

The Graduate School at the Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen

Course description:

Title:	Recognizing knowledges, renegotiating conflicts, forming communities, shaping desires
Date:	August 29-31, 2011
Place:	Department of Psychology University of Copenhagen Øster Farimagsgade 2A, 2 nd floor DK-1353 Copenhagen K Denmark
Organizer:	Morten Nissen , PhD, Associate professor of community psychology, Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Teachers:	Morten Nissen , PhD, Associate professor of community psychology, Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark Paul Stenner , PhD, Professor of Psycho-Social Studies, Applied Social Science, University of Brighton, UK Johanna F Motzkau , PhD, Lecturer of Forensic Psychology, Open University, Milton Keynes, UK
Language:	English
ECTS credits:	3 points
Course description:	<p>General Description</p> <p>Contents</p> <p>Psychology plays a changing and perhaps growing part in the politics of recognition. In many areas of social life, the critical Modern misrecognition of lay knowledges and worshipping of expertise appears to have given way to a more democratic and pragmatic recognition of a plurality of perspectives. This is probably a general (post-modern?) trend, but it is not accidental that it emerges with special force and lucidity where such 'subjective' and perhaps 'controversial' perspectives participate in defining new fields of intervention or modifying already existing ones. A well-known example is provided by the various 'bio-socialities' of patient categories struggling for the recognition of their disease and the experience it presents (e.g. AIDS, chronic pain, ADHD) demanding forms of professional support and recognition suited to the challenges peculiar to their everyday lives. Related examples can be found in the context of the 'psychologised' promotion of well-being and self-help, issues surrounding victims of sexual violence as witnesses in courts of law, or the field of addictions.</p> <p>Some kinds of expertise –often derived from psychology – emerge to provide rationales and methods for eliciting such perspectives and for representing lay knowledges, endowing them with objectivity rather than seeking to define themselves against or above them. Although such meta-knowledge often promises an 'appreciative' or 'positive' focus for dialogue – and a pragmatic, rather than radically transformative, approach to given communities and their values and</p>

cultural forms – it is tempting to question more deeply the effects of this transformation, and the genealogy of this new 'social life' of psychological knowledge.

Out of the many ways this could be done we will be concerned with six interconnected sets of issues:

1. How conflicts and tensions at various levels (interpersonal, institutional, political) are mediated and articulated in new ways through these new forms of recognition;
2. How rationality and its various counterparts (objectivity, neutrality, expertise, validity/credibility, common sense etc.) and opposites (subjectivity, bias, emotion, lay, vested interest etc.) are defined, negotiated and regulated;
3. How other common values such as autonomy, happiness, authenticity/truthfulness are stipulated and recognized in positive as well as negative (e.g. dependency, dysphoria, silencing, abuse) forms;
4. How such recognizing knowledges form part of the constitution of new communities and new modes of sociality and relationality;
5. How such processes and techniques implicate and lend shape to subjective desires and affects, suggesting new forms and images of personhood and agency;
6. The possible resulting implications for research methodology.

Forms

The purpose of this PhD course is to establish a platform for such inquiry. Lectures given by the course teachers will each address the general topic and discuss examples from a particular empirical field, focusing in particular on the *dilemmas* encountered in such research. Further, the participants will be encouraged to present materials and dilemmas from their ongoing research for discussion, in a structured way.

Lecture summaries

Morten Nissen: Addiction – the art of recognizing submission

One area in which the move toward recognition is striking is the approaches to drug problems which have changed quite radically in recent decades. When Isabelle Stengers' proposal to include the voices of drug users in the scientific construction of the problem was translated into English (1997), this was already happening in many countries. With the overall emergence of harm reduction strategies came not only massive legitimizations of the drug use itself (as methadone and later heroin clinics), and a landslide ascent of (cognitive, client-centered, solution-focused, narrative etc.) forms of counseling centered on the pragmatic articulation of client motivation and rationality, but also an immense rise in the popularity (and public financial support) of self-help communities, first of all '12-steps' or 'recovery' groups and programs.

While this movement is no doubt prevailing, it is quite contradictory. If drug users find their voices and preferences recognized, they are also much more likely to find themselves behind bars. Cognitive counseling matches the general move toward evidence-based interventions (a move which can itself be seen to result from the rising power of users and managers vis a vis professionals), but the success of recovery and 12 steps programs have nothing to do with documented effect. There seems to be a relation of direct opposition between recognizing drug users' preferences in the form of methadone maintenance or in the form of 12-steps programs, and between the corresponding kinds of bio-sociality: The pragmatics of a pharmaceutical malleability of the body and the psyche, versus

that of a (perhaps ironically reflexive) discursive constitution of an authentic core essence (addiction) anchored in a (pseudo-) biology. Further, it is logically hard to avoid defining addiction itself as a 'disease of the will'; thus intrinsically ambivalent, the recognition of drug users' perspectives must itself be complex and contradictory. To understand and be able to work with these contradictions, it may be helpful to dig deeper into the notion of recognition and see how it relates to the constitution of collectives and individual subjects in relationships of power. Following a broadly Hegelian approach, recognition is far from simply granted in a pleasant communicative sphere; it emerges from conflict, existential anxiety, and submission, but also from the objectifications and transformations of labor. Versions of these insights are present in the interdisciplinary tradition of theorizing addiction, and some residues are even represented in the pseudo-religious ideology of Narcotics Anonymous. Perhaps they can be taken up as analytical questions for ambitious drug intervention practitioners who venture to work reflexively with how their practices of recognition not only problematize knowledge and the disease entities around which it is defined, but also constitute welfare state communities in politically contentious ways. This lecture will present resources for, and materials and problems encountered in, an ongoing attempt to do just that.

Paul Stenner: The psycho-politics of happiness: a psycho-social study

A transdisciplinary approach to psychosocial studies will be outlined and related to the theme of recognizing knowledges and their relation to renegotiating conflicts, forming communities, and shaping desires.

The approach will be illustrated via the example of the recent turn (particularly in the US and UK) towards what could be called a 'psychopolitics of happiness'. On the one hand, a number of prominent authors have argued that mass happiness rather than GDP should be the primary aim of politics, and that policies should therefore be informed by psychological knowledge based on measurements of happiness, well-being and quality of life (e.g. Bok, 2010). This can be construed as a 'psychologisation' of politics and it entails new forms of recognition mediated by technologies and forms of knowledge derived from psychology and the social sciences. But it also involves a certain politicisation of psychology whereby psychology undergoes a high-profile transformation, with the help of new proposals such as Seligman's 'positive psychology'. This movement towards happiness also has significant applied dimensions. The multi-million pound UK government policy known as IAPTS (Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies), for example, involves the training of considerable numbers of cognitive behavioural therapists with the aim of increasing national happiness, and with a particular interest in the well being of the depressed unemployed. It can also be associated with new micro-management strategies through which organisations prescribe 'positive attitudes' towards institutional changes of a politically controversial nature, and with a new preoccupation with practical interventions into the well-being of employees.

The 'happiness movement' can therefore be analysed in relation to a more or less explicit alliance between politics and psychology which reconstitutes the relations between scientific 'expert' (particularly psychological expertise) and 'lay' and which provides new media for the 'recognition' of human nature and values. As conflicts and

tensions are renegotiated in terms of their implications for well-being, new modes of 'hedonic' community are suggested. These developments have not escaped criticism. In the US, for instance, Ehrenreich has recently published books with titles such as 'Bright-sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America' and 'Smile or Die: how positive thinking fooled America and the world, ' and in the UK, Frank Furedi has long criticized what he calls 'Therapy Culture' in which people are managed through their emotions. Such critiques can potentially be deepened through the adoption of a transdisciplinary psychosocial perspective.

Johanna Motzkau: Operations of recognition, knowledge and self at the intersection of psychological and legal practices: Witness credibility, suggestibility and the paradox of the psychosocial.

The aim is to interrogate practices of recognition, evidence and truth ('conditions of credibility') at the intersection of psychology and law, and to explore the paradoxes and dynamics of memory and self emergent as a result of an increasing psychologisation of legal practices and public perception. Legal practice is a site where complex institutional, societal, political and psychological (expert and lay) discourses come into play while concrete questions of experience, knowledge, memory, voice and truth are negotiated with real life consequences for those involved. Who is a reliable and credible witness and why? What type of evidence is admissible? What are expertises and are they admissible? Who assesses the relevance and validity of expert knowledge, juries? Hence the law can be seen to operate as an epistemological practice that encounters and deals with manifest (methodological) problems of recognition, evidence, experience and authenticity. Focusing on issues around witness credibility, memory and suggestibility, I explore how legal practice can undermine, challenge and potentially transform psychological knowledge, and research practices; and vice versa. Presenting data examples from past research into psychological expertise and witness practices in the German and English legal system (focusing on the prosecution of sexual violence), I will interrogate dynamics of recognition and knowledge, and highlight research dilemmas engendered by the paradoxical operations that characterize practitioners' narratives. These dilemmas are explored drawing on the work of Deleuze and Stengers, suggesting a transdisciplinary perspective towards recognizing such dilemmas, and sketching a method of 'researching practice as process'.

Since the early 1980s there has been increasing awareness for issues of rape and child sexual abuse in Northern America and Europe, but it was difficult to prosecute because of gendered preconceptions ('rape myths') and traditional assumptions about children's immaturity, unreliability and suggestibility. For example in England and Wales children had until 1988 largely been barred from testifying in court by corroboration laws. Internationally, over the past two decades evidence from psychological research and the focus on so called 'evidence based practice' have played an increasingly important role for changes and improvements in policy and evidential practices for prosecuting violence against women and children. Despite the traditionally uneasy relationship between psychology and law, we could speak of a psychologisation of legal practice, via assumptions and understandings of lay people (jury) and legal professionals, but also via new guidelines and the

	<p>introduction of expertise. In North America and across Europe, and for example in the UK, greater consideration is given to psychological expert testimony, and there is an emphasis on providing better 'access to justice' for victims of (sexual) violence in an attempt to 'make victim's voices heard' in courts of law by formally recognising them as 'vulnerable and intimidated witnesses' with specific personal needs and subjective ways of remembering and giving evidence. It is hoped that by accommodating such needs, these witnesses would be able to provide more authentic, accurate and reliable evidence for courts to appreciate. However, in practice the concept of 'evidence', just as that of 'voice', have ambiguous and problematic implications, and new policy did not translate smoothly into practice (as dramatically low conviction rates for sexual abuse and rape in the UK illustrate). The law's recognition of 'vulnerable and child' witnesses as well as the recognition of 'traumatised' or 'victim/survivor', turns problematic as it is encountered by the 'common sense' of a jury, the evidential considerations of judges, prosecutors, or psychologists. There is a collision of the subjective/collective knowledges (common sense) of the jury, the special knowledges of victims/survivors/witnesses, and the special way legal practice tries to handle these. Interrogating such 'evidence based' practices then means to open up a critical perspective towards the practices and knowledges underpinning the way in which evidence about women and children is created, interpreted and applied at the intersection of psychological, therapeutic/clinical, legal, and research practices. The analysis raises issues relevant to any legal system, and also informs highly charged debates around immigration law and international human rights law.</p>
Target group:	PhD students in psychology and other human or social sciences with an interest in the relations between lay, expert and scientific knowledges
Enrollment:	Please enroll at our website: http://www.psy.ku.dk/forskning/phd-skolen/kursustilmelding/
Enrollment deadline:	June 25
Limit:	20