

Transforming Biographical Experience Into Occupational Accountability: Paraprofessional Integration Workers' Efforts to Professionalise Integration Support in Sweden



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ABSTRACT

Integration support is a rather new professional field, and it is common for paraprofessionals (PPs) with personal migration experiences as their main qualification to perform the work without having a job description, education or ethical principles to follow. In previous research, migration experiences have been contested as a professional competence and criticism has been raised about a lack of professionalism. Organisational professionalisation directed from above – such as education, guidelines and standardisation – has been requested. This study raises questions about occupational professionalisation from within, from the working group itself. Based on workplace learning theory, the study explores how a working group of 30 PP integration workers in Civic Orientation are enhancing occupational capacities jointly. They identified a lack of client responsiveness as a problem and developed an explanatory model where their own biographical experience of migration (themselves as former migrants or their family members and recollections of their former 'home country') play a crucial role. Thus, the results indicate that one's own migration experience can be a part of and a motivator for occupational professionalism of PPs if it is allowed to be collectively reflected on, critically scrutinised and contextualised.

KEYWORDS:

Paraprofessional; Integration support; Civic orientation; Professionalisation; Occupational professionalism; Biographical experience; Accountability; Workplace learning

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Integration support is a new and growing professional field in Sweden and beyond. Because it is new, it is not yet clear what it implies or what competencies are needed. This study responds to calls for enhancing professionalism of integration support through an empirically based study of 30 paraprofessional (PP) integration workers in Civic Orientation (CO) and their own commitments to trying to professionalise the support services they provide. CO is a compulsory course about Swedish society provided to newly arrived immigrants categorised as refugees who have recently gained residency status. Several studies have shown that it is common to seek PP personnel with an 'immigrant background' to manage frontline work in integration support/immigrant services in the Nordic Countries (Abrahamsson & Agevall 2010: 209; Gruber 2015: 90; Khosravi 2009: 44–45; Valenta 2012: 94–97). The PPs are characterised by the fact that they have no formal training leading to professional credentialing in the field. The PPs in integration support/immigrant service are often hired to support integration by working with their own cultural community and are considered to have cultural competence due to their own migration background. There is seldom a job description or explicit agreement on how their own experience of migration should be used, and what competence it entails, or what tasks they should be responsible for (Abrahamsson & Agevall 2010; Gruber 2017: 200; Musser-Granski & Carrillo 1997: 52; Türegun 2013). Several deficits in using migration experience as a competence in integration support have been identified and demands have been raised for a professionalisation. In order for professionalisation to take place, external instruments, so-called organisational professionalisation, have been highlighted as necessary, such as education, ethical guidelines and policy. However, in profession and organisational studies, it is stated that a hybrid form of professionalisation is required in welfare institutions (Evetts 2011: 408). This also includes an occupational professionalisation, which consists of measures that include frontline workers' own learning processes in taking control of and developing a self-regulating occupational group (Evetts 2011: 408). Professionalisation thus requires both activities from within and from without. Yet occupational professionalism has been overlooked in studies on integration support, on the PP integration workers' own role in a professionalisation process. Thus, to contribute to the discussion about professionalisation of integration support, the aim of the study is to explore and examine occupational professionalisation of PP integration workers by analysing 30 members of the working groups' engagement in problem-solving situations at the workplace.¹ The article has the following disposition. First, previous research on PPs in general and on PPs in the integration sector is presented. After that, the theoretical framework for studying occupational professionalisation based on theories in the field of workplace learning and specifically Vygotsky's concept of spontaneous concept is described. Next is a presentation of the D-analysis as a method that focuses on problem-solving situations as a site where occupational professionalisation can be studied. Thereafter, the results are presented, on how 30 PP integration workers develop and use spontaneous accountability concept linked to their own biographical experiences to develop client responsiveness. Finally, a summary is given and based on the results, the content of a professionalisation of integration support that includes occupational professionalism, that is the PPs' own commitment and their self-control, is discussed.

¹ What is meant by professionalism can have different meanings. This study is based on professionalism stated by Evetts (2003: 396), which suggests that a shift in focus is required from a preoccupation with defining 'profession' to an analysis of the appeal to 'professionalism' as a driving force for and a facilitator of professional change.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON PP INTEGRATION WORKERS

PPs are often hired in welfare institutions because they have similar biographical experiences as the clients instead of common professional criteria such as training and education. Several difficulties for the working group have been described, such as the fact that they perform work for which they lack training, that they do not have a formal mandate to carry out and that there are no ethical principles to follow (Musser-Granski & Carrillo 1997). Nevertheless, research has also shown how PPs can contribute with certain components that are important in professions working in welfare institutions. Biographical narration has been identified as ‘user knowledge’ in social services, and in particular emotional intonation, the ability to see what is unique, and empathy have been highlighted (Borkman & Munn-Giddings 2017: 21; Järkestig Berggren 2014; Munn-Giddings & McVicar 2007: 26, 31; Valenta 2012: 102). However, in migration research, it has been shown that people with migration experience are primarily employed because they are considered to have cultural competence. According to Gruber (2015: 1, 5–6), the PPs with a migration background have been put forward as a strategy and a solution to a described problem that various welfare institutions have in handling cultural differences, and these cultural differences have above all been attributed to immigrants. Using this ‘cultural competence’, the PP is expected to translate, interpret and explain both linguistic and cultural differences (Bauder & Jayaraman 2014: 176; Gruber 2015: 1–2; Khosravi 2009: 44–45; Shaw 2014: 285; Valenta 2012: 92–93). Gruber (2005) and Khosravi (2009: 44–45) have also shown that the experience of immigration is not what is sought after by the heads of organisations when planning the content and structure of programmes; rather, the PPs are seen as valuable resources to be used for one-way communication of the decisions that have already been taken by managers to individuals with a migration background. Studies of PP integration work also show that one’s own migration experience risks being used for cultural othering of the client, and it is questioned as a competence because it may limit the professionalisation of integration support (Gruber 2005). Cultural othering is a process based on a binary opposition where the population is divided into ‘our’ and ‘their’ culture, and where the dominant group is often considered the norm (Hall 1997: 257). In order to get rid of these problems, professionalisation is described as needed and research has pointed to the need for better working conditions, educational training, guidelines and policies (Abrahamsson & Agevall 2010; Bauder & Jayaraman 2014; Musser-Granski & Carrillo 1997; Valenta 2012). Hence, these studies on PPs have primarily focused on analysing the talk about what cultural competence should be used for according to decision-makers and managers, not analysing how the PPs themselves manage their practice. To get a more comprehensive picture of the PPs’ own commitment and participation in the professionalisation, the focus in this study is on what skills the PPs themselves use when engaging in their work.

THE CASE OF PP INTEGRATION WORKERS IN CO IN SWEDEN

Since 2010, each municipality in Sweden has been obligated to arrange CO for immigrants who have recently obtained resident status (SFS 2010: 1138). CO has the overall purpose of facilitating immigrants’ civic integration process and assuring that during the first year of residency they receive societal information and guidance

in the nation's history, culture, norms, rights and obligations, political system and social welfare system. CO is now regulated so that it must encompass a minimum of 100 hours. The CO programme is also set up such that PP integration workers should be carrying it out in dialogue with the participants to promote reflection. The primary skill required to be employed as PP integration workers in CO are their ability to speak certain languages because the courses are offered in the immigrants' native languages (SFS 2010: 1138). What is sought after are also people who have a personal migration experience, which is referred to as cultural competence (SOU 2010: 16). Accordingly, this means that the group consists of PPs because they do not have academic knowledge or professional training, and they are hired solely because of their own migration background.

The importance of professionalising CO has repeatedly been expressed at the national, municipal and county levels (Dir 2009: 101; SOU 2010: 16). To answer this call, a county administrative board initiated a professionalisation process by producing national guidelines for the working group. A national reference group consisting of representatives from integration units in two large municipalities and representatives from county administrative boards in Sweden initiated the work. The aim was to develop a handbook that could be used nationally along with standardised instruction material and PowerPoint material for the PP integration workers to provide in the courses. These texts were perceived to be the central mediating tool instructing the PP integration workers on how they should inform about Swedish society, the Swedish welfare system and everyday life in Sweden. During the first part of the production of the guidelines, the managers, the county administrative boards, pedagogues and experts from over 30 Swedish institutions examined and developed the guidelines. No representative from the PP working group who carried out the work in practice took part in the process.

Approximately one year after the first material was produced, many PP integration workers who had started to implement the guidelines in their daily practice began to realise that parts of the guidelines did not contribute to civic integration. This led the managers who were leading the national project to invite 30 experienced PP integration workers from one large integration unit to offer their reflections on the material. This article analyses the process when the PP integration workers were reviewing the guidelines based on their experiences from having implemented these guidelines in their practice with newly arrived migrants in CO courses.

THEORY ON WORKPLACE LEARNING FOR STUDYING OCCUPATIONAL PROFESSIONALISATION

To be a professional includes a package of different aspects such as having factual knowledge as well as mastering and improving methods, procedures, languages, a code of ethics, jurisdiction, perspectives, rules and norms (Abbott 1988: 9–20). In this study, the focus lies on 'accountability' as an aspect of professionalisation. The term 'accountability' is often used in relation to duties performed by people in specific roles and is strongly associated with professionalism (Banks 2009: 588–589). To be 'accountable' means that people are liable to be called upon to account for their actions. To be professionally accountable is to be able to justify what has been done or not done, describe and explain actions, and undertake work that can be justified in terms of recognised standards of practice (Banks 2013: 588–589).

This study draws on workplace learning theories on ‘accountability-building’. This means that focusing on occupational professionalism, from within, as from the point of view of the working group themselves and how they are learning and improving methods such as identifying problems and building accounts and justifications regarding the identified problem (Edwards 2010: 21–28; Hopwood & Edwards 2017: 109–110).

To be able to analyse the PPs’ building of accountability as a potential to develop occupational professionalisation ‘from within’, this study is influenced by theories about *spontaneous* and *scientific concepts* from cultural–historical theory and Vygotsky (1986: 172–173, 193, 197). The focus is on what accountability concepts and occupational phrases the PP integration workers develop when arguing for certain actions to be taken in order to improve CO. Scientific concepts are general, abstract and part of a system of related ideas (Vygotsky 1986: 172–173). They are, for example, words and phrases that are central to specific occupational groups. They are well-tested, recognised concepts, and they are often learned socially under given instructions. One particular genre of scientific concepts concerns professions’ accountability. Many occupations have their well-established accountability, namely, their ‘scientific’ concepts that are shared in the occupation, learned in educational settings and have public recognition as being central to that certain profession. The latter also means that the account also manifests the jurisdiction, what mandate and what area or task they are responsible for. In social work practice, *the child’s perspective* is, for example, such a *scientific accountability concept*. It is a phrase that is part of the system of related ideas in the social worker’s profession. It can help social workers in decision-making, to highlight certain aspects of a situation, to justify why they see a situation in a certain way and to explain why they need to act according to that interpretation. Among social workers, there can also be different views on what a ‘child’s perspective’ is in a certain situation, which helps them to develop their accountability by engaging in negotiation and elaboration (De Montigny 1995: 211–215).

While the scientific accountability concept means that one learns through training, the spontaneous concept emphasises learning through practice (Vygotsky 1986: 193). When a person or a group, works on a problem, important concepts can arise and be developed. Spontaneous concepts emerge in response to something concrete, such as a reaction directly tied to a phenomenon. They can arise when a scientific concept does not fit the situation being worked on, when an occupation is new or the system of related ideas is not well developed. Because the PP integration workers do not have specific training, where scientific accountability concepts are learned, they are likely to use spontaneous accountability concepts.

METHOD FOR STUDYING PPS’ PROFESSIONALISATION EFFORTS

The data were drawn from ethnographic fieldwork conducted between January 2012 and December 2013. The whole work process from different actors, as described earlier, was followed when developing and implementing the national guidelines. The study design was inspired by institutional ethnography and its focus on ‘following texts’ (Smith 2005: 101–118), whereby observations, video-recorded observations and interviews are conducted in the production and the use of the text. The data in this study were gathered from the time when the PP integration workers were

involved, after the instructions had been implemented and they had used them at street level in CO.

Thirty PPs with a migration background participated in different workshops to review the national guidelines. To capture the PP integration workers' own efforts in improving their work, I video-recorded the observations of talk-in-interactions in real-time situations. Choosing this method means that I, as a researcher, tried not to influence the conversation by, for example, asking questions, and instead tried to access the participants' own way of solving situations and understandings of the problems. The purpose was to study the occupational professionalisation while it was in progress. The data were collected from four different workshops. In one workshop, the analysed data were from five groups of four or five persons, two workshops involved 30 PP integration workers who met with experts and coordinators, and one meeting involved 20 PP integration workers who discussed the material with coordinators. Data collection involved video-recorded observation (58 hours) of interactions between the working groups themselves and between the PP integration workers, coordinators and experts.

The data were transcribed verbatim. The excerpts chosen are illustrative of patterns found when the PP integration workers identified problems and what spontaneous concepts they were using as explanatory models when justifying their actions. The data were recorded with the informed consent from the participants, and pseudonyms have been used. The transcripts have been stored in a safe archive. The study was registered in the institutional data protection scheme at University West following the European guidelines for Data Protection and Data Management.

The interactions were coded using a CHAT-based discourse analytic protocol, referred to as a D-analytic protocol, developed by Middleton (2010). The protocol was used as an analytical rubric for identifying strands of learning *in situ*, in terms of when the PP integration workers engage in finding, defining and trying to solve problems that emerge in their daily work practice (Middleton 2010: 95).

D-analysis provides a coding scheme with five different codes that represent different phases in decision-making processes such as problem identification, explanatory models and problem intervention (cf Ostergaard Moller 2018). In the D-analysis, these phases are named *deixis*, *definition and delineation*, *deliberation*, *departure* and *development*. This coding in the *in situ* decision-making processes helped to reveal what type of problem they identified, how they tried to construe accountability for their actions and what explanations and justifications they had as a community of PP integration workers.

A detailed description is drawn from D-analysis, which is included in the following table (see Table 1). The table illustrates how the data were analysed, and it shows sequences in a decision-making process. The analysis of a decision-making process began when one of the PP integration workers in the working group indicated a problem within the instruction (*deixis*). In the analysis, problems were found by looking for when the participants say 'but' or when they explicitly say that this does not work (Middleton 2010). On the right of the table, examples are given of quotes that indicate a problem. Spontaneous concepts that the working group uses were found under the next phase, the definition and delineation, when they were accounting for and arguing that the defined problem was truthful.

CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES FROM THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS IN THIS STUDY
<i>Deixis</i>	When pointing to a particular issue in terms of a problem. Nomination of topics for discussion.	PP integration workers are drawing attention to a problem in one PowerPoint slide. For example, saying to the other IW, coordinator or expert: 'but', 'this picture is not a good picture', 'It isn't showing', 'you can't see'.
<i>Definition and Delineation</i>	How the problem raised is elaborated upon. Such as in the uptake of others in terms of how the following are warranted and made relevant: Asking for the provision of examples and justifications, further details and contextual parameters.	The PP integration workers collectively engage in identifying the problem with the PowerPoint slide in front of them. Using spontaneous concepts to give more details, explanations or justifications such as 'my mother wouldn't', or 'this would not be helpful for me'.
<i>Deliberation</i>	Identifying negotiations around their task, and how some working consensus on what is a collective, proper 'explanation' emerges.	Negotiation around whether their biographical experience as a spontaneous concept is a generally 'good' justification for changing the information. Do the others accept the justification used and what it is used for? Does it work as an account for several of the IWs or not? 'I agree' 'that's true'.
<i>Departure</i>	Identifying a shift towards qualitatively different positions in terms of the formulation of emergent problems.	This code was used in observing whether the PP integration workers reached a solution about a changed PowerPoint image that corresponded with their defined ('new') purpose of providing the societal information that would better match their spontaneous concept.
<i>Development:</i>	Identifying new ways of working: significant reformulation of their practices.	When the whole task of developing quality in CO changed due to IW achievements when using their spontaneous concepts.

Table 1 D-analysis, Coding scheme.

Source: D-analysis drawing from Middleton (2010: 96–97) and Hopwood & Edwards (2017: 111).

DEVELOPING OCCUPATIONAL PROFESSIONALISATION BY ENHANCING CLIENT RESPONSIVENESS

From a workplace learning perspective, to be able to identify common problems, account for them and build up an explanatory model and create an intervention at work are crucial for the possibility to develop occupational professionalisation (Edwards 2010). The results of this study show that when the working group got the opportunity to take control of their work, they collectively engaged in one problem that can be identified as a lack of responsiveness to the CO participants' needs and realities in how the support was composed. The following are examples of the detailed descriptive analysis of how the working group elaborated on identifying this problem in the national guidelines. First, there is an example of how they elaborated on the problem of *lack of responsiveness*; second, *the explanatory model* they primarily used

in accounting for the validity of the problem is presented; and finally, *the problems and complexities* for professionalisation that arose in their discussion when using their explanatory model are presented.

LACK OF RESPONSIVENESS

The PP integration workers often nominated a topic/problem for discussion if the information given was idealised and when it was not in accordance with their experience of how Swedish society 'meets' the newly arrived refugees. During one of the workshops, Maryam, one of the PP integration workers, stated that information about housing should be changed. In the following discussion, Maryam wants to reduce some of the information about letting contracts and include more information about sub-letting contracts to better respond to the reality for course participants. Maryam points to a problem with a slide as not fitting with reality (deixis) and thereafter gives an account from her own experience when defining and arguing for what she sees as a well-considered concern (definition and delineation).

Maryam: If I also can add that when it comes to housing, it would be good if they could, er, add some information about sub-letting; we have so little information. It is confusing for the participants, and since it's not in the material and, I speak from my own EXPERIENCE here too, and I search the Internet, but as long as it's not in the guidelines, it's not convincing. So, I think that it would be good to know that one doesn't get a normal rental lease that no one GETS one. SO, many facts as possible about this would be very good.

Coordinator 1: But there is something about sub-letting?

Coordinator 2: When we go over it more thoroughly in the new material, we will invite some of you to read through it and say, see if it is enough or if more is needed? Is this relevant, since you know the target audience.

Maryam: Housing, it's not considered so important.

Coordinator 1: It is really important.

Maryam: It is most interesting... for the participants... in their everyday life, for most of them do not have a rental lease and there are so many questions, so that's why I really want us to be as clear as possible.

In the above conversation, Maryam backs up her critique by referring to her own personal life. It was her spontaneous accountability concept to claim that the information provided in the guidelines is not the reality for newly arrived migrants living in Sweden. It demonstrates that what is conveyed in the CO information is an idealised image. The working group often used their own biographical narratives as a spontaneous concept to justify that the information presented was idealised. Such reactions were triggered when social institutions were described as well-organised, that access to social resources was easy to gain, and when a clear progression in how values had developed in society was presented. The PP integration workers highlighted, with the help of their references to their private lives, that society is sometimes disorganised, irrational and complex. This happened when information in the slide was described in logical steps suggesting that 'starting your own business' or gaining access to welfare was a smooth and easy process, or how it described that gender equality had progressively evolved.

When engaging in the question of client responsiveness, it becomes salient that unique information is sometimes needed. Their different biographical references to justify a change made this very clear. The standardised information as such does not coincide with the participants' different needs. Sometimes, when they use their private experience to account for how they know what is important for the participant, it is contradicted by another colleague with a story from the classroom, or from a different biographical experience. This happens, for example, when social structures from different countries do not match. In a discussion from one workshop, four PP integration workers and a coordinator analyse the information about elderly care and the pension system and discuss whether it is relevant to give the participants the information that it is possible to get a pension from the country they have emigrated from:

- Coordinator: How they can take their pension with them?
- Aneshka: Maybe in parentheses, they can get a pension.
- Coordinator: From their own country, that they can get it here too.
- Osman: I don't know if they can.
- Aneshka: Oh yes, they can.
- Coordinator: It is like that for your participants.
- Aneshka: Yes.
- Coordinator: I know that Trisha sat there laughing when they said that because there is probably not much to be had from Kurdistan, but, and it's certainly the case that there isn't so much to be had from (...).
- Jirek: No, not in Kurdistan.
- Rasha: There are many other countries (...) yes, pension in, at home, it depends on the number of years that you worked, at what age, if you worked for 30 years you get a pension, even if you are 50 years old.

Rasha shows that she has insight into the country she migrated from, and from which some of their participants also come. Not everyone was on board with what counts as relevant in relation to the country they come from; societal structures differed between the different countries, which led to a discussion about 'what the standard relevance' was. In many discussions, the PP integration workers did not come to a decision about a general solution, and the decision was postponed. Importantly, this study shows that the PP integration workers can, with their collective knowledge from multiple countries, address that there is a problem with standardised information given to all. In order to make CO more responsive to the participants, the information cannot be standardised.

THE EXPLANATORY MODEL

As shown earlier, when working on their defined problem of lack of responsiveness, the PP integration workers' own biographical narratives were primarily used as a justification and out of that their explanatory model was enhanced. The group tried to make generalisations from what they experienced in the course by referring to their own or their family members' experiences meeting the Swedish welfare system, or by referring to their 'home countries' and the social structures there. Accordingly,

migration experiences were used as a justification in three different ways that can be defined as 'the generalised self', 'the generalised family member', and 'the generalised home country'.

- **The generalised self:** One common type of spontaneous accountability concept used by the PP integration workers was referring to themselves and their past 'newly arrived' life in Sweden, or their present experience of Swedish society.
- **The generalised family member:** The generalised family was used when the PP integration workers were relating to the personal experience of a close relative or friend, such as how their sister, aunt or brother would benefit or not from certain information in the CO guidelines.
- **The generalised home country:** The PP integration workers referred to personal stories from the country the PP integration worker lived in before, sharing that with participants.

When developing, improving or changing work in different professions, the so-called scientific account is often the one that is used most and validated because it also has the public and governmental mandate of being seen 'from the outside' as professional (Banks 2013: 593). This can include references to principles of the profession, laws or policies, or to common experience-based knowledge that comes from the working group that can be part of the training. Hence, the biographical accounts that the PP integration workers make use of differentiate from such accounts. The working group as a collective is consistent in using biographical accounts, which indicates that it is a spontaneous account, which counts, at least for the working group themselves, as a validation of the lack of responsiveness. The biographical accounts become useful for them to distinguish something crucial, that integration support needs to identify the participants' *needs* and *realities*. Even though it may help them to focus on developing a client's responsiveness, there are also complexities for the group in using biography as accounts because this can also counteract professionalisation. One problem is that there is a risk of othering, and a second problem is that it can be hard for the working group members themselves to value their private experiences as professional/occupational.

Othering processes (see Hall 1997: 257), such as generalisations and stereotyping, mainly took place when using 'the generalised home country' as an account how it was in countries that the participants migrated from. But, another colleague could also sometimes question whether it was a reliable account. There could be reactions when cultural differences were too harshly defined and when the participants were defined as part of a group that does not know something.

In this example, from the workshop, five PP integration workers are analysing the PowerPoint slides that are used at the first session of CO, and they are discussing how individual rights are presented in the course. Manan accounts for 'the generalised home country' to justify that she knows how the CO participant reads the image. In the following conversation, the point of departure for her reasoning is that newly arrived persons are 'different' from Swedes in that they are not familiar with talking about 'rights'. Manan is questioning the guidelines they use at the beginning of CO by stating that there is too much information about 'individual rights', gender equality, and children's rights. She argues that she knows this by referring to her own knowledge from her own experience from her home country.

- Manan: We can't forget, Masood. We have no rights in our home country, or in your country or other countries. No one talks about rights. So, when someone comes here and sits in a classroom. You have the RIGHT to it, children have the RIGHT to it, your wife has the RIGHT to it, you as an individual have the right to it. It becomes like a horse, as soon as you take off the blinders he feels stress. So many RIGHTS I have as a human being.
- Masood But now it also varies when I talk to Iranians. The participants say to me ... it isn't so any longer. Then I am stumped, what do I say now?
- Farah Yes.
- Manan: Ha ha.
- Masood If I say to them, the way people do. They say NO. It's not like that. Among the youth. Not with the state, but among themselves they have very good rights. In their social life.
- Manan Yes.
- Masood They have a social life, are very well read, very well informed, and they do anything among themselves.

Manan transferred her experience from her 'home country' to all participants, as in all countries, that 'we have no rights in my homeland, or in your country or other countries'. This is contradicted by Masood who refers to his participants in his classroom and what they told him, referring to them as young people of today who are well read, as in they know their rights. The truth of Manan's account becomes questioned. This othering process corresponds with previous research of how the PPs are perceived as being used to legitimise a production of the other as different (Abrahamsson & Agevall 2010: 209; Gruber 2015: 98; Khosravi 2009: 44–45).

Another complexity with using biography as a justification to promote change is that it could be questioned as a valid professional account. There was a discussion about what professional means, as in what they were obligated to do based on their job descriptions. It thus appears that even if as a working group they think that the biographical experiences are important to address the problem of responsiveness to their participants' situations, they do not value them as a possible professional account. There were situations in which the working group was uncertain about what was 'professional to do'. Even if the PP integration workers often collectively reacted to the information as an ideal description when using their biographies as accounts, they could make a distinction regarding what they were expected to do in terms of their job specification as described by managers and policies. This can then be interpreted as organisational professionalism as opposed to occupational professionalisation. The following is an example of such a discussion that highlights this problem.

In a workshop, 22 PP integration workers were invited by the managers to analyse the guidelines. A group of four reviewed the first theme discussed in the course, for which the presentation provided a short introduction on the responsibilities of the Employment Office. The Employment Office is responsible for getting the immigrants settled, which means that a plan is drawn up consisting of classes in the Swedish language and CO as well as activities that should help them find jobs faster. The CO participants are also given a short explanation of the way the settlement allowance works and the fact that the daily allowance they receive is connected to and conditional on regular attendance at specific activities. To receive the daily allowance, they have to report to a caseworker if they have a particular reason for not attending

an activity on a given day. In the example, the working group highlights that it can be complicated to get in contact with one's caseworker, and one PP integration worker justifies this statement using her sister's experience as an accountability concept:

- Hassan Settlement, classes (*reads in the guidelines*)
- Farah It is the Employment Office that is supposed to deal with this. It is hard to get in touch...with one's caseworker.
- Elena My sister, she has waited for two months.
- Hassan Yes, that's right, yes.
- Elena They are the guides.
- Farah What we say to them is: if you are sick, or can't come here, call your caseworker. What caseworker? I haven't been able to reach him for two months. I am supposed to communicate that I can't come to this, to the lesson?
- Elena I haven't met with this caseworker for two months. I have been there and called and nagged; yes, we are waiting for a letter.
- Hassan That's right.
- Elena But we can't talk about this because it is not our job.

In the above conversation, Hassan, Farah and Elena are in agreement that it is hard to get hold of one's caseworker at the Employment Office, and that this could be important information to provide in CO. Elena gives an example that involved her sister, and thus uses family as a spontaneous accountability concept, and Farah is using her own biographical experience of when she went to the Employment Office, as a justification for the claim that what is in the presentation slide is not how it works in reality. Elena describes how her sister has waited for two months to meet with her caseworker, and Farah supports this description of the problem, using herself, the generalised self, as a justification.

Even if Elena's analysis was that the guidelines did not provide the information that gaining access to one's caseworker can be difficult, she ended the discussion by saying that they cannot say this to the participants 'because it's not our job'. Yet, when she uses her biographical experience, it becomes evident that it is important for CO to give the participants information about the fact that it can be hard to gain access to welfare services. When the PP integration workers used their accounts of family and friends, they often made the distinction that their duty was to tell CO participants about the fact that it could be hard to gain access to welfare or to get a job. But when they were accounting for their 'job description', they saw that, from an organisational professional view, the duty was to give the participants an ideal picture of how it 'should be in Sweden' according to policy. From an organisational professional view, an identified problem is often justified by referring to laws and policies for the occupation, ethical principles or standardised rules and considerations (Evetts 2011: 408). It becomes clear that they themselves have difficulty backing up the problem of lack of responsiveness with an organisational professional account, for example, ethical guidelines for the profession, because there are none.

This article addresses professionalisation of integration support by studying PP integration workers' own occupational professionalisation efforts for improvement. Previous research has questioned whether the migration experiences can be part of a professionalisation of integration support, and a certain problem of (re)production of a cultural othering of the client has been highlighted. Hence, there is a call for professionalisation of integration support in promoting educational training, policies and regulations. Thus, based on theories in occupational professionalisation that start out from a working group's agency, the results in this study indicate that biographical experiences of migration can be a part of and a motivator for occupational professionalism if they are allowed to be collectively reflected on, critically scrutinised and contextualised. The results also suggest that organisational professionalisation measures cannot develop all parts of integration support in a professional way. The organisational solution of developing guidelines for the work led to a lack of client responsiveness. According to frontline workers, that is the PP integration workers, the national guidelines did not match the needs and realities of the newly arrived migrants. With the help of their own personal experiences, they point to where the representation of Sweden in the guidelines is overly idealistic, downplaying any social conflicts and that it is weakly connected to the realities of, and not responding to, the actual needs that newly arrived immigrants have in Swedish society in their experience.

The results also show that in order for a personal migration experience to be developed into a professional explanatory model, it may be subjected to examination and questioning by the working group members themselves. In this case, the working group's own motivation to become more responsive to the clients' needs and realities became visible and could be studied because the working group had been consistent in wanting to take part in developing the standardised guidelines that governed their daily practice in giving guidance on Swedish society to newly arrived immigrants. Jointly, the 30 PP integration workers in the study have been engaged in an occupational professional development process that is common to other such processes through the three steps of problem identification, explanatory models and problem intervention (cfr Ostergaard Moller 2018). Through these steps, the problem of lack of responsiveness appears to be in relation to their main task of providing relevant societal information that will support civic integration. To justify that this was a general problem that they needed to change, they were backing up their criticism by referring to their own life as a former newly arrived migrant, to their connection to family members and friends who were newly arrived, or by referring to social structures in their 'home countries'. This study also shows that there is a risk of cultural othering of the participants, but there are also examples of when such a problem is discovered by other colleagues. Hence, knowing the participants is a complex task involving a tension between shared experiences and recognition of individual variation. A personal migration experience can be used to develop client responsiveness, but self-realisation and reflexivity are needed.

This study has empirically investigated the possibilities for personal experiences of migration as laying a foundation for further professionalisation of a profession that is quite new in Sweden. Based on the study's findings, I will now discuss the empirical findings about using migration experiences as an account in relation to a further professionalisation process.

Professionalisation processes often take a long time and extend over several years and include several actions from different actors such as practitioners, employment

organisations, universities and the state (Evetts 2011). The professionalisation process, in many integration initiatives, and above all in CO courses in Sweden, has foremost been directed from the government through developing regulations of practice, of what the content should be and what forms the content should take (Åberg 2020). Hence, this study, based on workplace learning theories, situates the starting point for the professionalisation process at the workplace among the practitioners (Edwards 2010). Hence, of interest for further professionalisation is what lessons have been learned in the workplace about using migration experience as accounts and how these lessons can reach a general and organisational level. One way of discussing this is to focus on Vygotsky's (1986: 172–173) theory about how biographical accounts can move from being spontaneous to also becoming scientifically acknowledged accounts that can be visualised and transported between individuals and levels such as managers and policymakers. Two aspects inherent in producing scientific accounts for how the organisational levels can appeal to what is going on the inside are *development from within* and *development from without*.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FROM WITHIN

This study shows that there are interesting actions by the working group themselves and that there are occupational capacities in using migration experiences, because doing so primarily draws attention to focusing on the support being based on the client's reality and needs. However, to further develop migration experiences into a scientific accountability concept, further processes of conceptualisation may be needed. To exemplify how such a process can take place, Smith (2005) describes how the concept of domestic work emerged and eventually became a scientific concept, in a feminist movement to gain status for the commitments women made in the home. By beginning in the women's standpoint in everyday experiences, the concept of work became a tool for further analysis and critical review, and it became possible to transport that knowledge to organisations and universities. Similar actions may need to be taken here to produce concepts that are coherent with the PP integration workers' everyday knowledge of how society unfolds for newly arrived migrants and to make it possible to transport that knowledge to policy makers and universities. This study has shown that the working group uses different types of migration experiences, and one way of conceptualising this further is to analyse them and to suggest definitions. In this study, I have termed such experiences as referring to 'the generalised self', 'the generalised family member' or 'the generalised home country', but the working group may need to find their own definitions. In this case, the biographical accounts were foremost used as a way to draw the attention to the client, and another way to professionalise their work is to properly define the accounts and concepts that help to draw attention to the client. Hence, it does not have to be their own migration experience. For example, as earlier described, *the child's perspective* is a common scientific concept in social work occupation that has the same purpose of focusing on the client. Employment organisations may become central actors in organising the processes for enabling these types of processes to further develop into scientific accountability concepts for the working group.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FROM WITHOUT

Another aspect in the professionalisation process is to use different types of organisational professionalisation tools that can take advantage of how a personal migration experience can be used. As stated, it is hard to gain public and

governmental mandates for migration experiences to be viewed 'from without' as professional. However, there is also a need to intervene in the paradox described by Gruber (2015: 90) for how a personal migration experience can be seen both as a necessity and as a burden. One way to keep the migration experience salient can be to develop jurisdiction. In relation to migration experiences, the development of jurisdiction can support building boundaries for what migration experience can be used for in providing support to newly arrived immigrants. It is a difficult balancing act to know who the client is based on actual general agreements and how to distinguish that from being governed by overarching discourses in society about cultural othering. These boundaries, and an awareness of these boundaries, seem central for an occupational professionalisation to emerge.

For the organisational level to appeal to client responsiveness as a part of integration support, it can also be important to produce an ethical code of conduct. Client responsiveness is often stated in ethical codes of conduct in similar professions that manage social justice, socialisation and social order. When ethical codes are developed in other similar welfare professions, such as education and social work, it is a given that the individual's contextual experiences, needs and wishes should be considered (Davies & Gray 2017: 4). For example, in social work, empathy is both part of the ethical codes of conduct and part of the national curriculum and is therefore a part of the training. This result shows that there may be embryos here to lift the biographical accounts to develop ethical guidelines for the profession. One such ethical principle can then be that the content of integration support needs to be developed in responsiveness to newly arrived migrants' needs, situations and everyday life experiences.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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