

SOCIAL WORK IDENTITY AS REPRESENTED IN FINNISH ACADEMIC CONTEXT¹

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Abstract

The article presents research, the aim of which is to study how social work is manifested in the official documents (doctoral dissertations) accepted in Finnish universities. The research material consists of 107 doctoral dissertations, which have been published from 1994 till spring of 2008. The point of the research is on the representations of social work, which implies the research question, how doctoral dissertations are communicating, what social work is. Content analysis was used to analyze the research material in three stages by concentrating on the aims and research questions by organizing them in their frames. The analysis reveals eleven categories and eight levels as representations of social work research identity. Based on the results, the core identity of social work is its diversity and all-inclusive nature. It is discussed whether this is a benefit or a disadvantage for social work as practice and as a discipline.

Keywords: social work research, social work identity, Finnish social work doctoral dissertations, social work profession, content analysis.

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Introduction

Higher education at university level is, or ideally should be, based on scientific research. In young disciplines, the relative meaning of doctoral dissertations among the whole scientific database is more distinguished compared to disciplines with longer traditions. Social work is a good example of the discipline with a short independent academic history. The goal in this article is to perceive the features of scientific basis of social work as illustrated by the doctoral dissertations in the field. We assume that the features found are portraying the identity of the discipline.

A parallel study performed by our Finnish-Lithuanian research group was concentrated on the similar issue but in the international context (Gudliauskaitė-Godvadė et al., 2008; Perttula et al., 2008). In this study, the primary context of social work identity is national. Even in Europe there is no uniform identity of social work (Erath, Littlechild & Vornanen, 2004). One of the probable reasons for that is the practical orientation of social work that has evolved in the close connection with the national attributes of welfare state paradigm and related social service systems (Murto, 2005). Besides, we presume that a short academic tradition explains national peculiarities of social work identity because the dialogue in international scientific research gradually modifies the unique characters of national disciplinary identities more similar to each other. In the academic world, this sort of modification process may last decades.

In our research, Finland is an example for studying identity of social work in national context. In Finland, social work entered university already in 1970 but branched out from social policy only in 1994 (Pohjola, 2003). Thereafter, it became possible to prepare doctoral dissertations also on social work. It can be regarded as a beginning of a scientific discipline of its own, and the start for constructing the disciplinary identity.

The number of doctoral dissertations on social work in Finland has grown quite rapidly. In the period from 1982 to 2006, one half of social work doctoral dissertations have been published after 1999 (Mäntysaari & Haaki, 2007). In that research, social work doctoral dissertations that had been published before 1994 were interpreted as social work dissertations by the researchers themselves. Because in Finland social work as an academic discipline has been developed as a branch of social policy, social work and social policy maintain close connections also concerning doctoral dissertations (Satka, 1996; 2003; 2005). Definitions about which doctoral dissertations are seen as social work dissertations vary (Mäntysaari & Haaki, 2007). In this study we have used the definition of Finnish National University Network for Social Work (SOSNET). By this criterion the research material of this study covers all 107 social work doctoral dissertations that have been accepted from 1994 to spring semester of 2008 at Finnish universities.

It is especially important to study Finnish social work identity (Murto, 2005) and social work research on the basis of doctoral dissertations (Satka, 2005; Meltti, 2004). Nonetheless, the total sample has been analyzed only in one research (see Mäntysaari & Haaki, 2007). Some studies have focused on the analysis of scientific articles (e.g., Meltti, 2004) or of a few dissertations as an example of social work research (e.g., Raitakari, Roivainen & Kröger, 2004).

In this article, the identity of social work is studied in national context by posing a research question, how social work is manifested in the official academic papers. The focus is on the doctoral dissertations as *representations* of social work. Representation is an answer to a question, how doctoral dissertations are communicating the identity of social work. We pay special attention to the goals and research questions set in the doctoral dissertations. In this sense, our research directs on the representational identity of social work. We do not consider social work profession as an entirety but its scientific dimension (Gudliauskaite-Godvade et al., 2009). Therefore, the results will illuminate the science-based aspect of the social work professional identity and provide sources for discussing its national features.

Method

Doctoral dissertations were read by concentrating on their focuses. By *focuses we mean aims and research questions*. They were interpreted as representations communicated in academic context. Research material was analyzed by content analysis. Its research interest is the characteristics of language as communication (Tesch, 1990; Weber, 1990). As such, content analysis as a method was appropriate to study representations. Referring to Tesch's (1990) view, content analysis is a functional qualitative method for studying the content of communication, not its process. In content analysis, it is crucial to detach similarities and dissimilarities from the research material. By applying the method, the categories are organized which intend to be unequivocal to each other (see also Ragin, 1994). How-

ever, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 248–250) remind that clustering as the process of forming categories may result in mutually overlapping categories. Content analysis was applied with three main stages in the following way (see Perttula et al., 2008).

Stage 1. Forming descriptive phrases

107 doctoral dissertations were read one by one focusing first on the abstract and then the aims and the research questions of the main chapters. This interpretative reading produced the descriptive phrases that crystallized the essential content or meaning of aims and research questions of each dissertation. Expressions used in dissertations were seen as analytical units which were classified to the descriptive phrases according to their content. The analytical unit is not one dissertation, as was the case in Mäntysaari's and Haaki's (2007) research, but a descriptive phrase expressing the focuses of the dissertation.

One expression could form one or more descriptive phrases. If the research question or aim was mentioned only in an abstract but not found from the main chapters, it was neglected. With dissertations in article format, the meta-analysis of articles was used as the material. While forming the descriptive phrases, the abstraction-level was kept concrete and original terms employed in dissertations were used. Identifying each descriptive phrase to original research material was verified by coding. After this stage, the research material diminished from approximately 20 000 pages to 668 descriptive phrases. This stage took a full-time work of several months.

Stage 2. Transforming descriptive phrases to more abstract level

Descriptive phrases were expressed by more abstract terms. Analytical units of the descriptive phrases were understood as examples of more general content or meaning. Some descriptive phrases were already expressed in convenient abstraction level, thus the expression was changed only slightly. The aim of this stage was to get one step closer to the focuses of the dissertations.

Stage 3. Transformations interpreted as categories

All the descriptive phrases and their transformations were named as categories using intuitively chosen word(s) by concentrating especially on the focuses. Consequently, each category expresses a certain core meaning of the aim and research questions of the dissertations. Besides focuses, the descriptive phrases and their transformations express views, approaches and contexts for the focus. Views, approaches and contexts form the *frame* for the focus. Then, the *representation means the category in the frame*. In other words, the representations are the focus on the view, the focus on the approach and the focus on the context.

Concentrating on the focuses was necessary that all the detailed varieties of the focuses in each dissertation were taken into account. During categorizing the saturation transpired and new categories did not emerge. The task of categorizing was to keep abstraction level of categories compatible to each other and high enough to cover the large research material without disfiguring.

Each category included several transformations, which expressed similar meanings of the focus. Material was read category by category to verify that it formed solid entirety, and that all the phrases and their transformations were in the right category. The final task was to find the most communicative name for each category. Frequencies of the descriptive phrases ($n = 668$) included into each category were also counted.

Results

The results include first the name of each category which describes the core meaning of the focuses of Finnish social work dissertations, followed by the frequency of descriptive phrases included in category. After each category, the focus is shortly presented. Then, the category-related frame, including view, approach and context is described. The name of the category, description of the focus and the frame together can be read as representations of social work research in Finnish academic context. Results includes subcategories (in italics), which refer either to focus or to the frame of the representation. The task of describing subcategories is to make the differences of descriptive phrases visible.

1. Experiences of individuals (42)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on experiences of individuals. Focus is described as experiences, memories and meanings. The focus is an inner world of an individual. Experiences are always related to something.

They are related to phenomena *outside of an individual*. Especially marginalized phenomena are frames in social work research like sexual abuse, domestic violence and drug use. Structures of welfare state like social service system, and societal phenomena such as labour markets are context of focus. One frame is health, especially in the sense of diseases. Experiences as a focus are also related to *individual himself*, like to identity. In this subcategory experiences of an individual are related to psychological phenomena; life control, security, recovering, oneself and identity as examples. Experiences are one frame besides their position as a focus, for example emotions. One possibility is to relate focus to individual as *somebody*. In this sense social work is researching experiences of substance abusers, homeless people, women, young criminal offenders, elders, clients and students.

2. Lives of people (45)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on lives of people. Representations concern life courses, living, life, lifestyle or everyday life.

Focuses are related to different *situations of living*, for example social work clienthood, studies and imprisonment. Especially social work illustrates itself as a researcher of lives of people in marginalized situations. They are viewed as *life changes* or meaningful parts of life. Lives of people means research of lives of *group of people*, such as young criminals, disabled people, social workers, patients, under-aged, elders, children and rehabilitators. Lives are viewed through *developmental phases* as childhood, youth and young adulthood. Focus is related to *institutional* and *regional* frames as well.

3. Formation of social (58)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on formation of social. Focuses are described as social reality, sociality, social, social activity, social conditions, social support, social mobility and social identity. Social is some kind of action or formation.

On *general level* focus is viewed like social reality and usually related to a particular context. Institutions, historical era, communes and welfare system are these kinds of frames. Groups like disabled persons, residents and volunteers are viewed as *actors*. Social is a frame itself, besides, it is a focus. Regions and *formation of communities*, such as villages and suburbs are one view to focus. *Social relations* are related to concepts like relationships, negotiations, power, conflicts and encounters. The partners are couples, residents, family members, adults and children. Situations as a frame extend from domestic violence to dining situations. *Attitudes* represent one core of representations described as normative control, values and atmospheres between groups of people. Marginalized issues are a frame when social identity is a focus.

4. Formal structures of welfare state (86)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on formal structures of welfare state. Representations describe societal level, policies, societal welfare, service systems, structures, society, institutions and bureaucracies. Society is viewed in its *formal* side. Tasks, profiles, influences, backgrounds, performances and opportunities of structures are on focus.

Frames are local, national, societal, historical and international. Welfare state is perceived from the *view of citizens* or clients, and for instance trying to make structures understandable for public general. Focus and frame are mixed when welfare state is a *context of social interventions*. Institutions as part of welfare state system are researched as places of action and having *societal task*. Welfare state is seen as *changeable system*. Macro-level changes of welfare state, local changes and change of policies are described. Change of family policies, aging policies and labour market policies as part of social policies are on focus. Welfare state is viewed in change of socio-cultural atmosphere, such as postmodern change. The view reaches from genealogies to developmental tendencies. Change of welfare state is described in two lines, by *renewal* and by *recession*.

5. Position of people in society (61)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on position of people in society. Focus is on integration, status, societal well being, citizenship, economics, inclusion, hierarchies, expectations, participation and different values of people in society.

Social work research is interested in position of citizens and especially in marginalized *groups of people*. Words such as unemployed, lone mothers, social service clients and substance abusers are mentioned. Persons are seen as hidden under marginalizing definitions. Frame is developmental when children, young people and elders are mentioned. View of gender and families is presented. Focus is researched in frame of societal *boundary conditions*, regions and structures and related for example to services. *Changes* in focuses, positions and contexts are researched. Focus is related to *expectations* of normality and functional *power*. Social work research manifests itself and other institutions as *ad-*

vancers of the integration of marginalizing people to society. People are perceived as *activators* by seeing them as participants in society. Societal structures are *resources* and *prevents* participation. Research is a possibility to advance societal rights.

6. Core of specialized phenomena (115)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on core of specialized phenomena. Focus is on phenomenon itself, not in relations to frames. Social work research seeks the core of marginalised, societal and psychological phenomena. Consequences, amounts, reasons, content, strength, profile, forms, frequencies, models, forming, processes, images or changes of these are researched.

Marginalized phenomena do not mean the core of average or standard but infrequent and special. Domestic violence, alcohol usage, drug use and custodies are examples of that. *Psychological phenomena* involve individual or mental side of a person, but they are not described as experiences. Identity and coping strategies are in remarkable interest. Psychic disorders, self-concept, way of thinking, future-orientation, inner resources and mental wellbeing are researched. With a focus on *societal phenomena* social work is interested in wage labour, employment, poverty, bureaus, consumption, education, social services and labour markets, as themselves and not as structures.

7. Content of social work practice (116)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on content of social work practice. Focus is on everyday life of social work, in working methods, practices and processes.

Particular methods concerns certain method used in practice, like documentation and sheltered workshops. *Practices of certain working area* mean research of practices of child protection services, gerontology work and rehabilitation. Groups of clients, like children and families are on focus. *Boundary conditions* describe the interest to needs, norms, morals, rules, nominations and logics surrounding the practice. *Processes of social work*, parts of processes like entering or working process and clienthood process as a whole are researched. *Actualization* of social work practise describes discourses, action, actors, justifications and quality of practice. *Applying of approaches* and theories in practice is one content.

8. Expertise of social workers (58)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on expertise of social workers. Social worker is on focus, as a person or representing the group of workers.

Focus is framed on backgrounds or its *construcion* during education and work. Services like rehabilitation are one frame. Psychological view comes along with researching of *expertise-identities*, self-evaluation, thinking models and psychic well-being. Research of image of social workers is related to present society and history. Gender, management and special working fields as rehabilitation or school social work are questions of expertise. Expertise of a worker includes the relation with the client, like position construction of a client. Social worker is a *categorizer* of clienthood and a *co-operator* with networks and groups of clients, like families. *Position* of clients in work process is presented.

9. Profession of social work (43)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on profession of social work. Focus is in wholeness of social work, beyond the practice and including academic doctrine. Focus is researched *towards practical expertise*.

Differences between conceptions and practices are sought, and profession is developed through expertise. *Development*, reconstruction and tensions of focus are researched. Frame is society within its changes, or focus is viewed as their describer. The *habitués*, *paradigms* and method as a whole is in interest. Scientific *knowledge* is part of focus. Future of focus is described, and focus is aimed to be redefined.

10. Research methods and research practices (25)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on research methods and research practises. Research material, analysing methods, scientific writing, *research process* as a whole and combining of methods are on focus.

Theories and practice are related by adapting theories to the practices. *Position of a research participant* is researched. Narrative research, discourse analysis, critical evaluation and some measures are *methodological challenges* to be developed. Public care, hidden phenomena, rehabilitation and power relations are the frames. *Limits of sciences* are aimed to be exceeded.

11. Structural relations (19)

Social work as an academic research manifests itself by focusing on structural relations. Focus is forms and nature of relations with different levels or issues including a level. Relations between individuals or groups are not researched. Various combinations are presented.

Individuals are described as clients, selves or experiential persons. In other levels the concepts such as localization, institutions, governing, communes, services, regions and science and modernization are mentioned. The combinations between the structural levels are *individual – welfare state system, culture – welfare state, welfare state – welfare state, individual – science and science – culture*. Interaction, changes, encounters, shaping, controlling, development, meaning and position are on focus.

Conclusions and Discussion

Results show a variety of aims and research questions of social work research in Finnish doctoral dissertations. The core of the identity of social work, then, is in its diversity and all-inclusive nature. Social work research represents itself as reaching for issues from individual experiences to welfare state structures. Contexts, views, approaches and focuses as intertwined form a multifaceted representations of social work dissertations, in which focus alone is only one dimension. Contexts, views and approaches form the represented frame, in other words the frame dimension of the representation. Together with the represented focuses the represented frame form the representations of social work dissertations. It appeared possible that the same dimension of the representation can present both the focus and the frame.

Adams, Dominelli and Payne (2005a, 2005b) describe complexity of contexts and controversies surrounding its subject matter as problematic. The complexity of social work representations may be the reason for the difficulties to communicate with other professions and disciplines at understandable conceptual level (see Murto, 2005, p. 322). Anyhow, the identity of social work appears exactly in this holistic manner which implies its general orientation (Murto, 2005; Kröger, 2004). The societal position of social work is one source for its ever-changing core with multiple accountabilities including law, authority, service user and profession (Adams et al. 2005a, 2005b).

Finnish social work research has been divided into studying of experiences, interaction, social networks and systems of social services including social work (Raitakari, Roivainen & Kröger, 2004). Mäntysaari and Haaki (2007) concluded that Finnish academic social work research concentrates on everyday life, practices and organisations. Meltti (2004) has emphasized the relation of social work to social policy, and practices as a core of the academic social work discussion. Karvinen, Satka and Pösö (2000) perceived that social work research is interested in expertise and interactional, societal and ethical questions. According to Dominelli (2005, p. 226) social work research enhances the status of the profession in both the field and the academy, improves services by researching needs of service users, highlights issues, and elucidates complexities in practice.

Describing the complexity as categories of social work representations is not enough to understand its identity. Based on this study, social work research represents itself as *levels*. Levels combine categories together. Eleven categories encompass eight levels. Social work manifests itself as interested in issues at the levels of *individual (1), lives (2), social (3), welfare state (4), phenomenon (6), societal relations (5, 11), practice (7, 8) and profession (9, 10)*.

All levels are rather equally presented when examining the proportionate parts (%) of the descriptive phrases (n=668). Only the level of *practice* (26 %) is outsized comparing to others. *Practice* includes social worker's expertise and practical social work contents. It appears that social work research responds to the need that Karvinen et al. (2000) and Dominelli (2005) have emphasized: social work practice has to be made visible by the social work research. Everyday life of social work practices, realized in interaction with clients, processes, actions and interpretations, belongs as the permanent subject matter to the sphere of social work research. *Practice* includes the role of the social worker at social work (Karvinen, 2000; Kuusisto-Niemi & Kääriäinen, 2005; Murto, 2005). Our study confirms that social work practice is the essential aspect of social work identity.

Level of *phenomenon* covered 17 % of all descriptive phrases. *Phenomenon* is the only level which, as representations, has no frame. *Phenomenon* represents itself only as focus. According to Granfelt (2004) and Niemelä (2004), particularly marginalized phenomena turn research to social work research. This is also verified by our findings. However, marginalized phenomena form only the subcategory, not the represented focus. Issues of marginalization are on the interest of social work research, but they seem to represent it typically as the frame. Furthermore, issues which are interpreted as psychological phenomena have been regarded as an important feature of social work research

(Niemelä, 2003, p. 97). The argument for their importance has been that they provide ground for developing services and methods which support person's well-being. It is possible to reduce psychological phenomena to social phenomena (see Niemelä, 2003) but on the other hand, it can be an argument for the subcategory of psychological because in social work many major theories are individual-based (Rose, 2003, p. 201). Pölkki (2004) underlines that social workers need psychological knowledge, when working with people living in various developmental phases. Another subcategory of *phenomenon* is societal, including social services that were related to other levels, like welfare state and practices as a frame. This result is reasonable along with Kröger (2004, p. 201), who notes that research of social services is taking theoretical, governmental and practical views.

Level of *welfare state* (13 %) describes structures or forms of the welfare state. The worry presented by Rose (2003) that structural explanations of social inequality remains behind individual views in social work is not actual or real based on this study. Instead, results are close to the view of Murto (2005, p. 318), who says that social work is work with change. Central view of social work research associated with *welfare state* is of change. In this sense social work realizes its task (Dominelli, 2005) as an identifier of change. In *welfare state*, policies are one feature of social work, like Humphries (2005) and Karvinen (2000) have argued. *Welfare state* reminds of the connections between social work and social policy. This challenges Satka's (2005, p. 310) view, that social work research and social political research encounters only rarely. One significant point at *welfare state* is the position of social work being politics itself and producer of welfare services (Murto, 2005). Hence, the research interest of *welfare state* means researching also social work itself.

Level of *societal relations* (12 %) focuses on the relations of levels. At *societal relations* social work research illustrates one of its most distinctive characters. Like Adams, Dominelli and Payne (2005a) describe, social work lies at the core of making connections between aspects it is interested in, that means focusing on beyond distinct features or boundaries. Position of a human being was the subcategory of *societal relations*, that describes values of social work – social justice, human dignity and participation, as Rose (2003, p. 197) remarks. Duty of social work is to diminish inequality (Murto, 2005, p. 320). Furthermore, social work has a key role to protect togetherness and preconditions of human life in society (Niemelä, 2004). Based on the results, social work research represents the position of a human being in society, but makes it merely concerning groups, not individuals.

Development of a profession is closely connected to ideology of the welfare state (Rose, 2003). Along with this connection it is understandable that *profession* (10 %) emerges as a distinct level. Social work illustrates itself as *profession*, which exceeds the limits between practice and theory. *Profession* represents social work research more as academic than practical work. Research and discipline are the subcategories of *profession*. As previously described, practice appeared as a distinctive level of social work representations. Nevertheless, *profession* is seen through social work practice, too. Karvinen et al. (2000; see also Satka, 1997) remind that the classical question of the relation between theory and practice has been properly discussed in Finnish social work since 1990's. The aim of the discussion has been to search for the identity of social work. It has been suggested that traditional professionalism based on scientific knowledge has already been changed to reflexivity and that reflexivity is based on social workers' personal knowledge and expertise (Mutka, 1998; Karvinen et al., 2000; Karvinen, 2000). Results imply that social work still reflects the traditional professionalism, and they are in accordance with the remark of Dominelli (2005, p. 228) that there is a need to concentrate on methodological issues in social work research. The represented focus of social work dissertations to research methodologies is rare.

The level of *social* (9 %) refers to the social core in the sense of social activity. *Social* always forms something and therefore includes the meaning of change or move. A more precise definition of *social* is action between partners or groups or as forming of sociality. In social work, there are also much broader views on what is social. Laitinen and Pohjola (2003) mean by social all social politics, social work and welfare. In our results, establishing communities was the subcategory of *social*, but not in that remarkable sense as Koskinen (2003) and Nylund (2004) figure. They report that community social work is the focal feature of Finnish social work and that the concept of community has already replaced the concept of social. However, that might be a relevant argument also in the light of our study, when taking into account the frames of representations. Possibly the minor position of *social* as the focus comes understandable in the perspective of Adams, Dominelli and Payne (2005a) who declare that social work is about people in their social worlds. As such *social* exists within social work research more as a represented frame than as a represented focus. Then, the critical question is, as Humphries (2005) underlines, can *social* legitimate social work or can *social* be in the core of social work research, if *social* manifests more the frame of social work than the focus of it?

Level of *lives* (7 %) presents lives of individuals or groups, and the diverse situations in which living occurs. The results do not support Mäntysaari's and Haaki's (2007) finding that everyday life is

one of the most popular themes in social work research in Finland. This dissimilarity is probably due to the different kind of questioning and categorizing process. Karvinen (2000, p. 9–11) proposes that there is a need to make everyday life to be seen by social work research. According to our study this need truly exists if it was agreed with Adams (2005) that social work is closely related to everyday lives and life courses of people. Level of *individual* (6 %) is the aspect of social work research as understood in describing individual experiences. *Individual* is seen as the person and thus the member of the named group. Pölkki (2004) emphasizes the importance of taking persons' experiences into account in social work. Also Niemelä (2004) remarks that the task of social work is necessarily needed the view on the individual as an existential and experiential person.

The representations of social work doctoral dissertations are organized to the focus *and* to the frame. It became clear that the results can be understood only if the focus (research aim and research questions) is set into the frame (context, view or approach to the focus). This means that it is not relevant to study the representational identity of social work as a discipline by posing the traditional ontological question of what turns phenomena into social work phenomena. Based on the results, the relevant ontological question to clarify the identity of social work is, what context and what approach turn what phenomena into social work phenomena.

The importance of the context and approach for the identity of social work representations is not surprising. A more unexpected result is that social work doctoral dissertations represented also focuses that could be organized to categories and levels. Accordingly, social work is not discipline that represents itself solely as taking certain kinds of perspectives and views into the interesting world, or as setting that world into certain kinds of contexts. Social work representations as scientific discipline encompass also certain kinds of subject matters and substances – phenomena.

It is confusing, how enormous the range of the represented focuses of social work research is. It is not an easy task to say, what is missing. Is it the benefit for social work? In social work practices it may be an advantage, but in the academic world it makes social work vulnerable in establishing its disciplinary identity. It is evident that more theoretical thinking is required in social work (Antikainen, 2007) because its scientific base appears vague (Kotiranta, 2008). It seems true that social work as a discipline is reflecting beyond boundaries by connecting knowledge of sociology, psychology, social policy and education (see Adams, 2005), but it is also relevant to ask, how to develop a true profession without a firm basis of knowledge (see Kuusisto-Niemi & Kääriäinen, 2005, p. 456).

The study demonstrates that social as a focus lies in the marginal of social work research. The largest attention is put on social work practices. In sum, the representational identity of social work research in Finnish academic context emphasizes *social work* instead of *social* work. Murto (2005, p. 328) is not alone to state that strengthening social work identity will require special interest to the social core of social work. Views on social work practices and on societal structural systems are already quite widely represented, but studying more intensively the life-worlds of persons and communities may add the societal depth of social work identity (see Humphries, 2005). Kröger (2004, p. 201) notes, how heavily social work literature is concentrated on understanding the identity of social work. After this research, we are sure that there is a need for that.

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SOCIALINIO DARBO IDENTITETO PATEIKIMAS SUOMIJOS AKADEMINIAME KONTEKSTE**Anna Väänänen, Prof. Dr. Juha Perttula**

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Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje pristatomi tyrimo, kurio tikslas atkleisti, kaip socialinio darbo identitetas pateikiamas Suomijos universitetuose apgintose socialinio darbo daktaro disertacijose, rezultatai. Tyrimo medžiagą sudaro 107 socialinio darbo daktaro disertacijos, apgintos įvairiuose Suomijos universitetuose nuo 1994 m. iki 2008 m. pavasario. Tyrimo medžiaga buvo analizuojama taikant turinio analizės metodą ir dėmesį sutelkiant į suomių socialinio darbo daktaro disertacijų tikslus ir tyrimo klausimus bei atsižvelgiant į kiekvienoje disertacijoje pateikiamus požiūrius ir kontekstą. Remiantis tyrimo rezultatais (11 kategorijų, apimančių 8 lygmenis, kuriais pasireiškia socialinio darbo identitetas) straipsnyje teigiama, kad socialinio darbo identiteto esmė yra įvairovė ir visa apimanti prigimtis. Straipsnyje diskutuojama, kiek tai gali būti naudinga ar nenaudinga socialiniam darbui kaip profesijai ir kaip mokslo disciplinai.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: socialinio darbo tyrimas, socialinio darbo identitetas, Suomijos socialinio darbo daktaro disertacijos, socialinio darbo profesija, turinio analizė.