John says that the most important in social work is that the social worker recognize the people they are working with, and to be non-judgmental, compassionate and try to understand all people. Both Luisa and John stress the importance of social workers questioning themselves. They say social workers need self-knowledge and that they have to ask themselves -Who says we are right anyway? Because if we are right, then someone else must be wrong, and who is to judge that?

Luisa bring up the difference between the social worker and the client, and how the social workers neglects the impact of culture and culture domination. She stresses that the majority of the clients are culturally different from the social workers, but that many social workers think the clients are not that different and they therefore can continue practicing the same way with all clients, that is, the Anglo-Saxon way.

Kerstin touches upon this when she emphasizes that the social worker must believe in the client and the way they perceive the world, even if it seems strange, and meet the client where they are. Kerstin is definite about not judging the client, she stresses the importance of being emphatic and to understand what it is like to be in the other person's shoes, that they are not another kind of people, that it can happen to anybody. The social worker must respect the client and have the courage to be a bit outside the framework as long as it is in the interest of the client. The social worker should work together with the client to improve their situation, and support them in helping themselves.

Inger says the social worker should be curious and open to every individual in every situation, find out where the problem lies, and try to solve it together with the client.

Björn says that the social workers should have respect for their clients as individuals, and that the basis must be the client's needs and wishes.

When analyzing the answers I interpret Luisa's and Kerstin's answers as two sides of the same coin, that they both acknowledge the importance of recognizing the differences between the social workers and clients at the same time as they want to avoid exclusion of people, to eliminate the 'we' and 'them'. 'To treat everybody the same way is not fair'. Luisa and John emphasize the importance of social workers questioning their own standpoints (how do I know I am right and the client wrong?). The other respondents do not problemize the relation between the social worker and the client. All respondents believe social workers should help the client and try to understand the client. The question is though, as not many of them mentions the cultural dimension of social work (and the cultural difference between social worker and client), if a real understanding is possible if this important issue is not recognized. All respondents have a social perspective and stress that the social workers should reduce inequalities in society and work for social change.

***Jill** says social workers should be concerned about redressing the consequences of injustice, and understand its individual and structural consequences. She means that a good social worker has a strong value commitment and a broad range of analytical and practical skills.*

***Joanne** thinks the role of the social worker in society is to question social attitudes, argue for better services, bring awareness and educate the community, everybody should be equal. Social workers must go into policy making and affect choices from above, says Joanne.*

***Brenda** says social workers should advocate social justice and social change, and reduce inequality in society. Social workers can bring about change in society by working with professional bodies and lobbying, and they should work for the empowerment of the people, in Brenda's view.*

***Inger** sees the social worker as a problem solver, that they should listen to different groups and be attentive when things are going the wrong direction, raise an outcry if needed, talk with politicians, write articles, investigate, inform and solve the problems before they grow too big. She means that social workers see and hear much that other citizens do not, and it is the responsibility of the social worker to spread this information in a constructive way.*

***Kerstin** wants the social workers to know the law and new research well, and to participate in public debate and the political process, make people aware of problems in society. The social workers should help to change the society, tell people in power what the reality looks like, how people live and how it could be improved. Not just sit in the office but participate in politics and React and protest when people say i.e racist things.*

***Björn** says social workers should work with and solve social problems, relieve the effects of social problems, prevent social problems, actively participate in forming the institutions in society, see to that people do not get excluded. This is really a responsibility for all citizens, but even more so for social workers.*

Many of the respondents talk about the risks as social worker to legitimate the power structures in society, and the importance to resist this.

***Lars** brings up the this problem and emphasizes that the social workers should not be just the states' obedient tool, that they must take sides and never forget who they are there for, (the client). Obedience is dangerous, Lars says. The social workers must not become a buffer making it possible to create even*

greater inequalities and letting the social workers handling the problems. We should fight inequalities in society and involve in visionary work, Lars thinks.

John says that the social worker should not adjust people to the system, but change the system to fit the people.

Luisa talks about the importance of social workers understanding the issues they're dealing with, and the social and political context in which those issues exist, before trying to 'help' the clients. She says that the social worker should educate themselves and others about why certain social problems exist and what forces creating and maintaining them, and how to challenge those oppressive conditions and institutions. The social worker's role in society is to redress inequalities between different groups, between individuals, between organizations and individuals, and between institutions and individuals, according to Luisa.

Kerstin means the social worker should be driving in the public discussion and politically active to a higher extent, not just be the 'fixer'.

According to **Björn**, workers need a correct socialistic analysis of society. They must be aware of that social problems cannot be solved by treating the symptoms only, but that you have to work with the root of evil, that is the exaggregated capitalistic system, Björn argues.

When talking about the role of the social worker, all respondents agree that they have an important role in fighting for a more equal society. But Joanne, Brenda and Inger do not mention anything about the social worker as part of the problem, i.e. maintainers of the power structures. As all the authors bring up the problem of social workers not questioning their own attitudes and behavior, and claim that this leads to ethnocentric, oppressive, conservative practices, it is quite serious if the respondents do not acknowledge this.

But maybe the reason why they did not mention anything about the importance of questioning your own views and practices, is that they were only thinking about about problems in society and how social workers could solve them, and not about problems within social work practice.

5.2.3 Summary

In this part, the work life of social workers is discussed. According to Jamrozik & Nocella, social workers convert social problems into personal problems and in that way legitimate the power structures in society, although they often lack awareness of this. Thompson also brings up this unawareness as a problem and claims that traditional social work practice is racist. Williams talk about the resistance among different actors to change social work. Payne remarks that Western social work practices are not appropriate when working in a multicultural environment.

All respondents talk about different obstacles in social work practice, mostly concerning not agreeing with the way of working at the work place. Generally, their solutions to these problems are on an individual and not a structural level. The respondents all think social workers should work for social change. Five of them recognize social workers as being part of the problem, i.e. as maintainers of oppressive/racist structures and/or converters of social problems into personal problems.

5.3 Immigration and Multiculturalism

5.3.1 Theory

Jamrozik & Nocella (1998) discuss the issue of multiculturalism and cultural diversity when applying *the Theory of Residualist Conversion* on different social issues. They say that cultural diversity is an issue that acquires the characteristics of a social problem in many contemporary societies. The problem may be manifest simply in the differences in certain attitudes, habits or pursuits, which leads to communication difficulties and tension in some public institutions. However, the problem may also explode into violence and open warfare. This happens when one ethnic or cultural group either remains or seeks to become dominant in political and social institutions. A social problem becomes manifest in the conflict between the dominant and the dominated, with each side perceiving a threat from the other in regard to its own relative position in society.

Ethnic and cultural diversity has a potential for creating a socially cohesive society under the umbrella of multiculturalism. The perceived threat in such diversity is in effect the threat of social change, through which the established dominance and advantages of one ethnic group might be reduced in relation to those of other ethnic and cultural groups.

The method of intervention in the perceived social problem of multiculturalism include the conversion of its intrinsically political nature into technical problems.

Thompson (1997) calls attention to the way social work is part of the process of institutional racism although it at one level is hard to believe that 'nice people' such as social workers could contribute so strongly to discrimination and oppression. However, at another level social workers are part of a wider framework which reflects power and privilege differences and which hinges on social division. This brings us to the point that if your not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. When we become aware of the racism inherent in the culture and institutions of social work, our own actions will either reflect, reinforce and consolidate such racism, or challenge and undermine it. There can be no neutral territory.

Jamrozik & Nocella (1998) take up the question if the multicultural nature of Australia is a social problem, and if this is the case, how the problem manifest itself and what the effects are. One manifestation is what the authors call 'Australia's symbolic universe' that consists of a core of social institutions and corresponding beliefs, values and interests inherited from colonial times, which have remained largely monocultural both in structure and in personnel. Particularly those from non-English speaking backgrounds are not well represented in the government, in parliamentary representation, in statutory bodies, and in the public service generally. The structure of political and cultural power is largely monocultural.

According to Payne (1997) there are concerns about cultural imperialism and the history of oppressive colonialism when discussing social work theories and methods. The countries where most social work ideas come from achieved economic development through exploitative power over countries which remain poor. Western ideas gain influence because poor countries have had their own cultures and systems destroyed by colonial influence. But Payne also emphasizes that these conflicts and difficulties about transferring ideas internationally in social work are not a conflict of two inconsistent blocs of ideas. These days most countries are ethnically and culturally pluralist and must therefore create services and practice methods to meet needs among among different ethnic and cultural groups. Ideas from non-Western countries may gain influence as Western countries become sensitive to minorities' needs, and there is evidence from different countries around the world that useful mutual exchange can be achieved, Payne points out.

5.3.2 Analysis of the Interviews

All respondents that touch upon these questions agree that immigrants are discriminated against and that this is a problem. What differentiates them from each other is what they believe discrimination is caused by and how it can be mastered, and how they view the role of the social worker. Björn here agrees with Thompson, that 'if you're not part of the solution, you are part of the problem', i.e. if you do not fight discrimination/racism you are part of the repression. Many of the respondents say that there is structural discrimination in society, as the authors claim, and that peoples' attitudes as well as the policies of the government and companies etc have to change.

***Luisa** emphasize the importance of understanding the problem before trying to solve it, and that social workers need to change their own attitudes to be able to work for social change and master discrimination. She says that workers have to consider the implications of immigration and remove the indoctrination of social superiority, but before redressing the problems we (the social workers) have to acknowledge them.*

Joanne and Brenda point out that immigrants should have the same rights and opportunities as other people, and that they need and should get support and guidance from society.

***Joanne** says that there is implicit discrimination in the society, laws and policies are not enforced and even if they are they do not change people's beliefs and behavior. To avoid discrimination people's perceptions, attitudes as well as Government policies have to change.*

***Brenda** too talks about the need of changing people's attitudes, she says that there is a lack of education of 'white' people and that causes discrimination, more information is needed to change attitudes and create awareness to see the gains of multiculturalism.*

They acknowledge the problems of discrimination, but none of them mention if social workers uphold the repressive structures or not. The way they talk about immigration and discrimination, it sounds like a societal problem that social workers could help to solve, but are not have any real part of. If related to their answers about education, they both said they had become more self aware and critical to society. Maybe this leads to them being critical to the rest of society, but because their perceived self-awareness and critical thinking they assume they will 'do the right thing'.

Lars and Björn also talk about the importance of changing peoples' attitudes to overcome the problems of discrimination. But, contrary to Joanne and Brenda, they acknowledge the responsibility of the social workers. Lars also mentions the importance of social workers confronting their own attitudes.

***Lars** says immigrants do not have the same possibilities because of indulgence, fear and structural discrimination, but that this could be changed through discussions, information, by being aware of your own prejudices and aware about the mechanisms of segregation, and not being afraid of fighting racism and xenophobia. Lars wants a code of honor –everyone's right to the same treatment, and a discussion about the fundamental moral values in social work instead of focusing on the technical, administrative level.*

***Björn** focuses more of your responsibility as a citizen, and the fact that 'if you are not a part of the solution, you are part of the problem'. He says there is discrimination on all levels, structural discrimination that excludes immigrants from the labor market for example. As a citizen you're a part of the repression. Our role as social workers is to overcome social problems, according to Björn, and*

this issue is indeed a social problem. People's attitudes and prejudices has to be changed, social workers must inform and educate the masses, it is our job to inform people that everybody has the same worth.

In this way, Björn sees all citizens, including social workers, as part of the repression of immigrants (if you do not actively combat discrimination), but that social workers have a particular responsibility to master social problems. As he believes social workers should educate the masses, he assumes social workers are more enlightened than the masses, or at least that they should be.

Neither Kerstin nor Inger mention the role or responsibility of the social worker when talking about discrimination of immigrants. But they both bring up the immigrants usefulness/competence (for the society) and how this is wasted and not looked out for. Kerstin also touches on the difference between the official and the hidden agenda of politics, and the double standards that prevail. Inger does not mention anything about structural discrimination, while Kerstin brings up that immigrants are discriminated against in different areas of society.

***Kerstin** says that many times immigrants are discriminated against right from start, in the labor and housing market etc, they do not get the chance to show what they can and that there is a lot of knowledge wasted because of that. Kerstin also points out that they talk about integration but in reality it is assimilation they demand, you can't even dress the way you want.*

***Inger** says is awful that the competence and skills of many immigrants are not used, but that the department of social work has helped some to get jobs.*

According to Inger,immigrants are discriminated against because of fear of the unknown, and feelings of insecurity. Swedish people play safe, we are wary with strangers, and mind our own business. She thinks it is important that we dare to talk about these questions and dare to let people in.

The dilemma of social work, and the balancing of helping on the one hand and controlling/repressing on the other, as well as the social workers' power over the client and its' possible consequences, seem to be neglected to a great extent in social work education, considered the respondents continuous forgetting/neglecting of these aspects.

5.3.3 Summary

This part deals with multiculturalism/immigration and social work. Jamrozik & Nocella discuss multiculturalism as a social problem, the multicultural nature of Australia and its' discriminatory practices. Payne talks about cultural imperialism and the importance of creating appropriate services and practice methods in social work, and learn from practices of non-Westerns countries.

All respondents think discrimination of immigrants is a problem, and most of them view this as a structural problem that social workers could and should help solving. Only three of them bring up the problem of social workers as part of this discrimination though.

5.4 The Influence of the Society

5.4.1 Theory

In the same way as social problems can be seen as constructed, social work could be said to be constructed and built up from the societal context. Malcolm Payne (1997)says that what is considered to be a client, a social worker or social work differs from country to country and depend on the viewpoint and perspective society and the social worker take. Is the aim of social work for example to

achieve social change on an individual basis or to change society as a whole to achieve equality between different groups? Is it in the interest of the individual, different groups or the society? Depending on the perspective, theories and methods are chosen to justify and define social work and whom to consider as clients.

Jamrozik & Nocella (1998) say that in considering the kinds of social problems generated by the contemporary society, we need to be conscious that the 'market' is indeed a dominant force. The market demonstrates success by ever-greater and more diverse consumption, while at the same time an increasing number of people become excluded from the market because of their inability to pay. It is this 'human residue' of the market economy that the state expects social workers to act as instruments of social control through their methods of 'helpful' intervention and surveillance. This prevents the residue from becoming too troublesome, and minimize the need for open coercion.

In the coming years, if the present trends in world politics and economy continue, social inequalities will continue to increase and as a consequence the pressure of the helping professions to play a controlling, remedial and legitimating role.

Jamrozik & Nocella emphasize that the social workers need to regain their role in the social sciences, although in the currently dominant political and economic climate it will not be easy. But such a climate will not remain dominant forever because the human cost it generates will in the foreseeable future become too great for society to bear. Sociologists and the helping professions must speed up the process of change.

Williams (2002) shows that educational institutions have been very slow to consider the social and cultural plurality of society and rhetorically questions why this is the case and why increased attention is being afforded this issue now. At one level the answer to these questions lie in the different immigration histories of various European countries, in their differing social policies and not least in the nature of and organization of social work itself. However, it may equally lie something of the fundamental ambivalence of Europe to its minorities and an unquestioning approach to the eurocentric discourses of Europe.

5.4.2 Analysis of the Interviews

The respondents touch upon different aspects of problems in today's society and their consequences for social work, like the widening income gaps, the role of NGO's, and how social work changes with society.

John talks a lot about the Australian welfare system and its effects. He says Australia has the second lowest tax in OECD, and welfare spending is second lowest too. There are hundreds of thousands of NGO's in all sorts of areas who fill the gaps not provided by the government. He explains that from 1975-1990 there were an expansion of professional social workers and welfare state programs. Since then, the market place is the model, and the government doesn't deliver services. There are 3,5 million people living in poverty. In the last ten years, participation in labor market is essential to get benefits etc.

Brenda is also concerned with this issue. She says that the gaps in society are widening which puts a bigger burden on the individual, isolated individuals who lack a support network become even more marginalized because of all cut-backs.

Jill comments that social workers want to be accepted by society at the same time as they criticize society. Jill here points at the problem of having to work in an environment you want to change. She also says that the nature of social work changes with society, that social work is a product of society.

Lars talk about that there is a critical viewpoint in the education that has to do with the climate in society that has turned again. There is soil for this critical discussion, everybody has become aware of the dangers of today's society, according to Lars.

Inger says that in the seventies the students were critical, but in the eighties both teachers and students were more adjusted. Nowadays people are again more critical towards society, and the discussions are different. She says the education must keep pace with the rest of society.

John and Brenda agree with Jamrozik & Nocella, that the market has become the dominant force and that this affects the social work practice negatively. Jill, Inger and Lars say that social work is controlled by changes in society. None of the respondents say anything about an increased pressure on social workers to perform social control, nor possibilities as a social worker to influence these processes as Jamrozik & Nocella suggest. But as Jamrozik & Nocella and Williams point out, and as mentioned earlier, although a change is essential, challenging the existing power structures and transforming social work will produce resistance and fear and will not be an easy job. Inger and Lars mention that the current climate in society and social work education are more critical than before, and Lars says everybody is aware of the dangers of today's society. This could be the answer to Williams question of why multicultural issues are getting more attention at present. None of the Australian respondent say anything about this though. That the students do not say anything about this is not surprising as they might not have many years of social work experience to compare with. But when talking with Australians I got in contact with, both the respondents and others, I understood that this does not seem to be the case in Australia, the liberal market wind has not yet turned there. But, if this is the case, then it is a bit strange that this does not show in the respondents' answers.

5.4.3 Summary

The focus of this part is the society's influence on social work. Payne stresses that social work is constructed from the societal context and that the definitions of social work differs in different societies. Jamrozik & Nocella bring up the dominant force of 'the market' in today's society, that the social inequalities and the pressure on social workers will continue to increase, and that social workers need to fight this. Two of the respondents talk about the widening gaps in society, and three of them about social work following changes in society. None of them mention any increased pressure on social workers nor the importance of social workers working against the growing inequalities.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate, on the basis of the Theory of Residualist Conversion, if students in social work education are trained to maintain the structures in society by converting social problems into personal problems.

In my analysis of the interview material I come to the conclusion that the answer to that question is no, not consequently through the whole education, but neither do the students learn how to avoid this. That is, they are not taught in the education (not as a whole at least) to convert social problems into personal problems, but as the discussions on the dilemmas of social work, and the dual role of the social worker

are not an integrated and lively part of the social work educations, the students might not become aware of these problems and therefore, without knowing it, convert social problems into personal problems. This unawareness or neglect of these issues in social work education may lead to the students becoming 'the Government's obedient tools', as one of the respondent's put it.

There is no clear-cut pattern in the respondents' answers though, their opinions are quite varied, so it is difficult to come to one conclusion.

As the Swedish students reflect on their role as social workers although they criticize the education for not having a critical viewpoint, while the Australian students claim they have learned to question themselves and the society in the education, but then do not problemize the social worker's role in society, and also that the teachers criticize the education for being ethnocentric while the Directors of Studies' neglect this issue to some point, I interpret that as The Theory of Residualist Conversion is to some extent true when applied on social work education.

When analyzing the interview answers, although there is no clear-cut picture as mentioned earlier, I sense this 'We are the good people who are there to change the world for the better'. This is of course much better (in my opinion at least) than not caring for others or trying to improve the society at all. But it is not enough. As control and repression are an intrinsic part of social work, an awareness of this dilemma of social work is crucial to be able to change oppressive structures at the work places and in society, and to really help the clients.

All the respondents think immigrants are discriminated against in society and view this as a problem. Most of the respondents believe that more multicultural inputs are needed in education. But only the teachers bring up the problem of the education being ethnocentric and that the students learn to individualize social problems. My interpretation of this is that the students learn about cultural needs, as Williams discusses, but are not part of a liberating education, and that the teachers, but not the students and Directors of Studies', acknowledge this as an important problem. In this way, the education become, implicitly and sometimes explicitly, repressive and helps to maintain the power structures in society as the importance of culture is neglected and only a small and distorted part of 'the reality' is shown.

7. Discussion

In the beginning of the work with this thesis, I thought I would be able to see some clear distinctions between the answers of the Australian and the Swedish respondents, due to the different social policies, welfare systems, immigration policies, histories etc. But as you maybe have noticed, the distinctions (when there are any) are rather between the the Directors of Studies', the teachers and the students. The role you have in the education, seem to have a great influence on your attitudes and utterances. As a Director of Studies, you have to take all parties' opinions into consideration, defend the education, be diplomatic and maybe not too critical to things. The teachers are more free to express their own views and the teachers interviewed have a special interest in these particular issues and are maybe due to this more critical and more well up in these subjects. The students are also quite free to express their own views (during the interviews at least) but the contents and shape of the education limit the students impressions and knowledge.

In the interviews, the teachers tend to problemize and analyze the topics to a higher extent; they question the education, the role of the social worker, the society etc, while the Directors of Studies' discuss the topics more generally and vaguely. The students problemize and analyze the topics to some

extent, but seem to view themselves as 'good', and often do not problemize the role of the social worker i.e. their own role.

When comparing Sweden and Australia, you soon discover that their welfare solutions are quite different. For example, the social security system is more developed, the income differences are smaller and there are less poor people in Sweden compared to Australia. But the well-developed social safety net also means more social control and is in some ways also more normative and oppressive, as most reforms are initiated from above, and it is difficult for grass-roots movements to have any influence.

An unprejudiced discussion of different welfare systems and its consequences, positive and negative, is needed in the social work education to avoid biases and to broaden the outlooks and learn from each other.

It is interesting to see, that although the Swedish and Australian welfare systems are very different, the answers of the Swedish and Australian respondents when talking about the work life, the role of the social worker etc., are quite similar (although John point to the role of volunteers in Australian social work). Is this similarity due to some globalized social work discussion, that make social workers and social work students believe in the same thing regardless of government policies, welfare system, population composition etc.?

As mentioned earlier, most of the respondents seem in many cases to 'forget' about social workers as part of the societal structures, and as potential oppressors. Is it a survival strategy when talking about problems in society and in social work, not to relate it to yourself and your role as a social worker? Does the work become overwhelming if you realise you have to challenge the structures and your own views to achieve any real change? Or is it knowledge that is missing?

All respondents I interviewed for this thesis recognized discrimination of immigrants as a problem, and most of them viewed this as a structural problem that social workers could and should help solving. Although social workers in their exercise of public authority inevitably are part of these structures, most of the respondents did not bring that up though.

I agree with the respondents that discrimination of immigrants is a structural problem and that social workers (could) have an important role in creating a more equal and fair society. But, in my opinion, this will not happen if social workers and social work students are not aware of their own role and critically examine their own values and actions. And it is certainly a lack in the educations not bringing awareness and knowledge about these issues.

To build the foundations of truly equal multicultural societies is essential as the number of people moving between different countries and places will most likely increase during the coming decades, because of the huge income gap between North and South, environmental pollution, wars and conflicts etc. I hope that social workers will contribute to a more peaceful, open and fair world, and I wish social work educations, like the ones I have examined, will be in the forefront in educating daring, critically reflexive and able social workers, prepared for fighting oppressive structures and narrow minded attitudes and policies.

Sweden and Australia have many similarities in their 'national character' that could be positive when creating an equal multicultural society. Some of these common features of Swedes and Australians are that they view themselves as democratic, individualistic, intolerant of oppression, egalitarian, pragmatic, secular and view their 'own' country as a country of freedom. These 'national characters'

could be used to justify multicultural policies and measures (i.e. if we say we are democratic and intolerant of oppression, we have to suit the action to the word), for the purpose of creating an open and anti-oppressive society.

In the social work education in Lund, Sweden, a review of the whole education has been made, and far-reaching alterations have been proposed. In this work, all the staff and also the Students' Union have been included. Hopefully this work of change will lead to a liberating and brave intercultural education, as discussed by Charlotte Williams, that dare to challenge the dominant paradigm of the academy and of the bureaucracy, and that encourage students to reflect critically on their own culture and to explore power relations and the processes of oppression.

7.1 Proposals for Further Studies

It would be interesting to follow a group of social work students during the education and in the beginning of their work life to see how/if their attitudes change and in what way. Similar studies of medical students have shown they become less emphatic during the education, so it is an important issue to see what actual effect the education have on the students.

An international comparison between the curricula, aims of the education, literature and pedagogics of different social work education is also something that is lacking and would be valuable.

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Interviews

John May (teacher at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Queensland).
Interview the 21th of May 2001.

Luisa Nocella (teacher at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Queensland and coordinator of the course 'Human Services in a Multi-cultural Society').
Interview the 31th of May 2001.

Jill Wilson (Director of Studies at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Queensland).
Interview the 31th of May 2001.

Brenda Gillingham (student at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Queensland).
Interview the 1st of June 2001.

Joanne Duff (student at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Queensland).
Interview the 1st of June 2001.

Inger Farm (Director of Studies at the Social Work Education in Lund).
Interview the 18th of June 2001.

Lars B Ohlsson (teacher at the Social Work Education in Lund and coordinator of the course 'Social Work with Focus on Culture and Integration').
Interview the 18th of June 2001.

Björn Lönnberg (student at the Social Work Education in Lund).
Interview the 19th of June 2001.

Kerstin Lennander (student at the Social Work Education in Lund).
Interview the 15th of July 2001.

Janetta Pavlovitch (PhD-student and teacher at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia).
Interview the 14th of May 2001.

Kate Martin (PhD-student, tutor and placement officer at School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia).
Interview the 17th of May 2001.

Appendix 1 - Interview Guide

Questions to the Students:

Background? (class, immigrant etc.)
Academic studies?
Working experience?
Kind of placement (during social work education)?
What made you choose this social work education?
What's a 'good' social worker for you?
What's the social workers' role in society, do you think?
Have you discussed or had lectures about immigration/the multicultural society during the course?
Have this education changed your perceptions about society? (about immigration, multiculturalism etc.)
What's your view about immigration/the multicultural society? In relation to social work?
Do you think immigration/the multicultural society is a problem?
Are your views widely shared or are they different from other students?

Questions to the Teachers:

Academic background? Social background?
Working experience?
What is the course about? Theories / perspectives?
What do you want the students to learn / reflect about?
Has the course changed over the years? Why / why not? In what way?
What's a 'good' social worker for you?
What's the social workers' role in society, do you think?
What's your view about immigration, the multicultural society? In relation to social work?
Do you think immigration/the multicultural society is a problem?

Questions to the Directors of Studies':

Academic background? Social background?
Working experience?
Thoughts behind the education? Theories / perspectives?
What do you want the students to learn / reflect about?
Has the course changed over the years? Why / why not? In what way?
What's a 'good' social worker for you?
What's the social workers' role in society, do you think?
What's your view about immigration, the multicultural society? In relation to social work?
Do you think immigration/the multicultural society is a problem?
Are there any work done to attract student from underrepresented groups?