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The Transformative Potential of Craft and Creative Occupations for People in Vulnerable Life Situations

Thesis for the degree of Doctor Philosophiae

Trondheim, December 2014

Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management
Department of Social Work and Health Science



NTNU – Trondheim
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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

The doctoral thesis is based on the following four papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

- I. Horghagen S, Josephsson S, Alsaker S (2007). The use of craft activities as an occupational therapy treatment modality in Norway during 1952-1960. *Occupational Therapy International*, 14(1), 42-56
- II. Horghagen, S., Josephsson, S. (2010). Theatre as liberation, collaboration and relationship for asylum seekers. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 17(3), 168-176
- III. Horghagen, S. (2012). The kingdom of the subjunctive: Theatre as meaning making of the self. *Ergoterapeuten*, 55(02), 54-61.
- IV. Horghagen, S., Fostvedt, B. & Alsaker, S. (2014). Craft activities in groups at meeting places: Supporting mental health users' everyday occupations. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 21: 145-152

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NORSK SAMMENDRAG

Mange menneskers helseproblemer av i dag er ikke nødvendigvis medisinske, men kan være knyttet til ensomhet, fattigdom og fremmedgjøring. Noen mennesker befinner seg periodevis eller konstant i sårbare livssituasjoner. De er usatt for å bli passive, bli utstøtt, eller for å ta del i destruktive aktiviteter. Det innebærer at helse- og sosialarbeidere i tiden framover må øke innsatser for mennesker i sårbare livssituasjoner. Det trengs både tradisjonelle og eksperimenterende initiativ for å utvikle erfarings- og forskningskunnskap om disse utfordringene. Den overordnede målsetting med denne avhandlingen er å *bidra til kunnskap og forståelse om hvordan engasjement i håndverks og kreative aktiviteter kan øke deltagelse i hverdagslivets aktiviteter for mennesker i sårbare livssituasjoner*. Dette vil bli utforsket fra de subjektive aktivitets-erfaringene til pionerer, asylsøkere, hjemløse, og mennesker med langvarig psykisk sykdom. Deres engasjement i organiserte håndverks- eller kreative aktiviteter vil bli studert i et aktivitetsvitenskapelig perspektiv, med vekt på aktivitetenes transformativ muligheter.

Avhandlingen består av fire kvalitative studier (Paper I-IV). Den første studien (Paper I) utforsker det historiske grunnlaget for bruk av håndverksaktiviteter, gjennom å undersøke hvordan seks ergoterapi-pionerer resonerte over bruk av håndverks aktiviteter når ergoterapifaget var nytt i Norge i 1952. Basert på antagelser over kreative aktiviteters potensiale, ble tre studier designet for mennesker i ulike sårbare situasjoner: To studier undersøkte bruk av teater som en muliggjørende aktivitet: Den ene (Paper II) utforsket engasjement i et teaterprosjekt for asylsøkere som bodde på et mottak. Teaterprosjektet laget manus basert på asylsøkernes fortellinger. Forestillingene ble presentert i lokalmiljøet. Den neste studien (Paper III) utforsket engasjement i teater som aktivitet for hjemløse mennesker, utforsket hvordan hjemløses fortellinger som ble presentert i en forestilling, dannet mening i deres hverdagsliv. Den fjerde studien (Paper IV) fulgte opp temaene i Paper I og så på engasjement i håndverksaktiviteter ved et kommunalt treffsted. Målgruppen var mennesker med psykiske helseproblemer. Målet med studien var å utforske deltagernes engasjement i håndverksgrupper og hvordan dette støttet dem i å håndtere hverdagslivets aktiviteter. Data i de fire studiene ble samlet inn gjennom strukturerte konversasjoner, deltagende observasjon og etnografi. Analysemetoder var tekst, tematiske og paradigmatisk analyser.

Resultat fra Paper I presenterer en fagforankret tro på at man bedrer sin helse gjennom deltagelse meningsfulle aktiviteter som håndverk. Paper II presenterer hvordan asylsøkeres deltagelse i et teaterprosjekt bidro til frigjøring, samarbeid og relasjoner for deltagerne. Paper III viste hvordan drama ble brukt som et redskap for å fremme hjemløses ressurser, og Paper IV viser hvordan deltagelse i håndverksgruppe på et treffsted bidro til at deltagerne fant strategier for å øke sine hverdagsaktiviteter. Særlig Paper II & III viser også hvordan flere av deltagerne ikke var innbefattet av grunnleggende menneskerettigheter, som det å være inkludert i samfunnet, og hvordan dette hindret dem fra å gjøre vanlige hverdagslige aktiviteter.

I avhandlingen diskuteres de personlige og sosiale endringer som skjer gjennom deltagernes engasjement i håndverks og kreative aktiviteter. Transformasjonene på det personlige nivået, handler om endringer fra å være i en offerrolle til å ta kontroll over eget liv, - om hvordan aktiviteten gir erfaring med nye eller endrede roller, - og

om hvordan deltagelsen gir erfaringer med å løse vanskelige situasjoner i hverdagslivet. Videre diskuteres at deltagelse i håndverks og kreative aktiviteter skaper sosiale transformasjoner, som det å endre seg fra å være usynlig til å bli synlig i sitt lokale miljø, som det å erfare likemannsarbeid, og det å være i meningsfulle aktiviteter og sammenhenger. Sist diskuteres overføringer av kunnskap og erfaring som skjer mellom deltagerne og deres lokalmiljø, og hvordan disse overføringene fremmer respekt og toleranse.

Gjennom kunnskap og erfaring om deltagernes engasjement i håndverks og kreative aktiviteter, bidrar avhandlingen til kunnskap om hva som oppleves som undertrykkende mekanismer og hvordan samfunnsmessige kontekster påvirker menneskers hverdagsliv. Videre eksemplifiserer og bidrar avhandlingen til kunnskap om det transformative potensialet i håndverks og kreative aktiviteter, - og hvordan dette fører til personlige, sosiale, og lokale endringer for mennesker i sårbare livssituasjoner.

Nøkkelord: sårbare grupper, teater, håndverksaktiviteter, aktivitetsvitenskap, problematiske situasjoner.

ENGLISH SUMMARY

Modern-day health challenges are not only physical, but often related to loneliness, poverty and alienation. People in vulnerable situations can be at risk of becoming passive, being excluded, or taking up destructive activities. This implies a requirement for more efforts from health and social workers in the field of health promotion for people in vulnerable life situations. There is a need for both traditional and experimental interventions to develop scientific knowledge useful for these challenges. The overall aim of this thesis is *to contribute to an understanding of how craft and creative activities, used by people in vulnerable life situations, might enhance their participation in everyday occupations*. This is explored from the subjective experiences of pioneers, homeless people, asylum seekers, and people with mental health illness. Their engagement in crafts and creative activities will be studied from an occupational science perspective, revealing these occupations and their transformative potential for the involved participants.

The thesis includes four studies (Paper I-IV), which use a qualitative explorative methodological design. The first study (Paper I) investigates the history of professional use of craft activities, and explores the reasoning of six occupational therapist pioneers using craft activities as therapy in the 1950s. Based on a hypothesis of the healing potential of creative occupations, three additional studies were designed. The first of these (Paper II) explores engagements in a theatre-project for eleven asylum seekers who were living at asylum centres. A theatre-performance was developed based upon the participants' narratives. The next study (Paper III) explores the narratives presented by homeless people in ethnodrama, and how they related this to meaning in their everyday lives. The fourth study (Paper IV) explores the potential of engaging in crafts and creative activities at a meeting-place for people with long-term mental illness. Data was gathered through guided conversations, participant observations and ethnographic participation. Data analysis methods were textual analysis, interpretive analytic method and paradigmatic analysis.

The results of Paper I present the therapists' belief in the healing sources of occupation. Paper II presents how participation in a theatre project led to liberation, collaboration and relationship for the participants. Paper III shows how drama was used as a tool to liberate homeless people's resources, and Paper IV presents how a crafts-group at a meeting place enabled the participants to find strategies to make changes for the better. Through these studies, connections can be drawn regarding past, contemporary and anticipated future occupational perspectives. The overall results from Papers II and III reveal how some of the participants were not afforded basic human rights, such as societal inclusion, and how this hindered their engagement in ordinary, everyday occupations.

The thesis presents and discusses how participants' engagement in craft and creative activities promoted personal, social and environmental transformations. At a personal level their engagements catalyzed changes including moving from victimised positions to being in charge of their own lives, brought new characters into existence, and developed problem-solving strategies to manage problematic situations and to cope with everyday occupations. Their participation in crafts and creative activities also led to social transforms, including the transition from being invisible to become visible in their local environments, enabling peer support, and

developing sense of meaning. Further the findings presented how transformation of knowledge and tolerance between the participants and their local communities occurred from the engagement in these activities.

Through knowledge and experiences from the participants' engagements in craft and creative activities, this thesis contributes with knowledge about oppressive mechanisms for people in vulnerable life situations and how the context of society affects people's everyday occupations. Further the thesis exemplifies and contributes to knowledge about the transformative potential of craft and creative occupations, and how participation in these activities contributes to personal, social and environmental changes for people in vulnerable life situations.

Key words: vulnerable groups, theatre, crafts, occupational science, problematic situations

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PREFACE

The beginning

Many years ago, I was responsible for Nordic Education in creative activities, together with Professor Staffan Josephsson (Karolinska Institute, Sweden) and researcher Karen la Cour (University College Næstvedt, Denmark). We had constructive and critical discussions about the use of craft and creative activities in occupational therapy, and discussed the ways in which to use such activities in future practice and perspectives, including possible choices of conceptual frames. For instance, the act of sitting in a circle and describing what you feel whilst squeezing a clod of clay is obviously grounded in a psychological reference, such as Freud, who explained that the human mind is divided into three levels of consciousness. This is different from an occupational perspective, where Ann Wilcock (2006) describes that health is promoted through the act of doing, being, and becoming, anchored in pragmatic understanding of human nature. These discussions developed an interest in exploring the subject through research and developing a foundation for the use and understanding of craft and creative activities from an occupational science perspective. Karen la Cour chose to explore the meanings of creative activities for people suffering from cancer. Staffan Josephsson developed the field of narratives. I felt the need to go back to the occupational therapy history and explore the use of craft and creative activities in the past to develop future perspectives (Paper I). These reflections became the starting point of my research and my personal and professional departure for this thesis.

The turning point

Upon initiating the first study (Paper I), I had negative comprehensions about crafts as a therapeutic modality. From my point of view it looked old fashioned and repetitive, and was negatively associated with knitting ladies and basket weaving. However, the stories of the pioneers affected and changed my view, and made me see the craft activities as a transformative medium, which is important in recovery and health promotional processes. The findings also brought forward how the patients' use of craft activities improved, maintained and promoted skills and function, and gave the long days at the institution a meaningful content and provided feelings of joy. People could spend years at institutions during this era. The pioneers (from the years 1952 to 1960) underlined the importance of the patients finding motivation for their rehabilitation processes, without which the rehabilitation

process could not succeed. The pioneers' works were to adapt and encourage patients in these processes. Their practices were anchored in a personal and professional belief in the importance of being active and healed through occupation. Despite deprived situations at the institutions, the pioneers used themselves as professionals, but also as humans to inspire and give faith to the patients in their rehabilitation processes.

Berger and Luckmann (1990) underline that it is impossible for man to develop in isolation, and that it is impossible for man in isolation to produce a human environment. This led me to reflect upon the contemporary setting and to see further challenges for people living in vulnerable life situations, where their possibilities to unfold as humans are restricted as a course of the restraints of their context. The results and reflections after this historical study (Paper I) became a turning point, and opened new opportunities to search for and explore the potential of craft and creative activities for people in vulnerable life situations.

The continuation

The studies in this thesis (Papers I-IV) were not planned as part of a doctoral thesis, but were undertaken as a professional and personal exploration of the field and as a means of developing knowledge. The process emerged through dynamic interactions with my collaborators. Curiosity about the coherence between vulnerability, the activities of craft and creativity and people's everyday occupations has inspired this thesis. It brings forward some visible and invisible obstacles that make participation complicated for vulnerable groups in the Norwegian society. However, the focus has not been to highlight structural factors that restrain participation, but to bring attention to the participants' experiences about how engagement in craft or creative activities might enhance their participation in everyday life. And hereby I invite you to join this journey of discovery...

INTRODUCTION OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The songwriter Bob Dylan wrote the famous lyrics *the times they are a-changing*, reflecting upon changes in politics and societies as well people's occupations, minds, opinions and attitudes. Changes can be for the good or for the worse. Taking a global perspective, there are descriptions and concerns of the negative aspects of contemporary changes and developments for the inclusion of people in vulnerable life situations (Amin, et al., 2011; Laliberte Rudman, 2012). National statistics and policy documents (Meld.St.34), international policy statements (OECD, 2013), and scientific publications (Geldof, 1999; Hocking & Whiteford, 2012; Johansson & Hvinden, 2005; Laliberte Rudman, 2010) are concerned about the growing population of poorly qualified and/or long-termed unemployed people, who are dependent upon income support. They describe structural gaps between predominantly highly skilled insiders and a growing group of mostly unskilled outsiders. There appear to be different explanations for these phenomena. Some discuss the dynamics of exclusions due to factors such as gender, disability, occupational possibilities, and ethnicity (Johansson & Hvinden, 2005; Laliberte Rudman, 2010); others discuss the dynamics in the development of capitalistic systems (Malin, Wilmot & Manthorpe, 2002); and others how ecological changes might affect planetary health and lead to, for instance, emigrations (Horton, et al., 2014; Persson & Erlandsson, 2014). Laliberte Rudman (2010) underlines how political systems, policies and practices create occupational possibilities for some people, while excluding others. Researchers (Amin, et al., 2011; Geldof, 1999; Hocking & Whiteford, 2012; Johansson & Hvinden, 2005; Laliberte Rudman, 2010; Laliberte Rudman, 2012) worry about the consequences of global changes and developments, and how this affects groups such as asylum seekers, the unemployed, the homeless and people with mental health illness. These groups are the focus of this thesis, described as people in vulnerable life situations. Thus, the departure for developing the research question is the urgent need for consideration of the conditions for people in vulnerable life situations. This seems to be one of the central objectives of contemporary development paradigms (Amin et al., 2011; Laliberte Rudman, 2012), and the chosen approach in this thesis is to investigate their occupational possibilities and transformations through craft and creative activities. As modern day health challenges are not only physical, but often related to loneliness, poverty and alienation (with risks of

becoming passive, excluded, and becoming part of destructive activities), these challenges imply requirements for efforts from health and social workers that are not necessarily described as therapy.

Some might question craft and creativity as a response when we consider people in vulnerable life situations. Aren't their needs more basic, one might think. However, learning from history, people in all cultures have always used song, dance and design in their everyday lives. This could be understood as a human need to express ourselves through different mediums (Creek, 2009; Langer, 1966, May, 1975; Tubbs & Drake, 2007), and that craft and creative occupations and expressions are something inherent in human nature,- expressing who we are and how we belong. This is underlined by Yerxa (2000), the founder of occupational science. She describes that it is a biological need for humans to be playful, and she explains that play is an occupation that requires a biological unfolding for its spontaneity and explorations. Play and creating are connected. Considering this, one might suggest that the elements of crafting and creating are part of our mental, physical, and social resources, which are necessary for everyday occupations. Hasselkus (2006) describes creativity as a capability that is evident in all aspects of life and that may improve physical, mental and social well-being, and be a valuable tool in people's healing processes. Craft has remained a popular form of activity that offers a means of self-expression (Pöllänen, 2013). The act of making crafts might help people to learn and develop coping strategies (Pöllänen, 2013). Crafts have also been expressions against oppression (Dickie & Frank, 1996), for example the tapestries of the artist Hannah Ryggen (Horghagen, 2003; Næss, 2002), and *nisselua* (a red hat) that was knitted and used as a symbol for resistance against the Nazism in Norway. Arts and crafts and Bauhaus movements have been a search for the real and the authentic, as well as beliefs that arts and crafts are political and for everybody (Brochmann, 2014). Seen this way, craft and creative activities are not a luxury product of civilisation. Craft and creative activities are mediums where humans can discover what they are able to do, to be, and to become (Wilcock, 2003).

The chosen theoretical position for this thesis is occupational science (Hocking & Whiteford, 2012; Laliberte Rudman, 2012; Yerxa, 2000; Zemke & Clark, 1996), and the conceptual understandings of the transformative potential of craft and creative occupations (Dickie & Frank, 1996; Duncan & Watson, 2004; Hasselkus, 2006; Law et al., 1997; Townsend, 1997; Wilcock, 1999; 2003). Although other perspectives could have been chosen (e.g.,

psychological, biomechanical, or sociological perspectives), an occupational perspective was favoured because of its suitability for exploring potentials when doing craft and creative activities in people's everyday lives. The transformative potential of occupations refers to the opportunities people might have to choose and engage in occupations to direct and change personal or social aspects of life with the aim of realising dreams and goals (Townsend, 1997). However, for some there are different restraints carrying out the occupational potential.

When occupational science was established in 1989 it was defined as the study of human as occupational beings including the need for and capacity to engage in and orchestrate daily occupations in the environment over the lifespan (Yerxa et al., 1990). Since that time, more critical perspectives have been added to the agenda of the science, *to stress the power of occupation to address global population inequities, to improve the lives of vulnerable people* (Hocking & Whiteford, 2012:3). These are people with occupational needs, who might be excluded from education or work. The response to such exclusions and occupational injustices that they have experienced can be to mobilise people in vulnerable life situations into civic actions. The term occupation in this thesis, describes people's doings. People primarily choose their occupations based on earlier experiences and perceptions. Some might associate the term 'occupation' with 'profession', but according to Pierce (2001), the term 'occupation' involves moving towards identifications with individual experiences of doing. An occupation is observable, but only the person can interpret the meaning and content of the occupation. The active process of occupation is a basic human need that enables people to develop as individuals and as members of society (Townsend, 1997). However, people generally choose occupations that are available and valued within the context within which they live. And what is available and valued are quite different for people. All this will be outlined more deeply later in the thesis.

The research objectives of this thesis involve people in vulnerable life situations who have been invited to participate in some organised activities. The thesis is an exploratory study with the primary aim of enhancing knowledge of how people in vulnerable life situations experience participation in craft or creative activities. This includes information about how people in vulnerable life situations can transform their position from problematic / vulnerable life situations through participation in such occupations. An additional aim of the thesis is to bring forward knowledge about the inherent possibilities in craft and creative activities. Can people in vulnerable life situations occupy or seize their everyday life occupations through

participation in such organised activities, and can exchange of knowledge and experiences between the participants and their social environments occur from participation in these activities? Can these transformations lead to paths out of problematic situations? From this, the overall research question for this thesis is described as the following: *How might engagement in craft and creative activities enhance participation in everyday occupations for people in vulnerable life situations?* This is explored with the theoretical lenses of occupation, and the transformative potentials of craft and creative occupations. This will be outlined in the theoretical position of the thesis.

This thesis consists of four papers (Papers I-IV). The historical study about crafts, Paper I, explores some occupational therapy pioneers' reasonings and use of craft activities as treatment during the foundation of the occupational therapy profession in Norway. The main purpose of this study was *to describe the use of craft activities as treatment during the period 1952-1960, by interviewing six retired Norwegian occupational therapists*. Based on reflections of the potential of craft and creativity in Paper I, three studies were designed. Two of these (Papers II and III) address the potential of theatre, by exploring theatre engagements for asylum seekers living at an asylum centre (Paper II), and exploring theatre engagements for homeless people (Paper III). The main purpose of the second study (Paper II) was *to describe theatre as an occupation for asylum seekers and identify whether engagement in theatre can promote participation in other life areas*. The main purpose for the third study (Paper III) was *to explore narratives presented by homeless people in ethnodrama and how they relate them to meaning in their everyday lives*. The last study (Paper IV) follows up the use of crafts (Paper I), and explores the potential of craft activities for people living with mental health illness. The main purpose of this study (Paper IV) was *to explore how participants' engagement in crafts in groups supported their way of managing everyday occupations*.

RELATED KNOWLEDGE

Before the theoretical perspective of the thesis is presented, related knowledge will be introduced: a general presentation of relevant issues of people in vulnerable life situations, the concept of participation, and craft and creative activities.

General presentation of relevant issues of people in vulnerable life situations

The participants of Paper I were characterised by being pioneers of a new profession. Paper I was included in the thesis because the research object was the use of craft activities as a human transform. The participants involved in Papers II, III and IV were diverse, but had some characteristics in common. They found themselves in different problematic situations, had experienced more life challenges than people in general, and were receivers of official benefits, disability benefits or retirement pensions during the studied period. They all had a unique situated knowledge from these positions, different from people in general; a knowledge that is useful for informing the society about occupational inequities and occupational possibilities from their position. Vulnerable groups of people are not a uniform homogeneous group. By including participants with different backgrounds, a more nuanced picture of who they are is given. Based upon this, the term ‘people in vulnerable life situations’ was chosen as a conceptual description of the participants. In the work of science there are needs to conceptualise the research objects. Such conceptualisations are constructions with weaknesses and strengths. Considerations and definitions of the term ‘vulnerable’ are described further in this chapter and in the methodology of the mantle.

Some of the participants lived at asylum centres (Paper II), some were homeless (Paper III), and some participants were people with mental health illness (Paper IV). Asylum seekers are people fleeing warzones, poverty, violence, persecution or other types of threats (Goodwin-Gill, 1996). They are protected by United Nations High Commission on Refugees, which provides the right for anyone to seek asylum and find protection (Whiteford, 2005). However, their situation is complex and often difficult, as the long application process might bring asylum seekers into passive and destructive occupational patterns (Algado, Gregori, Egan, 1997; Morville & Erlandsson, 2013; Schisler & Polatajko, 2002). Another major group of participants was homeless people. Homelessness is a pressing social issue of the world, as the physical and mental health of homeless people is worse than the general population, and the

prevalence of mental illness is three times higher (Koegel, Memamid & Burnham, 1995). Persons with an ethnic minority background are over-represented amongst people with an unsuitable habitation (Järvinen, 1992). The final group of participants included people with mental health illness (traumatic experiences, anxiety, loneliness, manic depression) that have lasted for years. Mental illness might prevent people from participating in work (Arbeids-og inkluderings departementet 2007-2012), and might bring people into social isolation, thus reducing participation in everyday occupations that bring everyday life consistency and familiarity (Argentzell, Leufstadius & Eklund, 2012; Hasselkus, 2006; Ulfseth, Josephsson & Alsaker, 2013). These groups are defined as living in vulnerable life situations in the national policy documents, alongside with some women older than 67 years, single mothers and their children, some families with three or more children, people with long-term disease and recipients of public assistance (Fløtten, Hansen, Grødem, Grønningsæther & Nielsen, 2011; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2008). They are all people with occupational risk factors for non-participation in everyday occupations.

Almost 84 million Europeans live at risk of poverty, meaning that they face insecurity and live without what most people take for granted, with the potential to develop an utter and inner sense of vulnerability in handling everyday occupations (EC, 2008; ENOTHE, 2011). In the following I will outline the concepts of poverty and vulnerability through literature and research. The concept of vulnerability, and consequently the criteria defining vulnerable populations, has been vague, and to address this, indicators have been developed to classify vulnerability (Amin et al., 2012; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2008; Ruof, 2002). Indeed, both poverty and vulnerability relate to reduced possibilities for participation in everyday occupations.

Poverty

The participants (Studies II, III and IV) found themselves in vulnerable life situations and were receivers of official benefits. Here we touch upon grey arenas; people are not necessarily poor when living on official benefits, but doing that for years can bring people into situations where they have less occupational possibilities than people in general (Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003). Poverty is discussed in Norway as a social-political issue, even if Norway is one of the richest countries in the world. The standard of living is high for most citizens, and the welfare state assists those who are not capable of supporting themselves and their families through

work income. Despite this, some Norwegians still live under the national poverty level (more than 700 000 in 2014). The most used measurement of poverty is income (Lister, 2004). Poverty affects people in many ways. Consequences of poverty might be poor housing, homelessness, poor health and reduced access to healthcare, reduced access to education, training and leisure activities, financial exclusion and high levels of debt, and limited access to modern technology, as for instance Internet (EC,2008; ENOTHE, 2011; Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003). Poverty might lead to social exclusion, powerlessness, lack of voice, disrespect, stigma, shame, diminished citizenship and denials of human rights (Lister, 2004).

There are various comprehensions about how to define and understand poverty, with one important distinction being between *absolute* and *relative poverty*. We know for sure that at the start of the twenty-first century, almost half of the world's population suffered in a state of poverty, with an income less than 2 dollars per day (World Bank, 2001). Absolute poverty is the complete lack of resources to sustain life, while relative poverty refers to the inadequate lack of income compared to the average standards of living in your country. Therefore, it is possible to say that the study population in this thesis, living in relative poverty in Norway, can be considered as rich by the poorest living in absolute poverty in Burundi.

In recent years, several authors have argued to define poverty by capabilities, rather than economics (ENOTHE, 2011; Graham, Moodley & Selipsky, 2012). For instance, the study of Graham, Moodley and Selipsky (2012) provided insights into the lives of disabled people living in the context of urban poverty. These insights have revealed the mechanisms that can enhance the capabilities of disabled people living in urban poverty. To develop and focus competences as assessments and approaches in poverty reduction has also been on the agenda of the European Network of Occupational Therapy (ENOTHE, 2011), which published a report on competences for poverty reduction (Copore). From these sources two possible perspectives of exploring and understanding poverty occur: an economical perspective and a competence perspective. A competence perspective includes searching for peoples capabilities. A capability approach focuses on what people are able to do and be, as opposed to what they have, or how they feel (Hick, 2012). To consider poverty from more than an economic definition, linking it to competences and capabilities, makes the strategies for solutions at political, professional and individual levels clearer. In fact, Amin et al. (2011) claim that the contemporary development paradigm attempts to realise justice through advancing the conditions of the poor and for people that are underprivileged in all aspects of

life (Amin et al., 2011). This is also described in national (Meld.St.34) and international declarations (OECD, 2013) that present how to promote health and better living conditions for people in vulnerable life situations.

Vulnerability in an occupational perspective

Both poverty and vulnerability say something about people living in difficult conditions, which offer fewer opportunities to participate in activities because of social, economic, political and geographic restrictions. London (2007) defined vulnerable groups as social groups that experience limited resources and consequently high relative risk for morbidity and premature mortality, a definition which is in line with the research of Koegel, Memamid and Burnham (1995) and Shelton et al. (2009). Micheli and Rosina (2009) consider vulnerability to be a dynamic concept, as it refers to potentially problematic life conditions in the zone between normality and exclusion. Some researchers are occupied with people's inner sense of vulnerability (Anthony, 1974), while others concentrate on external risk factors, and how they might lead to vulnerability (Laliberte Rudman, 2012).

I have chosen to use the term 'people in vulnerable life situation' and not 'vulnerable people', which seems more static, and where attention is mostly on the inner conditions. The challenges of people living in vulnerable life situations is that there are factors that prevent them from demonstrating through their activities who they are or hope to be (Wilcock, 1993), and the question of how to remove such restraints arises.

Greater attention is given in contemporary research to explore what happens to people's health and well-being when their life conditions hinder participation in everyday occupations (Molke et al., 2004). From a global perspective, initiatives of social research attempt to improve people's life conditions (Hocking and Whiteford, 2012). From this it seems that expectations and possibilities for participation in occupations are shaped by social and political processes (Laliberte Rudman, 2012). Social exclusion may operate invisibly and occurs often because individuals or groups are discriminated against because of contextual factors (Christensen & Townsend, 2010). Therefore, there are definitive challenges to discover the complexity of the everyday occupations for people in vulnerable life situations, to be aware of restraints, and to achieve improved participation in everyday occupations.

Dear (1996) and Galvaan (2012) have examined the patterns and structures that restrain participation in everyday occupations for people in vulnerable life situations. Dear (1996) is a geographer and published a study about homeless people in the first book about occupational science (Zemke & Clark, 1996). He brought forward the link between power, control and geography. Establishments have the power to constrict the influence of geography, through defining where different groups and individuals in the society are allowed to stay or not to stay. Dear (1996) exemplified how the government decided where homeless people could stay in daytime and night time. He reflected that in more general terms we can think of people's lives as being bound by a 'prism' of time and space. For people in vulnerable life situations the time-space prism constricts to become a time-space prison. Galvaan (2012) explored how occupational patterns perpetuate historical injustice, and how the society's socio-economic context and politics constrain and enable occupations. One might imagine that this can influence the patterns of people's style of housing, the subcultures to which they belong, and their educational expectations. Therefore, we can view the normative aspects in the shadows of these patterns. Living in vulnerable life situations might lead to young people being unable to complete their education, leading to participation in non-legitimate occupations and homelessness.

Both Wilcock (2006) and Whiteford (2000) have studied non-legitimate occupations. Wilcock (2006) underlines how people in vulnerable life situations have less or no legitimate 'voice' in the mainstream society. As a result, participation in legitimate occupations might be difficult. For some people this can lead to engagement in occupations such as drugs, vandalism, gang participation and criminal activities. Whiteford (2000) underlines that gang participation can develop an identity for vulnerable groups. This is an urban phenomenon that might occur when people are living in vulnerable life situations and are in deprived circumstances. Heuchemer and Josephson (2006) have published a study about former homeless women who were recovering from drug addiction. The study describes how these women were engaged in non-legitimate occupations such as chasing money and drugs and getting high. Both these studies present the dynamics between environmental risk factors and people's occupational choices and possibilities of participating in the legitimate society.

It is well documented that people in vulnerable life situations might be exposed to deprivations (Laliberte Rudman, 2012; Molke, Townsend & Wilcock, 2003; Whiteford, 2004; WHO, 2007) and victimised positions (Polkinghorne, 1996). Being receivers of official

benefits can be conceptualised as dependency on others. A paradox may thus arise when vulnerable people receive benefits or help in different forms, as this can lead to further stigmatisation. Likewise, using the term 'vulnerability' may aggravate the problem of those it concerns rather than being helpful. For instance Shakespeare (2000) raises a discussion about terms that can lead to further stigmatisation. Using the example of fragile elderly, it is argued that when the elderly are described as 'the growing burden' and a 'demographic time bomb', this impacts negatively on the general understanding in the population, but ignores the reality that the majority of older people live independent lives in their own homes and do not rely on support from others. From this we can learn that even if people spend shorter or longer periods of their lives living in vulnerable life situations, researchers and health and social workers, as well as people in general, must be careful not to consider them as poor subjects, but rather as people having a unique knowledge. People in vulnerable life situations have experiences of being in, and doing activities in, these contexts. They are 'bearing witnesses', a concept discussed by critical anthropologists (Hocking, 2012). Through this they can be viewed as having a special knowledge. Both their vulnerable position and their strengths (vulnerability, bearing witnesses, survivor, and life expert) were in my mind when performing the studies. I chose to use the term 'vulnerability' to explore how specific kinds of doing might enhance participation in everyday occupations, even when those people that find themselves in difficult life situations have generally restricted occupational participation.

Health promotion

The services in health and social systems are usually described as treatment, rehabilitation/recovery, habilitation and preventive health, and health promotion. This thesis is designed in such a way that it is placed within the field of health promotion.

The agenda of the Ministry of Health and Care Services (White Paper, 2012-2013) is community services and health promotion. They underscore how policies must promote social equity in health; reduce the costs of treating diseases related to lifestyle, and how public efforts shall improve health and living conditions. Critical considerations of this plan mean that it relies too much on each individual's capability to change to a healthier lifestyle (e.g., physical training, nonsmoking programs and reduction of alcohol consumption), which can be interpreted as moralistic. However, this white paper (Meld.St.34) also underlines the urgency of public health efforts to improve health and living conditions. This is in line with

international politics, where there has been a rethinking of how health is experienced and how the environment influences health (Hocking & Ness, 2002). These new directions in global health policy began with *The 1978 Declaration of Alma-Ata*, which contained the World Health Organization's published call for *Health for All by the Year 2000*. This declaration emphasised the need for preventive programs and envisioned a major reorientation of the health professions towards illness prevention. Furthermore, *The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* (WHO, 1986) was developed, which defines health promotion as the process of enabling people to increase control over their own health. The charter stated that health is a resource in everyday life and is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources together with physical capacities. Putting health promotion on the agenda has led to specific processes to clarify the understanding of health. Even if the pharmaceutical industry strongly influences a medical perspective on health (Trentham & Cockburn, 2005), the World Health Organization (WHO, 2007) claims that health is determined by social, economic and political factors, as well as risk factors such as outbreaks of epidemics, industrial accidents, natural disasters and threats to global public health security. In reviewing the literature, this definition of public health does not appear to be universally accepted, although Acheson's (1998) definition is widely used, whereby he defines public health as a science and an art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through organised efforts of society. This involves a need for considerations as to how social, economic and political factors affect people's living conditions and health.

Thus, health promotion goes beyond health care, and policy makers should be aware of the health consequences of policy decisions (WHO, 2009). Therefore, political documents of health promotion (Ministry of Health and Social Services, 2012; Royal Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2008; WHO, 2009) have priorities for action to eliminate stigma and discrimination and to improve the conditions for people in vulnerable life situations. The shifting perspectives on determinants of health yield a need for alternative approaches for creating knowledge. This raises the problem of how to develop health promotion in different cultures within a society, despite social and cultural diversities. Engaging citizens to change their agendas seems to be one possible way of achieving this (Trentham & Cockburn, 2005). Research aimed at exploring and understanding the complexity of people in vulnerable situations, their occupational needs, and how injustice influences their everyday occupations should be used to explore this coherence.

Holmberg and Ringsberg (2014) bring forward that little research has been initiated so far on how to contribute to health promotion at both a system and a community level. Their study describes how, although a majority of occupational therapists in Norway work in the community, most of them work in the fields of individual rehabilitation and prevention, with relatively few working in health promotion and public health. There are, however, good examples of research in health promotion (Knuttsen, Holmen & Håpnes, 2005). Argyle (1987) exemplifies health promotion through participation in Scottish country dancing. This activity involves social contact, involvement in culture, skills and exercise. Such examples of health promotion activities can be found in all cultures, and can obviously be used more consciously as health promotion for people in general. Through such activities, health promotional occupations can empower and enable participation in different arenas of life (home, leisure, work/school) for people in vulnerable life situations, although more research is required in this field.

Occupational science assumes a relationship between the engagement in occupation and the health of people and populations (Yerxa, 1998). Research conducted by occupational scientists has brought forward that health can be promoted by enabling and facilitating participation in occupations at school, work, in the home, and at leisure (Law, 2002) with individuals, groups or larger populations. Occupational science was created to study people as occupational beings, and to research the purpose, meaning and complexities of the interaction between what people do, where and how (Wilcock, 2005). An awareness of the context of occupations has received more attention in contemporary discussions in occupational science, and recently Persson and Erlandsson (2014) introduced the term ‘ecopation’ to connect sustainability, globalisation and well-being. This approach is in concurrence with Horton et al. (2014), Laliberte Rudman (2012), Molineux and Whiteford (2011), and Wright-St Clair (2012), who all aim to capture the global challenges of health.

Participation

Participation in everyday occupations can be complicated. Homeless people, asylum seekers, and people with mental illness might not have the same possibilities for participation as the general population (Whiteford, 2000; 2004). In recent years, health and social services have made a shift from a care perspective to a human, democratic and autonomy rights perspective (Sinclair, 2006), and there have been many recent studies addressing participation in everyday

life (Hasselkus, 2006; Law, 2002; Vik, 2008; Witsø, Eide Vik, 2011). However, in this context many challenges to actual possibilities for participation still exist.

Participation in everyday occupations

Participation is defined by WHO (2001:10) as *involvement in a life situation*. The European Network of Occupational Therapists (ENOTHE) supplemented this definition in 2006: *Participation is involvement in a life situation through activity within a social context*. Hasselkus (2006:627) has also explored the term ‘participation’ related to everyday occupations: *Everyday occupation is a primary means by which we organize the world in which we live; the intermeshed patterns of ordinary occupations are what give shape to our daily lives*. Hasselkus adds that it is around the features of everyday occupations that we build meaning and community in our lives. Living with different kinds of vulnerability can make a person more exposed to being excluded from ordinary everyday occupations of their culture (Whiteford, 2000). Although it might be easier to pay attention to physical barriers rather than invisible hindrances to participation, we know that many people are disrupted from participation in everyday occupations or have never learned to do everyday occupations because of unfortunate living conditions when they were children.

Participation as a human right

In 1993 the United Nations (UN) arranged the World Conference on Human Rights, where they adapted the standard rules for equalisation of opportunities for people with disabilities (Sinclair, 2006; WHO, 1993). Participation as human, political and civil rights has been formalised through laws, resolutions and conventions (SHD, 1996/97; UN, 2006; WHO, 2001) and outlined in research (Borell et al., 2006; Scult & Townsend, 2006; Vik, 2008; Whiteford, 2005; Witsø, Eide & Vik, 2011). The UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (2006) describes one of the basic principles as: *full and effective participation and inclusion in society* (Art.3c). This is described as a political right connected to all areas of human life. According to the former leader of World Federations of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), Kit Sinclair (2006), the international community has experienced a paradigmatic shift in health and social services. She explains that the understanding has changed from the idea that people with special needs are objects for care and services, to the paradigm of equal rights and opportunities for all. Many occupational scientists have taken human rights initiatives throughout the world to promote justice for

people in vulnerable life situations (Whiteford, 2000). The WFOT revised its minimum standards of occupational therapy education accordingly (Hocking & Ness, 2002).

Norway has five million inhabitants, but not all children who are born in Norway are included in this number. Most children are registered and get their personal identification number at birth, and are a part of Statistics Norway's population statistics. Children of asylum seekers are not included in these statistics (they get a temporary personal identification number). People can have different interpretation of refugee politics, but it is a fact that without a personal identification number people have very limited access to human rights beyond their most basic needs. This is a global challenge and research about participation and human rights (Smith, 2005; Whiteford, 2005; Whiteford & Hocking, 2012; Wicks, 2004) has resulted in discussions about the need for a shift from primarily focusing on occupation's role in health, to a broader concept of social and political health. For instance, Schisler and Polatajko (2002) have reported how victims of torture who seek asylum in other countries might be traumatised by their experiences, and have problems utilising their competences for lack of cultural skills.

Promoting human rights is not just about the conditions of asylum seekers. It can be about the protection of cultural rights of native peoples, and the protection of children affected by conflicts or poverty. Wright-St Clair (2012) emphasises that human right is the elimination of human trafficking, protection against sexual abuses and the equality of women's social participation. Laliberte Rudman (2010) points to culture, politics and structure that may influence inclusion or exclusion from active citizenship.

From these issues I will now outline the occupations that are included in this thesis, explicitly the craft and creative activities, and how these activities (among others) have been used to increase the occupational possibilities in people's everyday lives.

Craft and creative activities

The use of craft and creative activities are generally popular and valued activities, and men and women in contemporary cultures participate for a variety of reasons (Pöllänen, 2013). These reasons might be economical (income), or linked to experiences of well-being, togetherness or meaningfulness (Dickie & Frank, 2007; Reynolds, 2009; Tubbs & Drake, 2007). Research has addressed the use of craft and creative activities used as a therapeutic

medium, and how the use of such occupations can strengthen people's abilities to cope with everyday challenges encountered during occupation (la Cour, Josephsson, Tishelman & Nygård, 2007; Griffith & Corr, 2007; Reynolds, 2009; Thomson & Blair, 1998). Clinical praxis is beyond the scope of this thesis, but different craft and creative activities can be used as activities in health promotion to explore existential questions (Bø & Sæther, 2004), and to transform medias that support people in handling challenges in everyday occupations (Watson & Swartz, 2004). Generally pathogenic indicators' influence on health has had more focus than health-promoting factors (Knudtsen, Holmen & Håpnes, 2005), so there remains a challenge to clarify the use of craft and creative activities in the field of health promotion. Therefore, concepts and research about craft and creative activities will be presented in the following, as well as concepts and research about the transformative processes of occupations.

Craft activities

To begin, I will describe how crafts were used as therapy when occupational therapy was founded and draw comparisons/connections to the research of craft activities in treatment, and for people in general, in line with contemporary developments in health promotion and social services.

Crafts have been rooted in occupational therapy since the beginning of the twentieth century (ENOTHE, 2004; Ness, 2002; Stein & Cutler, 2002; Tubbs & Drake, 2007). It has been described as a purposeful activity that has been a traditional modality and a cornerstone in occupational therapy (Kleinman and Stalcup, 1991; Spackman, 1968). According to the 1997 *Aschehoug and Gyldendals Dictionary*, crafts are a form of production that requires special skills, personal insight and extensive practice of any of the manual arts. The use of crafts in occupational therapy can be traced back to moral treatment, which was progressive for its time in the late seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. Moral treatment linked activity to rehabilitation. Psychiatric reformers like Rush (1745-1813), Pinel, (1745-1826), Reil (1759-1813), and Tuke (1784-1857), changed the course of caring for individuals with mental health illness from a perspective of custodial neglect to a model of humanistic concern (Stein & Cutler, 2002). It was human intervention that kept patients active in producing crafts while they were living at institutions. Various authors (Kielhofner, 1983; Thompson & Blair, 1998; Whiteford, Townsend & Hocking, 2000) have expressed a belief that research underlined the therapeutic value of crafts. Kielhofner (1983) claimed early in his

works, that thoughts and action are fused in craft and that this provides the most immediate context for Mary Reilly's vision of occupational therapy as binding hands and will to a common purpose. Lyons (2004) describes how pioneers had a commitment to the use of craft activities as central to the therapeutic processes, which has been confirmed by research (Friedland, 2003; Harris, 2008; Hasselkus, 2006; Horghagen, Alsaker, Josephsson, 2007) and narratives (Raastad et al. 2013).

Gradually a critique was raised in the 1950s about the therapeutic values of this medium and concern that the use of crafts did not seem to be scientific (Tubbs & Drake, 2007; Harris, 2007). The critics insinuated that occupational therapy was negatively identified with 'knitting ladies' and patients doing basket-weaving. A consequence of such critical views was that the use of crafts was reduced or disappeared from different curriculums, perhaps suggesting that Western culture favoured cognitive and verbal activities over manual skills. However, Holder (2001) questions why occupational therapists seem ashamed of using crafts as an intervention and claims that there are tendencies for other professions to explore the significance between doing crafts and well-being. Reflecting these sentiments, this thesis is a contribution to these discourses.

Considering contemporary research about crafts, some studies present results on the therapeutic use of craft activities (la Cour, Josephsson & Luborsky, 2005; Gunnarsson, 2008; Reynolds, 1997; Griffith & Corr, 2007), like the *Three Theme Method* used for adults in mental health services (Gunnarsson, 2008). Activities used in such assessments include painting (Gunnarsson, Jansson & Eklund, 2006; la Cour, Josephsson & Luborsky, 2005), knitting, wood-working, making soaps and ceramics (Gunnarsson, Jansson & Eklund, 2006; la Cour, Josephsson, Tishelman & Nygård, 2007; Griffith & Corr, 2007). Some studies reported the use of crafts to develop social relations and communicative skills, as for instance the study of Reynolds (1997), Griffith & Corr (2007) and la Cour et al. (2005). These studies presented how participants in groups developed a feeling of belonging despite isolation. Generally, many measurements have been described in this field, but la Cour et al. (2005) reflected that there were few measures in mental health services related to one's quality of life. Wagman et al. (2008) ask if the use of activity analysis can improve the therapeutic use of craft activities. From this we can see that, even with the available research results supporting the use of therapeutic use of craft activities, this remains a topic to develop further.

Available data suggests that people in vulnerable life situations have a more inactive lifestyle and do not participate as much in cultural activities compared to the main population (Eklund, 2010; Pieris & Craik, 2004). Crafts are generally well known activities (Tubbs & Drake, 2007) that have traditions of being used by people requiring additional income. Dickie and Frank (1996) use the term 'crafts' both as occupation and for products. They claim that the nature of craft production is easily adapted to home-based work, overlapped with other family-related activities. In developed countries craft production has historical roots in the Art and Crafts movement (Friedland, 2003). Dickie and Frank (1996) state that craft activities meet personal and socio-economic needs and are rich with multiple meanings. Tubbs and Drake (2007) reflected that there is a modern renaissance of craft activities in the Western world, but that these symbolize leisure time activities rather than work, which Pöllänen (2013) confirms.

The use of craft activities in Norway has been rooted in a social-democratic understanding that everyone should participate in the society and in the ideas from the Arts and Crafts movement, which were implemented in the Norwegian Craft Organisation (Sundt, 1975). The Arts and Crafts movement in Norway was established in 1910. Sundt (1817-1875) (1975), the founder of sociology in Norway, described from his studies that the working class's production of art and craft activities could provide an opportunity for additional income. The Arts and Crafts movement appeared as an organisation that rejected the values of industrialisation, but valued creating objects with the hands as well as the cultural values connected to such craftworks (Wilcock, 1998). In Norway, the organisation Husfliden structured the home production of arts and crafts. In contemporary times people still produce craft products as a means of mobilising political resistance (Dickie & Frank, 1996), to get necessary incomes, to conserve traditions, and to develop aesthetic expressions (Pöllänen (2013). Pöllänen (2013) published a study based on the analysis of the written narratives of 92 textile craft makers. The results indicated a significance of crafts as an agony- and stress-reducing and mind-calming activity. Obviously, from this study the crafts could be used as a transformative medium to enhance well-being for people who were attracted to craft-making. Arts and crafts remain a mandatory subject in primary school in Norway with 627 hours of education from the first to the tenth grade (Department of Education, 2006). Despite changes in the popularity of crafts throughout the years, it has remained a powerful media for people in general (Creek, 2009).

Crafts have been an activity for making protected and explored aesthetic expressions in people's cultures, where it has also been used as an expression against oppression (Dickie & Frank, 1996). Over time there have been shifting trends in cultural tastes, fair-trade, fashion and aesthetics, and currently ethnic products are popular. Many craft workers fluctuate between work, unemployment, income and poverty, as wars and civil disruption may occur, and raw materials may disappear or become too expensive (Scrase, 2003). However, Scrase claims that artisan crafts carry with them a piece of the identity of the makers themselves. Through this, the artisans' skills and production survive and circulate in the global consumer markets.

Considering this review, we can see how crafts have been used as a therapeutic activity, but also as an activity used by poor, vulnerable and oppressed people for purposes of getting useful products or economical contributions for the household. There is, however, a different opinion as to whether such craft works will exacerbate or diminish the craft workers' marginalised positions related to local and global capitalist economies. Furthermore, the review describes the use of craft activities for people in general, and for its benefits of experiencing meaningfulness, coping and togetherness. However, there appears to be a need for further research to explore health-promotional perspectives and advantages of craft activities in contemporary time and within different contexts.

Creative activities

Creative activities can be interpreted and used in different ways depending on how its use is theoretically rooted. For instance, they can be used in the frames of art expression which is psychological founded (Ødegaard, 2003), although the perspective used in this thesis is that of how people can enhance participation in everyday occupations through their creative doings. There have been various studies about creativity (Schmid, 2004; Yeager, 2006; Fox & Dickie, 2010; Perruzza & Kinsella, 2010) contending that humans are creative beings and that people have an innate need to engage in creative occupations. More specifically, Schmid (2004:6) defines creativity as: *An innate capacity to think and act in original ways, to be inventive, to be imaginative and to find new and original solutions to needs, problems and forms of expressions. It can be used in all activities. Its processes and outcomes are meaningful to its user and generate positive feelings.* Rollo May (1975) stresses that creativity is a processes, and how the process of doing and creating bring things into existence. May (1975) emphasises

that the world is always changing, and that this challenges people to think new thoughts, and to dare to create. Perruzza and Kinsella (2010) did a literature review of creative art occupations in therapeutic practice. They identified 23 articles exploring creative arts occupation as a therapeutic medium. Their findings suggested that the use of creative occupations in therapeutic practice has qualitative values related to health and well-being, especially the findings that presented how the use of creative arts occupations enhanced perceived control, built a sense of self, offered opportunities of expression, transformed illness experiences, or gained a sense of self.

Theatre and drama are two words that are used synonymously. They do, however, have some nuances; drama is a word from Latin and means “to do”. Drama is a pedagogic form of theatre. In the field of drama, activities such as dance, movements, songs, narratives and forms of play are most often used (Knudtsen, Holmgren & Håpnes, 2005). This suggest that drama might be used as treatment or as a health-promotion activity to change attitudes and develop knowledge and change behaviour, for instance, as related to change of lifestyle, self-managing related to mental health, drug addictions, and HIV/AIDS (Seguin & Rancourt, 1996). The term ‘theatre’ encompasses the whole concept with both performances and buildings (Schonmann, 2011). In the following the use of the terms theatre and drama might overlap, but generally these terms will be used according to the understanding of Seguin and Rancourt (1996) and Schonmann (2011).

In both theatre and drama subjunctive realities can be used to explore human possibilities rather than settled certainties (Bruner, 1986). Drama as an activity invites people to get involved in creative processes through which they can experience and unfold their resources. One specific form of drama and theatre is applied theatre (Thompson, 2003). Applied theatre is the use of theatre in a nontraditional way that is intended to bring about changes in human occupation through direct participation. It might enable participants to interpret the emerging space between cultures in such a way that the performances represent a move away from text analysis, towards the analysis of cultural enactments and speech events (Becker, 2004; Gade, 2007; Kaptani & Yuval-Davis, 2008). Drama has in this way been a means to inspire thoughts, critical reflections, emotional engagements and personal transforms (Denzin, 1997; Gray et al., 2000; Horghagen & Josephsson, 2010, Horghagen, 2012; Kwon, 2004).

Such personal transformations (Denzin, 1997) require interruptions or rupturing of ordinary everyday occupations, thus enabling participants to see alternatives (Fielding & Rudduck, 2002). These transformations need new activities, new structures, and rethinking of the traditional ways of doing; it is about how the involved participants can gain new perspectives (Fielding & Ruddock, 2002). Experiences from Scandinavian countries show that such projects are often implemented by enthusiasts, professionals or researchers who have a special belief in the use of such activities (Knudsen et al., 2005).

Research on drama has provided evidence for its health promotion values. For example, research in the field of education has shown that engagement in drama positively influences oral, language and social skills (Jones, 1996), language development (Podlozny, 2000), and story comprehension (Pelligrini & Galda, 1982, Rowe, 2004). Dance and movements have been considered social activities as well as a treatment method for emotional challenges and a strengthening activity for physical well-being. Myskja and Lindbæk (2000) report how children with emotional challenges and autism developed through dance therapy. Dance as an activity might strengthen balance and preventive initiatives (Nyström, 2001). Dance can also reduce psychosomatic illness by reducing the sense of pain (Nyström, 2001). According to Yeager (2006), drama and theatre studies are an avenue for increased understanding of the nature of occupation. Creative abilities affect the degree of quality of people's activities in everyday occupations, such as personal care, productivity, social relationships, and leisure (Creek, 2009).

Drama has been and remains an activity used to empower oppressed people and people in vulnerable life situations. This has been visualised by community projects and reported in books, but has yet to be addressed through science. August Boal has many publications on theatre as a method for people in vulnerable life situations (Boal, 1979; 1998; Sullivan & Lloyd, 2006). The Brazilian Augusto Boal developed a theatre process, *Forum Theatre*, where the audience can stop a performance and suggest different actions for the character experiencing oppression. Furthermore, the audience members can enter the stage and demonstrate their ideas. The theatre ensemble experienced that the audience members became empowered, not only through imagining change, but also through enacting the idea of change to generate social action (Boal, 1979; 1998). Boal cooperated with Paulo Freire, the author of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1972; 1998; Magalhães, 2012) to further develop another form of theatre called *Legislative Theatre*, which is a method used in neighbourhoods

to identify community problems. This method has been used to develop research designs and democratise dialogic processes where environmental health research, community health care and education have been integrated (Sullivan & Lloyd, 2006).

Taken together, the above suggests that theatre and drama can be used as a frame for creative activities, and become a medium for human change and development. However, there remains a need to investigate further, to establish precisely how human transformation happens when people in vulnerable life situations participate in such activities, and the relevance of the act of doing.

THEORETICAL POSITION OF THE THESIS

The chosen position in the overall perspective of the thesis

The transformative potentials of occupations are chosen as a theoretical position in the overall perspective of the thesis. This will be outlined in this chapter.

A chosen understanding of activity and occupation

People generally use verbs such as occupation and activity to express what people do. These terms have often been used synonymously (Golledge, 1998), but they are rather unique. Pierce (2001) claims that definitions of core concepts are the basis of the research of a discipline. These definitions shape the research traditions through their values and emphasis. There have been discussions regarding whether the terms ‘occupation’ and ‘activity’ should be placed within some kind of hierarchical system (Gray, 1997); however, Pierce (2001) argues that attempts to do this would act against a clarification of the two concepts into distinct and equally important units. The following section will present some distinctions about activity and occupation from how Pierce (2001) and Christiansen and Townsend (2010) have developed and defined these terms.

Firstly, one might associate ‘profession’ when we hear the term ‘occupation’, though it has a wider meaning. Christiansen and Townsend (2010) refer to the philosopher Horace who offered the admonition *carpe diem*, which means to seize or occupy the day. Christiansen and Townsend (2010) interpreted that Horace recommended that people live their life to the fullest

by learning about and making use of occupation for experiencing and structuring everyday life. Pierce (2001:139) is in line with such thinking and defines occupation as *...a specific individual's personally constructed nonrepeatable experience*. She underlines that *...an occupation is a subjective event in perceived temporal, spatial, and sociocultural conditions that are unique to that one-time occurrence*. This means that a key perspective of occupation is subjectivity, embodied in an occurring context. Pierce (2001) explains that eating breakfast is fully situated in a real context—the time, the place, the social grouping, the cultural meaning that you as a person perceive, and, therefore, this is an occupation. *An activity* is, according to Pierce (2001:139) *...a culturally defined and general class of human actions*. She describes activity as an idea held in the minds of persons and in their shared cultural language. Such activities can be for examples, work, play or cooking. We have some common sense of these activities that enable us to communicate about them.

The term 'occupation' refers to moving toward identification with individual experiences. Activity emphasises a shared cultural idea about human action. The distinction between the two terms can help us as health and social workers to be clear about the values of the individuals (Pierce, 2001). This includes reflecting upon the power the therapists have in these positions when they are choosing activities for the users (Horghagen, Josephsson & Alsaker, 2007). The intention in this thesis is to use the terms 'activity' and 'occupation' in line with Pierce's (2001) descriptions.

Occupational science

Occupational science emerged in 1989 at the University of Southern California. Yerxa et al. (1989) published the first scientific article in the field, *An Introduction to Occupational Science, a Foundation for Occupational Therapy in the 21st Century*. This article and the commencement of the doctoral program, proposed occupational science as a new discipline (Molineux, 2010; Zemke & Clark, 1996). Occupational science was defined as *the study of the human as an occupational being including the need for and capacity to engage in and orchestrate daily occupations in the environment over the lifespan*. According to Molineux (2010), occupational science is firstly a field of study that draws on a range of research methodologies, and approaches due to the complexity of humans and the multifaceted nature of occupation. Secondly, the science is related to the statement that humans are occupational beings and that humans have an innate occupational nature. Thirdly, it is hypothesised that

humans have a need to engage in occupations as well as to have the necessary capacities to do so. The last parts of the definition focus on human engagement in occupations over the lifespan, but also stress that humans orchestrate their occupational engagement in their environment. Occupational science is an interdisciplinary study and Elisabeth Yerxa is credited as its founder.

Why research on occupation occurred

Let me guide you to a retrospective view of this topic, central to this thesis. Why study human occupation? The establishment of occupational science was a reaction to something that had happened in the past. I therefore begin by returning to the foundation of occupational therapy in 1918.

Why does occupation matter? Occupational therapy's early paradigm was centred on the importance of occupation in everyday life and as a restorative force. Early founders chose the term 'occupation' as the name of the profession, the conclusion to a common philosophical approach to develop people's health and education through occupation (Breines, 1990). It was physicians (Adolf Meyer and William Rush Dunton), nurses (Susan Tracy), architects (Thomas Kidner), and craft persons who reapplied the ideas of moral treatment in different areas of caring. Eleanor Clarke Slagle was generally considered to be the primary founder of occupational therapy. Together these pioneers generated occupational therapy and described the principles of using occupation to influence recovery from illness and adjustment to disability (Breines, 1990; Kielhofner, 1997; Wilcock, 2003).

However, there were two paradigmatic crises in occupational therapy. First, around the 1950s, there was a pressure to establish a scientific rationale for the field of occupation. The biomedical perspective dominated the health care systems and forged a closer alliance with medicine (Kielhofner, 1997). A mechanistic paradigm was subsequently created and resulted in advances to certain knowledge, but also created confusion about the professional identity and loss of respect for the therapeutic impact of occupation (Kielhofner, 1997). This mechanistic paradigm achieved much of its promise, but had replaced a holistic thinking, and this brought forward a second crisis. The departure of occupational science resulted in discussions amongst occupational therapists related to the second crisis (Yerxa et al., 1989; Yerxa et al., 1990), and questions were raised about how to expand the understanding of

occupation in contrast to the mechanistic paradigm. Yerxa and her colleagues (1989) then started to build a science on the concept of occupation. In their opinion, it was essential that this research should be interdisciplinary and separate from occupational therapy praxis (Yerxa et al., 1990). From the establishment of occupational science in 1989 until today, a large number of studies have been published, especially in the *Journal of Occupational Science*.

The transformative potential of occupation

Reflecting retrospectively on the research articles upon which this mantle is based, the transformative potential of craft and creative activities occurred. As a consequence of this, the transformative potential of occupations was the chosen theoretical position for discussing the results on a meta-level.

The transformative potential of occupation

Elizabeth Townsend (1997) shows how occupations include all the active processes from the beginning to the end of our lives, where we look after ourselves and others and try to be socially and economically productive and enjoy life. The transformative potential in occupation refers to the possibilities humans have to choose and engage in occupations for the purposes of directing and changing personal or social aspects of life (Law et al., 1997). According to Law et al. (1997) the purposes of these engagements are to realise our dreams to achieve a better life. They outline four key features of the active processes of occupation that illustrate this transforming potential: learning, organising time and place, discovering meaning and exercising choice and control. Watson and Swartz (2004) made further contributions to the transformative potentials of occupation using their African lenses. They explain how transformation might occur at a community level, in addition to the personal and social level. Watson (2004) is concerned about the vulnerable and poorest members of society, those who are often neglected and overlooked. She claims that these people must be enabled to achieve what they perceive as a better life in their community environment. This is made possible through democracy, job creation, fundamental social services and the rule of law. Most people change and develop at all life stages and ages, but circumstances at a personal, social or a community level can hinder such developments. In such cases efforts are required to bring out people's latent strengths (Watson, 2004). Townsend (1997) describes how therapists have used occupations to open people's transformative potentials.

Duncan and Watson (2004) anchor the concept of ‘transformation’ in humanitarian values such as social justice and altruism. They stress that transformation is associated with social justice, thus creating possibilities for transformation for the vulnerable, the poor and people with disabilities. When Duncan and Watson (2004) include altruism in the values of transformation, it becomes centred on what happens in a network of people, rather than the traditional client-centred practice between the therapist and the patient. Duncan and Watson (2004) show that this approach is aimed at finding meaning and purpose through relatedness with others. The therapist has to act as a facilitator of change in communities, and this might expand the ethos of empowerment of vulnerable groups. Watson and Swartz’s (2004) experiences have made valuable contributions to the field of health promotion in Norwegian society, which is rapidly becoming more diverse. According to Watson and Swartz (2004), we must rethink the term ‘occupation’ and see new horizons of practice. Specifically, it is important to see and develop attitudes and skills to develop relevant practices and acceptance in a broader arena than it is currently done. This means that we have to support people to understand the ideologies of oppression in their social environments and within themselves. This might enable people to come into positions where transactions of communication occur (Cutchin & Dickie, 2012), and from these positions, they can transform attitudes in their environments. An example of such transformation is how homeless people, drug-addicted and people belonging to the underground culture began producing street magazines to get an income, but the result was that they also communicated and influenced people’s stigmas and prejudices towards them as a group of low-valued people.

Philosophers such as Nagel (1987), Kleiber, Broch, Lee, Dattilo and Caldwell (1995), and Polkinghorne (1995) have focused their research on transformation to indicate the idea of human processes and change over time. Through reflections of values, engaging in activities, selecting priorities and making choices, people decide what they want to become (Nagel, 1987). Kleiber et al. (1995) and Polkinghorne (1995) focused on narratives as transformative mediums. Kleiber et al. (1995: 297) proposed that the new story that people write for themselves subsequent to traumatic life events *...is likely to be illustrated with a future self in action in a way that makes life enjoyable and meaningful once again*. Polkinghorne (1995) studied how impairment in functioning moves some clients from an agentic identity of self to a victimised identity. Polkinghorne was, therefore, able to see how the participants’ engagements in purposeful, motivating and constructive occupations contributed to

transformation to a more agentic identity; from considering themselves as a victim to agentic life plots.

This research has some similarities to the therapists Dubouloz et al. (2004) whose purpose was to examine the process of transformation of personal beliefs, values, feelings, and knowledge underlying occupational change of clients with rheumatoid arthritis. Their findings suggested that transformation of new meaning perspectives occurred through occupational therapies such as independence, activity and altruism. Two other clinical studies focused on transformation of meaning of occupations for people with cancer as life-threatening illness (Vrkljan & Miller-Polgar, 2001; la Cour et al., 2007). Participating in creative occupations promoted a positive and healthy focal point. This provided a way of dealing with illness and its consequences, and through those activities the patients transformed the illness experience into an experience that was part of a larger life picture (la Cour et al., 2007). Vrkljan and Miller-Polgar (2001) studied occupational engagements and its meaning to individuals with breast cancer. Their study found that the self is altered as a result of a life-threatening diagnosis. The participants underwent two transformative processes during disruption of the occupational self when they were not able to engage in the activities they desired. Secondly, Vrkljan and Miller-Polgar (2001) described how the participants reconstructed, transformed and negotiated their occupational self to regain a sense of control in their daily lives. Mondaca and Josephsson (2013) reported research on occupation as a transformative phase, as a part of a larger healing process for elderly survivors of human rights violations. Occupations acted as a bridge in creating meaning, and participants tried different strategies to gain coherence in life. In their study they understood the transformative phase as a kind of liminal space where boundaries dissolve a little and people stand on the threshold, an undefined space. It represents a transformative phase of ambiguity, a marginal and transitional state, where things are about to be defined. Such a contextualised view of occupation, considering the relationship and negotiations among persons, environment and activity, can be deemed transactional processes.

Implications for the research aim

Social differences in health are growing in Norway, and are parallel to people's education and income (Meld.St.34). These social differences have an impact on people's lives and occupational possibilities (OECD, 2013). These differences influence people's access to health services, education, housing, modern technology, training and leisure activities (EC, 2008; Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003). Social differences might lead to deprived situations for groups, including exclusion, or participation in non-legitimate and criminal occupations (Dear, 1996; Denzin, 1997; Wilcock, 1998; Whiteford, 2000; Heuchemer & Josephsson, 2006; Laliberte Rudman, 2010; Galvaan, 2012). The health and social services worldwide present a paradigmatic change from care and treatment, towards greater emphasis on health promotional efforts to deal with these challenges and to enable people to participate in everyday occupations (home, care, school/work, leisure) (Amin et al., 2011). Further research is needed to explore the values of this paradigmatic change.

Over the past decades debates in occupational science have addressed whether to take more economic, political and social forces into consideration of human occupation. This critical reflexivity has problematised the individualising of occupation (Whiteford & Hocking, 2012; Laliberte Rudman, 2013), and the research as to how vulnerable groups are shaped by political, economic, social and cultural forces (Laliberte Rudman, 2013). The debaters ask for aims to reveal how occupational inequities are politically and socially produced, and there is a need to develop more knowledge and further debates about the relations between social-political contexts and human occupation. Considering these debates and the need for Norwegian politics to take on more health promotion efforts, one can see a requirement for rethinking and innovative initiatives. This can involve exploring these issues through different methodological designs and with different approaches, such as cross-over studies, where people from different knowledge cultures work together to bring forward the experiences from people in vulnerable life situations. This also involves considering people in vulnerable situations as experts with a unique knowledge. The theories about the transformative potential of occupations seems appropriate to explore the use of craft and creative activities (as traditional and nontraditional activities) within the health promotional services, with the idea that through such activities people in vulnerable life situations can find ways out of problematic situations, and enhance their participation in ordinary everyday occupations.

RESEARCH AIMS

The overall aim for this thesis was to enhance knowledge of how people in vulnerable life situations experience participation in craft and creative activities, and if and how such engagement might enhance their participation in everyday occupations. From this, the aim is also to enhance knowledge about the transformative potentials of craft and creative occupations. The overall research question for this thesis is described as follows: *How might engagement in craft and creative activities enhance participation in everyday occupations for people in vulnerable life situations?* This will be discussed within the theoretical perspective of the transformative potentials of craft and creative occupations.

The main purposes for each of the four studies were:

- To describe the use of craft activities as treatment during the period 1952-1960 by interviewing six retired Norwegian occupational therapists.
- To describe theatre as an occupation for asylum seekers and identify whether engagement in theatre can promote participation in other areas of their lives.
- To explore narratives presented by homeless people in ethnodrama, and how they related them to meaning in their everyday lives.
- To explore how engagement in craft activities in groups at meeting places can support mental health users' everyday occupations.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A dialectical approach between theoretical conceptions, empirical material and my pre-understanding has been used in the planning and performance of this research. Such an approach has similarities with the hermeneutical circle (Giddens, 1984). The hermeneutic circle presents ways to describe, understand, interpret, and develop empirical material from perspectives of chosen theoretical foundations, and to describe, understand, and develop knowledge from empirical material collected through ethnography and interviews. The studies presented here have been an ongoing processes (Giddens, 1984), involving shifting foreground and background information, and moving between the empirical data and interpretations recurrently. Addressing the overall aim, the studies were conducted with different groups of people in different vulnerable life situations. They are all empirically based studies with interviews, participatory observations, and ethnographic approaches. Ethnographical approaches require both conceptual and empirical materials (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), and this fits together with the hermeneutical dialectical processes of developing knowledge. The methods were chosen to suit the research questions.

Presentation of the chosen study designs, epistemological aspects, ontological aspects, aspects of my pre-understanding, participants and sampling, data collection, methods of analysis, ethical considerations, and methodological critique and considerations will be presented in the following.

Study designs

Qualitative designs were chosen in order to answer research questions to develop knowledge about and contribute to substantial theory-building on how engagement in craft and creative activities might enhance participation for people in vulnerable life situations. The chosen arenas were the homes of the occupational therapy pioneers, a centre for asylum seekers, a community school that offered courses for asylum seekers, the streets, parks, a community centre for homeless people, and a community meeting place for people with mental health illness. Meeting participants in their own environments was reasoned to be a good choice to get information about the participants' ongoing flow of everyday occupations. Through this I

would be able to get information about their doing and thinking, their everyday routines and tasks, how they interpreted themselves in their situation, related to themselves and others, and how they saw future life prospects. The specific research methods used in the studies of the thesis were textual analysis (Kjelstadli, 2000; Peachy-Hill and Law, 2000), ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), and narrative theory (Polkinghorne, 1995). All the studies were theoretically founded in studies about human doings in an occupational science perspective. Table 1 provides an overview of research approaches and methods used.

Study I was designed as a qualitative explorative study with textual analysis (Kjelstadli, 2000; Peachy-Hill & Law, 2000). The purpose of the study was to establish some understanding of the past through textual analysis of stories told about craft activities in the early years of occupational therapy in Norway. Guided conversations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) were chosen as they encourage the participants, who were occupational therapy pioneers, to talk freely about their areas of interest. A conversation guide was developed to ensure that key points were addressed. The interviews were conducted in the homes of the participants. They were invited to bring objects from the defined period. Based on reflections on the potential of craft and creative activities from this paper, three studies about the use of craft and creative activities in contemporary time were designed.

Study II was designed as a qualitative explorative study, following guidelines from an ethnographical design (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), and interpretive analytic methods guided from Thagaard (1998). The experiences of living in a vulnerable life situation at an asylum centre and participating in a theatre project were explored. The manuscript was based upon the stories and experiences of the participants. I participated in people's everyday life context for an extended period of time; observing, asking questions, and making comments when appropriate and relevant to the study aim (Alsaker & Josephsson, 2010).

Study III had much of the same design as Study II, with a few differences. The theoretical and methodological foundations were supported by ideas from drama (Saldana, 2005), narratives (Mattingly, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1995), and ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The aim was to explore narratives presented by homeless people in drama, and how they related them to meaning in their everyday lives. The material was narrative in its form, and paradigmatic analysis was used on the material (Polkinghorne, 1995). Paradigmatic analysis is common to most thematic analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). This research brought forward how

participation in drama activities can clarify the needs of homeless people and identify better ways to deliver occupational opportunities to this population.

Study IV followed up on Study I by focusing on the use of craft activities, but in the context of community services. The participants were people with long-term mental health illness. The object of analysis in this study was the participants' engagement in craft production in a group. The design of this study was focused ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), and the guidelines used for analysing the fieldnotes were paradigmatic analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995).

All the studies have a theoretical foundation in studies of occupation, and human potential through occupation (Dickie & Frank, 1996; Fielding & Ruddock, 2002; Law et al., 1997; Polkinghorne, 1995; Watson, 2004; Whiteford & Hocking, 2012). Taken together, the four studies are exploratory and aim to contribute to substantial theory about human occupation, within the specific area of the use of craft and creative occupations and how these can enhance participation in everyday life occupations for people in vulnerable life situations. Specifically, the studies bring forward how the activities and changes unfold and this contributes to the field of occupational science, recovery, and health promotion. Furthermore, some ontological and epistemological aspects of the thesis will be presented.

Table 1: Thesis overview

	Study I	Study II	Study III	Study IV
Research approach	Qualitative explorative	Qualitative explorative	Qualitative explorative	Qualitative explorative
Participants	Occupational therapists, pioneers N=6	Asylum seekers living at asylum centres N=11	Homeless people N=4	Participants at a meeting place N=12
Gender and age	F=6 Aged between 64 and 81 years	M=7, F=4 Aged between 20 and 30 years	M=3, F=1 Aged between 40 and 55 years	F=9, =3 Aged between 45 and 78 years
Methods of data collection	Guided conversations	Participant observations	Ethnographic participation	Ethnographic participation
Data analysis methods	Textual analysis (Kjelstadli, 2001)	Interpretive analytic method (Thagaard, 1998)	Paradigmatic analysis of narrative data (Polkinghorne, 1995)	Paradigmatic Analysis of narrative data (Polkinghorne, 1995)
Context of the study	The participants' homes	The asylum centre, the community school, the castle where they performed	The streets and parks where they spent their time and a community centre	A meeting place/a community centre

Epistemological and ontological aspects

Pragmatism (Dewey, 1980) was chosen as the epistemological approach of this thesis because of my interest in the study of the everyday occupations and the situations within which they acted, rather than isolated aspects of human display. It is assumed that health, social and cultural workers might have an inherent wish to improve people's possibilities to manage everyday occupations and achieve more fulfilling lives. Taking the position as a researcher, one has to be more aware of the role of science. How can I combine an inherent wish to

change things for the better within the role of science? How can I position my scientific works within these frames? I looked for support and answers to these questions in the philosophy of pragmatism.

Pragmatism, as described and developed by James, Peirce and Dewey, can be understood as one of four philosophical movements, i.e. in addition to Marxism, existentialism, and analytic philosophy, which are all concerned with the field of praxis and action (Bernstein, 1972).

James, Peirce and Dewey all discussed how Hegel understood the world, but Dewey claimed to have discovered in Hegel a sense of life, process, and the concreteness of experience itself. The emphasis in pragmatism as presented by Dewey (1980) was to develop an understanding of the concepts of action and doing (Bernstein, 1972). From this he was concerned with how to theorise the doings with the goal of making social reforms to create a better world. Dewey claimed that knowledge is an activity that people can use to change the world, through active existence in genuine situations of experiences (Dewey, 1980). His understanding of *learning by doing*, which would later influence the educational systems worldwide, can be understood as the foundations for problem-based learning (Horghagen, 1998; Steinsholt & Løvlie, 2004). Dewey's conceptual foundations about how to theorise the doings have similarities to Wilcock (2006) when she writes about the health processes of doing, being, becoming and belonging, described as ontological assumptions of human transformations in this thesis. People can change the world through active existence in genuine situations of experiences. Adolf Meyer, one of the founders of occupational therapy, was inspired by Dewey and his studies of human occupation.

Dewey's pragmatic attitude is, according to Cutchin and Dickie (2012), relevant to occupational science, which is concerned with issues, related to making a better world, and ontologically relevant when studying people in vulnerable life situations. The use of pragmatic aspects is connected to the growing consciousness of the influences of the social and political context in occupational science, which have led to a more critical ontology. A broader societal contribution is related to a global acknowledgement of the emergent numbers of people who are poor, unemployed, and homeless due to conflicts or natural disasters (Whiteford & Pereira, 2012). According to Wicks (2012), a key belief about human occupation reveals ideas about justice, inclusivity and diversity. Those key beliefs have ontological synergies with the philosophical foundations of occupational science (Wicks, 2012), as expressed by the founders such as Yerxa et al. (1989), Zemke and Clark (1996), and

Wilcock (1993). Consequences of such thinking include the notion that theory should not only serve science, but also be evaluated by how it makes a difference in the world, which is in line with pragmatic philosophy.

The ontological theory of Wilcock (1999), health through occupation (doing, being and becoming), holds the notions of potential and growth of self-actualisation and transforming. Thus, Wilcock's hypotheses' address ontological questions, which according to Langergaard, Rasmussen and Sørensen (2011) are about why things are as they are, and how people understand their being in contextualised situations. The ontological aspects of this thesis have had consequences for the choices of theoretical assumptions and methodologies. They have influenced me to study what people do, or are not able to do, within the situations that they find themselves, bound by a prism of time and space, as Dear (1996) describes it. To achieve a deeper understanding of the participants' challenges of doing everyday occupations, the chosen research methods have made it possible to be together with the participants in the situated activities, and through this obtain knowledge about how they tell stories related to their doings and explore the transformative and transactional potential of doing craft and creative activities.

There are theoretical connections in this thesis between ethnography, occupation, transformations and pragmatism. Ethnography as a field of research was developed by the members of the Chicago School in the 1920s and 30s. Their aim was to reach an in-depth, interpretive understanding of life in a particular cultural context from the perspective of the people within it (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The Chicago School conducted a great number of ethnographic studies, for example Thrasher's (1927) study of a street gang. They studied everyday life by examining the local, subjective world of particular social groups (Scott, 2011). People like John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Adolph Meyer, and Eleanor Clark Slagle belonged to the milieu of the Chicago School. They were friends and colleagues and were concerned about social welfare (Breines, 1990; 1995; Scott, 2011). Eleanor Clark Slagle and Adolph Meyer were the founders of occupational therapy. John Dewey was a colleague of Adolph Meyer, and also had discussions with Paulo Freire. One might suppose that there were professional discussions between occupational therapists and the members of the Chicago School among the pragmatic, ethnographic and the occupational assumptions. Viewing history makes it possible to see developments and how different philosophers and professions have affected each other. Seen this way, ethnography, pragmatism and occupation

can be linked, making the epistemological and ontological assumptions and the choice of data collection methods in this thesis, appropriate choices. Together these concepts are the foundations for my professional formation, and I must admit to feeling a kind of intellectual joy discovering these connections. I will argue more about this in the following chapter.

Aspects of pre-understanding

As an occupational therapist, a lecturer in occupational therapy and occupational science, and a performative artist, I consider that the described epistemological and ontological aspects are consistent with my professional and personal formation, values, and experiences of human development. The choice of research design and the foundations in philosophical and theoretical traditions constitute a way of understanding the world (Langergaard et al., 2011). Science and theory are creations of the human mind that make sense of the world (Kielhofner, 2006). Although objectivity and certainty are scientific desires, Gadamer (2007) claims that it is not possible to separate knowledge from the knower. He writes about the subjectivity of the horizons of understanding. As an occupational therapist I have knowledge from medicine, human sciences, and human complexity. My practical experiences have been with people in vulnerable life situations. I have worked as a traditional occupational therapist in mental health institutions and in communities, and with people in somatic rehabilitation. I have also worked non-traditionally together with cultural workers and pedagogues using theatre as a method for young unemployed people, Romany people, asylum seekers and homeless people. My experiences and my professional foundation are my conditions for knowledge production. Such processes, as described in the hermeneutic approach (Denzin, 1997; Giddens, 1984), are about how to interpret and express someone else's expressions. Such interpretations are connected to me, as is my knowledge (called the pre-understanding), and this constitutes the hermeneutic circle. There are differences in the way Giddens (1984) and Gadamer (2007) relate to hermeneutics. Gadamer (2007) relates to hermeneutics as ontology, while Giddens (1984) uses it more like a method. Using hermeneutics as a method, my analysis expanded and opened it for transparency of the interpretations. This is of value for the credibility of the study, Gadamer explains (1988). Though I have not concretised the hermeneutical perspective in the methodological descriptions of the articles, this has been a methodological foundation in the analysis. It is about considering the data from different levels of knowledge. The paradigmatic analyses, as well as the interpretive analysis, are in accordance with an

epistemology based on the hermeneutical traditions, where the interpretations have been to understand doings in contextualised situations.

Participants and sampling

The participants had a unique situated knowledge from their positions, a knowledge that was useful for informing the society about occupational inequities. There were, however, some dilemmas about recruitments of participants belonging to unknown cultures for me as a researcher. How to gain access to four different cultures arose as an initial question. The four studies varied in the degree of availability. The contexts that were most radically different from the others were those of the homeless and the asylum seekers. Studying unknown cultures made it necessary to spend time establishing contact and trust. This was especially true of Study III, which became a long social process to find participants and establish contact. The challenge was not that the homeless people seemed unfriendly, but was rather about the need to be conscious about my own integrated behaviour of avoided contact with homeless people, and then change this to an integrated behaviour. It was about meeting my own pre-judgments. Goffman (1967) used the term 'involvement shield', and it is about the behaviour we use to avoid interaction. Once I became aware of this, the next step was to form strategies for how to remove such involvement shields and gain contact with the target group. It was about how to dare to present oneself as a researcher, to dare to describe the project and to invite them into the project and believe that they would be interested.

The category of participants in Study I differs from the main category of participants, as this group consisted of the occupational therapy pioneers. Through their experiences, they told about the dilemmas of engagement in craft activities for their patients, and if such engagement enhanced the patients participation in everyday occupations. In this way this study was involved in the thesis.

Hereby I will present the participants of the studies:

Study I

The participants were six occupational therapists (n=6, F=6) who had worked in the central region of Norway in the 1950s. They were all women between 64 and 81 years old at the time of the interview. They practiced from 1952 to 1960 at institutions where people with

polio, epilepsy, tuberculosis and mental health diseases were treated or rehabilitated. All except one had been educated in Oslo, the main city of Norway. The others had been educated in England. The participants were young pioneers in the studied period, in trained roles to implement a new profession with occupation as treatment in the social and health care systems.

Study II

The participants were asylum seekers and refugees. Some were recruited through their participation in a language course at a community school, and others were recruited from the asylum centre. They (n=11, M=7, F=4) were between 20 and 30 years old. They originated from Asia or Africa.

Study III

The participants were homeless people. They were recruited by the researcher and the theatre instructors through time spent walking and sleeping in specific areas of the city. For the researcher, these participants belonged to an unknown society. Eleven people participated in the theatre performance and four (n=4, M=3, F=1) of them were recruited for this study. They were adults around 50 years old.

Study IV

The participants (n=12, M=3, F=9) were individuals who most often attended the craft group at a community meeting place. All participants had long-lasting mental health illness, were receivers of disability benefits, and participated in the craft group almost daily. Although meeting places do not file medical records and do not register attendee's diagnoses, according to staff, the participants' mental health illness could generally be related to traumatic experiences, depression, anxiety, loneliness, or manic depression. The study was introduced twice, once verbally and once by distributing pamphlets at joint meetings with all the participants at the meeting place held in the living-room. The twelve participants who participated regularly in the crafts group were recruited for the project.

Data collections

Study I: Guided conversations and reflective journal

The first author gathered data through interviews in the form of guided conversations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). A conversation guide was developed to ensure that key points were

addressed. A reflective journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was written after each conversation. The conversations were tape recorded and transcribed. I revisited the participants to follow up on some of the questions in the conversation guide. Literature addressing the development of the profession of occupational therapy in Norway was included in the material (Haworth & Macdonald, 1945; Munthe, 1962). The participants gave rich descriptions and explanations, and presented objects and magazines from that time and described the context of the period. This made it easier to understand the historical context of their stories.

Study II: Participant observations with guidelines from ethnography

The first author collected data through participant observations. The collection of data followed recommended guidelines from an ethnographic design (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In general, this involves participation in people's everyday life context for an extended period of time, observing, asking questions and making comments when these are appropriate and relevant to the aim of the study. The observations took place at the rehearsals for 8 hours a week over 24 weeks. The data consisted of fieldnotes and the created manuscript, which was developed by the instructors together with the participants. It was based on the participants' stories and enactments. The fieldnotes were written shortly after each rehearsal; however, I took notes during discussions about specific topics. This was agreed to by the participants and the instructors.

All the studies were conducted in a nonintrusive manner (Guillemin & Gillam, 2009). This was considered as important, particularly as the participants found themselves in vulnerable life situations. Giving written and oral information and explaining the purpose of the studies followed the recommendations of Guillemin and Gillam (2009). The ethnographic approach includes involvement in activities within the participants' local context to render possible experiences together with them. Ethnographic research methods derive from the tradition in anthropology of interpreting the process of cultural behaviour. This means that the researcher participated in defined parts or generally in the participants' everyday life context for an extended period of time. Through the focus on practical details of the everyday occupations (Bauman & Sherzer, 1996), one might understand the participants' perspectives, actions, incidents, norms and values, and increase the opportunity to catch sight of the unexpected. The questions asked to encourage participants to tell stories from their everyday lives were related to their way of living in contemporary time, but also to the past and their wishes for the future.

Occupations are embedded in the everyday lives of people and take on different nuances related to living conditions and context. In such ways it seemed consistent to use ethnography as an entrance to explore research questions that were in line with an occupational perspective. Through such an approach, it was possible to observe the doings, and not only the participants own descriptions of their doings as through interviews.

Study III: Ethnographic participation

The collected data followed recommended guidelines from an ethnographic design (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Extensive fieldnotes and reflections were written shortly after each rehearsal or performance, and were structured into three categories: context, experience and reflections. The data consisted of those fieldnotes and the created manuscript. Data collection took place one day a week for a six-month period. The first author and one of the instructors wrote fieldnotes individually and then notes were shared and discussed. The period of gathering data, creating the manuscript for the performance and presenting the performance lasted for one year. In this study, data gathering through participatory observations guided by ethnography, allowed the cultural workers and me to experience a different use of the city and its facilities. We became aware of restrictions as to where we could stay when we were not consumers. We also experienced how free services, such as food and hostels, created a structure to the days, and how it was important to behave and regulate time schedules to get free meals and free accommodations. The methodological procedures within the thesis fostered a growing consciousness about the challenges in everyday occupations and how they were connected to participants' view of themselves in a historical, social and political perspective.

Study IV: Guidelines from ethnography and narrative data collections

Participatory observations were conducted by the first author for four hours one day per week for a period of seven months in the crafts group. I did the same activities as the participants: observing, listening, talking and asking questions, and making comments, when these were appropriate and relevant to the aim of the study. The fieldnotes were written shortly after each workshop, and were structured into three categories to describe the context of each workshop. These were related to seasons and events in the lived culture so as to be able to consider situated actions (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Methods of analysis

All the analysis have been content analysis with categories/themes as a result, but with different theoretical references: Study I: textual analysis (Peachy-Hill & Law, 2000; Kjelstadli, 2001), Study II: interpretive analytic methods (Thagaard, 1998), Studies III and IV: paradigmatic analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). Paradigmatic analyses are in the methodological tradition of narrative inquiries (Polkinghorne, 1995). The paradigmatic type of narrative inquiry is a method where stories are gathered as data, followed by paradigmatic

analytic procedures used to produce categories. Narrative inquiry refers to research designs where stories are used to describe human doings (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Content analysis is a method of analysing written, verbal or visual communication messages (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007). Its aim is to attain a condensed and broad description of a phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is categories describing the studied phenomenon (Thagaard, 1998). Content analysis has been criticised in the quantitative field, where it is considered to be a simplistic technique that does not lend itself to statistical analysis. Some have criticised content analysis for not being sufficiently qualitative in nature (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007). Despite diverse criticism, this method has gained an established position in research (Malterud, 2001; Thagaard, 1998).

The aim of the analysis was to transform the data collection into trustworthy, reliable and transferable findings. This is especially important when using content analysis as categories that are created from the raw data without a theory-based categorisation matrix (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, different suggested actions were chosen (Malterud, 2001; Polkinghorne, 1995; Thagaard, 1998): Firstly the principles and transparent and systematic procedures for data analysis were described in all the studies. This was done to allow the readers to understand the steps of the analysis from raw material to the presented findings. Secondly decisions were made as to whether theory should guide the analysis into various categories or whether the categories should be developed from the material. This was perceived as a dilemma. My aim was to stay close to the empirical data, to interpret the participants' doings and sayings in their situations. The theory was chosen as the analysis proceeded, so the categories reflected those of the literature presented in the study's introduction. Through the work with the analysis, I became gradually more aware of what the units of analysis were, how the research question became a frame of the focus of the analyses, and of my pre-understanding. The focus of the analysis had been people's doings and their reflections of their own doings. I reflect that descriptions of these considerations enhanced the trustworthiness, reliability and the transference of the results of the analysis. Thirdly some strategies were used to validate the results: I was responsible for all the analyses, but the analyses were developed further and rewritten after discussions with the co-authors. I have also presented the preliminary results for the participants (Paper IV) for peers in the research-networks to which I belong. Here preconceptions were shared and critically discussed. In this

way the validity of the studies was examined and discussed as well as the transference of the results of the analyses.

I experienced some problems regarding the critiques of the content analysis. On the one hand, one might strive to give a kind of taxonomy for how to develop the codes, the sub-categories, the categories and the themes to present the trustworthiness, reliability and transference of the analysis. On the other hand, this can be somewhat mechanical and restrict the multiple meanings in the material. These concrete procedures are important for the reliability and the validity of the analyses. Therefore, from my point of view, the answer to what gives the best trustworthiness, reliability and transference is not that simple. These dilemmas can be debated in future studies. My strategy was to use the hermeneutic approach in the analysis. The practice of reading by alternating between a narrow and a broad perspective allows us as researchers to consider both the specific and the general situations in which events occurred.

When conducting an ethnographic study, you acquire very rich data generally and this becomes a great strength in the analysis of the material, as I spent much time with the participants in all the studies. This involves obtaining data about the situations in which people act. In this way I gathered data about what they did within their situation, what hindered their activities, how they reasoned regarding it, and the meaning of their events and activities. I was embedded in the social relations by acting both as a researcher and a participant, and this can be both strength and a limitation. The greatest strength of the analysis was the richness of the material: Many of the events, stories and events addressed the same issues; so many observations confirmed each other.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations address the formal ethical standards as well as the researchers' behaviour during the study (Connolly, 2003). The investigations in this thesis have followed the ethical standards from the Helsinki declaration, the Norwegian Research Council and/or the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD). The Regional Committee for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REK) accepted the research protocol for Study IV. The other studies were accepted by the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD). No files regarding personal data (e.g., date of birth, name, diagnoses, or addresses) were collected. The

participants were capable of giving informed consent in the studies. They were informed about their rights to withdraw from the studies at any time without reprisal.

There are special ethical protections necessary when studying vulnerable groups. These are described in the Helsinki declaration, the Vancouver convention, the Belmont Report (DePoy & Gitlin, 2011), and by REK. Participating in research studies may increase the vulnerability of disadvantaged groups. The primary issue is to remain aware of whether it is ethically appropriate to burden people in such situations by involving them in the projects. The research protocol of Study IV necessitated more descriptions about security and protection, as this was in a meeting place organised by the community health services. For instance, the staff were available for the participants during and after observations. Most of the participants indicated that they wanted to contribute to the knowledge of their situations by participating in the projects.

Related to the ethics of my behaviour, I tried to conduct the research with integrity and with a natural, human behaviour, as the form of data gathering was mostly ethnographic. I developed knowledge about rights and treated the participants with dignity, ensuring the well-being of the participants in a nonintrusive manner (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

In the research protocol I designed the studies' ethical considerations according to *vulnerability*. However, I also considered the participants as people having a unique knowledge. All the participants were in special circumstances and experienced activities within these contexts. Instead of referring to them as 'vulnerable', one might call them 'bearing witnesses', a concept discussed by critical anthropologists (Hocking, 2012). Through this they were viewed as having a special knowledge and competences that others do not have. Considerations about these perspectives (vulnerability/bearing witnesses) were kept in mind when performing the studies. This was aimed at seeing participants as individuals with both challenges and competences, and to view them as a group in an historical time and place.

Methodological critique and considerations

The work with the mantle and the chosen designs and procedures of the involved and presented studies had dilemmas, strengths and weaknesses. Doctoral theses can have several different designs. Some choices of the issues of thesis in general can derive more-or-less from

the professors' or supervisors' interests. As this thesis was not initiated by a professor/supervisor, the chosen research questions were closely connected to my personal and professional interests. I reflect that it is both a weakness and strength that this thesis was not planned to be a thesis. As a result of this, it has been a challenge to write this mantle, to see similarities in the findings of the articles, describing them, bringing them to a meta-level and discussing them. I consider it to be strength that I could spend a long time with each group of participants, and through this gain rich material for the analysis. No time schedules for finishing a thesis restricted the periods of data collection.

One methodological dilemma was whether to involve Study I in the thesis or not. The main concern was that the subjects of Studies II-IV were people who found themselves in vulnerable life situations. The occupational therapist pioneers were well educated in their time, and even if they had tough challenges being pioneers of a new profession, they were not in a vulnerable situation (in line with the used definition of the term); however, their patients were. It felt natural to include Study I as described in the preface of the thesis. Study I was my start of exploring the potential of craft and creative activities, and the presented result of the study (Paper I) underlined the importance that the patients found motivation for their rehabilitation process through involvements in activities, and how they through the use of craft activities developed skills to manage everyday life. When designing the last study (Paper IV), I was able to view the line from past to contemporary and future practices and determined that these articles in such a way belonged to each other. Therefore, it was included.

How to frame the thesis theoretically presented an additional dilemma and necessitated different choices. Throughout all of these studies, the theoretical foundation was the potential of 'occupation' and research about people's craft and creative. However, viewing the results of all the studies, the answer to the overall research question presented that with craft and creative occupations as a vehicle the participants went through transformative processes. This created a need for theoretical foundations about the transformative processes. In the beginning I wanted to present the theoretical foundations of these terms in the general discussion in order to make the mantle dynamic. I have seen different solutions to this dilemma in other theses. After several discussions, I chose to present it in the theoretical foundations, as it is a part of the theoretical foundation of this thesis. This was a new view that all of the articles brought forward.

The data collection in Study II presented some challenges related to communication and knowledge. For example, the instructors asked the participants to reflect on what they had learned when the project was finished. The participants then presented the movements and texts that they had presented in the performance. This was a surprise; the instructors and I had expected them to tell about their experiences. We had not managed to make them understand what was expected. One way to interpret this is that their knowledge was embodied and not reflectional. The Nordic countries have a knowledge tradition that is rooted in Humboldt's understanding and goal to educate critical students (Sorkin, 1983). It could be fruitful in future occupational science research to delve into the methodological issues of how people from different cultures relate to their embodied knowledge (Paper II).

Another critical question resulting from the research was whether participation in other kinds of activities would have given the same effect. This is a topic that is more thoroughly addressed in the general discussion, where the transformative and transactional potential of craft and creative activities are discussed.

A challenge in research is to provide detailed descriptions of the research methodologies. Various researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Hocking, 2012; Steedman, 1991) have discussed how it is not possible to separate knowledge from the knower. What methodological and ethical considerations rise from such statements? Bogdan and Biklen (1998) claim that status, class and gender are significant in the research procedures used in fieldwork. This is underlined by Hocking (2012), who summarises that most occupational scientist researchers are elderly women with comfortable middleclass background. She raises awareness about the issue and indicates that the chosen research questions are shaped by our own understandings of how people live their lives, and what we think is important. In such a perspective, it is obvious that the research questions, the choice of data collection and methods of analyses are affected by personal values, social status, age and experiences. These factors might have affected the people with whom I made contact, especially as Studies I and III did not have an open invitation for participation. For instance, most of the homeless people with whom I made contact were more or less my age.

Common to Studies II, III and IV was that the data collection was conducted in natural contexts where the activities were happening. Conducting data collection in an ethnographic

design brought forward reflections around the term 'situated activity'. The situated activities for the homeless participants were often unstable, and this influenced the performance of the activities. The asylum seekers had many competences when they were living in their homelands, but their activity level was lowered by living at the asylum centre. I understood this as they became more passive as a cause of the situation. It was not that they did not have the skills to perform everyday occupations; the situation made them incompetent, and they could be viewed as incompetent or stigmatised by others. This made me reflect upon the importance of conducting studies in the participants' natural environments while they were performing activities. This raises questions such as: Do professional assessments consider the situation of the activity? The interests of situated activity and situated behaviour have been a topic in social psychology (Chaiklin & Lave, 1997), Activity Theory (Karpatschhof, 2000), and also in pragmatism (Dewey, 1980; Hartman & Lundgren, 1980). Dewey outlined the importance of the situation for the learning activity, and could (from my point of view) be valued more in future practice and studies, as a counterweight to cognitive therapies and techniques. These aspects are included in the chosen views of the transformative potentials of occupations.

FINDINGS

Taken together, the studies concretised the transformative potential of craft and creative activities and presented how this enhanced participation in everyday occupations despite living in vulnerable life situations.

Summary of the findings

In **Study I** the major findings resulted in four themes that highlighted the use of craft activities as an occupational therapy treatment modality in Norway from 1952 to 1960. The first theme focused on how the pioneer occupational therapists used craft activities as a therapeutic tool for promoting work skills, rehabilitating or maintaining function, giving long days at the institution a meaningful content, creating joy in life or a combination of all these. The participants spoke of a belief in crafts as a therapeutic tool that could motivate patients to be active in their rehabilitation process. If the patients could not find their own drive in the rehabilitation, it could not succeed. The second theme focused on ambivalence in framing

rehabilitation from a medical, an occupational or a humanistic perspective. The third theme identified the power relationships at the institutions. The participants related that the demands from the employers were not in line with the knowledge from their occupational therapy education and that the culture at the institutions seemed unethical within the humanistic framework that they identified as their perspective. The last theme highlighted the idea of occupational therapists and patients as fellow humans. This involved their caring so deeply for the patients that often had to spend years at the institutions without going home for visits. The study indicated that the discussions about craft activities as treatment during the period 1952-1960 were anchored in a personal and professional belief in the importance of being active and healed through occupation. These beliefs were founded on a holistic reasoning with philosophical roots in humanism. Their attitudes provided future occupational therapists an important foundation for later practice.

Study II presented how participation in a theatre project for asylum seekers led to liberation, collaboration and relationships for those involved. The major findings reflected four themes from stories of their everyday lives. The first theme identified how asylum seekers described their current existence as a process of waiting. They expressed their feelings of helplessness and the feeling that their future was in the hands of the Department of Foreign Affairs. This situation brought forward anger and frustration as well as isolation and depression. The next theme showed that by telling stories and dramatizing them, the participants were enabled to express some of their despair. Listening to each other's experiences through the occupations involved in the theatre encouraged the participants to release their own voices, see similarities in their sufferings, and start healing processes that moved them towards seeing challenges in a more conscious way. The third theme presented how some of the participants had isolated themselves with sorrow in their small apartments at the asylum centre. This led them into situations where no one confirmed them and verified their existence. By breaking this isolation through participation in the theatre project, they developed social relations and habitual patterns (stand up in the morning, dress, go to the bus station to get to the project) to manage participation. The fourth theme showed how the theatre activity became a meeting place where the participants learned how to communicate within the group, respect others' cultural values, take responsibility for themselves and others, trust others and deal with physical proximity to both genders. The theatre activity was also a place where they could learn the new language and cultural codes. The condensed situation with the performance involved interaction, cooperation and the responsibility to perform. The performance

belonged to the whole group, and this intense engagement encouraged the participants to learn the language effectively. Through the engagement the participants became more conscious of their resources, challenges, and constraints in their occupational choices. At the end of the theatre process, it was obvious that the group identification had been strengthened, as they were able to take better care of each other. Each person became more able to present him or herself as an individual and not an asylum seeker. The participants could present themselves as citizens with dreams and hopes for a future. They had constructed new realities which visualised how to integrate into a local society. The study indicated that participation and engagement in theatre might serve to liberate people in locked situations. Participation in such occupations may create relational aesthetics through which they could construct collaboration and social relations. The study exemplified how stories of life experts can create art expressions in the context of applied theatre for non-professional artists.

The findings in **Study III** presented four themes. The first theme described how homeless participants experienced injustice that disturbed their storyline. They mostly talked about the past, and strived to establish causality between experiences, actions and images of future events, in an effort to form a coherent and understandable whole. The article suggests that the experiences of injustice hindered the participants' ability to handle everyday occupations. The second theme brought forward how the rewritten narratives created possibilities and changes. In the process of making the performance, participants were asked to present and exemplify future perspectives. In such a way, the hypothetical perspectives could assist the participants to use their narratives in reasoning resulting in subjunctive possibilities. Those subjunctive aspects were presented in the third theme. Storytelling became a significant action used to pursue the direction they wished their life to take. Storytelling offered them a way to weave together their storyline from past, contemporary, and future perspectives. The last and fourth theme highlighted their lack of trusting relations when they were children. The stories of the participants had extensive political consequences and were woven into a collective story of how children with special needs had been treated and how they had experienced betrayal from adults. The findings presented a need for more professional considerations in enabling homeless people to live in homes, consider their resources, make adaptations for part-time work or create opportunities to engage in meaningful and relevant occupations. Using drama as a method may liberate people's resources, and through the subjunctive, they were offered possibilities to consider themselves as respected and valued people and discover ways to handle everyday occupations.

The main findings from the analysis in **Study IV** presented three themes. The study revealed insights into how the act of doing crafts in a group at a meeting place facilitated stability and routines, skills and abilities, and peer support for people with mental health illness. The study contributed to knowledge about the value of crafts, and how they are experienced as an activity with low-risk threshold for participation and that doing crafts together with peers supported the management of everyday occupations. The participants described the activity and its consequences to be what they needed to prevent re-hospitalisation, as they regarded crafts as a path to recovery. From any of these perspectives, the act of doing crafts in group retains significant value for recovery and health promotion. The discussion reflected knowledge and experiences of craft as an activity with a low-risk threshold for participation and its healing value. How craft activities in a group offered a transactional space to gain experiences to manage everyday occupations was further discussed.

Transition from the findings into the discussion

The first study presented the professionals' belief in the healing sources of occupation. The second study presented how participation in a theatre project led to liberation, collaboration and relationships for the participants. The third study showed how drama was used as a tool to liberate homeless people's resources, and the fourth study presented how a crafts group supported the participants to find strategies to make changes for a better life. With craft and creative occupations as a vehicle the participants went through transformative processes that liberated them, made them develop collaborations with others, and supported their everyday occupations within the context of their local community. These were personal and social transformations. Simultaneously, these visualised transactions of competences and experiences led to transformations between the participants and their local communities. This will be outlined in the general discussion.

Paper I

The use of craft activities as an occupational therapy treatment modality in Norway during 1952–1960

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of the present study was to explore the use of craft activities as occupational therapy treatment modalities in Norway during the period 1952–1960. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with six retired occupational therapists on their experiences in using crafts. Data were analysed through textual analysis and this resulted in four themes: craft activities identified as a therapeutic tool; ambivalence in how to frame the intervention; practice relative to power relationships; and occupational therapists and patients as equals. A limitation of the present study was that participants drew on their screened memories in the context of contemporary practice, which may omit or distort the historical truth. Further research is needed to document the effect of contemporary therapeutic use of craft activities, and to bring forward how occupational therapists and clients value the craft activities of today in the context of their lives. Copyright © 2007 John Wiley & Sons. Ltd.*

Key words: craft activities, occupational therapy, history

Introduction

The present study focuses on the use of craft activities as therapy in occupational therapy in Norway during the period 1952–1960. The use of craft activities in interventions has been discussed in the profession since its start in Norway in 1952 (Ness, 2002) as well as in other countries (Drake, 1999; Stein

and Cutler, 2002; ENOTHE, 2004). In general, research on craft activities as a therapeutic modality in occupational therapy is limited.

The use of crafts was significant in occupational therapy when it was founded in Scandinavia as well as in other parts of the world. According to the 1997 *Aschehoug and Gyldendals Dictionary*, crafts are a form of production that requires special skills, personal insight and extensive practice of any of the manual arts. Kleinman and Stalcup (1991) claimed that crafts, as one type of purposeful activity, have been a traditional modality in occupational therapy, but the therapeutic efficacy of craft activities has not yet been demonstrated adequately by research. Spackman (1968) identified crafts as the cornerstone of occupational therapy. Drake (1999) claimed that there is a renaissance of craft activities in the Western world today, but these symbolize leisure time activity rather than work. Drake (1999) argued for the use of craft as therapeutic media in the clinical setting. In her opinion it is important to keep crafts as one of many treatment alternatives. Further, Drake (1999) argues that, as a profession, we have intuitively understood that crafts help to use and rehabilitate functions, but we do not know how. Dickie and Frank (1996) use the term 'crafts' both as an occupation and as products. They claim that the nature of craft production is easily adapted to home-based work, overlapping with other family-related activities. To succeed with this work there must be a market for the products. In developed countries this market has historical roots in the Arts and Crafts movement. Dickie and Frank (1996) state that craft occupations meet personal and socio-economic needs and are rich with multiple meanings. Creek (1997) stated that whether the craft work is culturally acceptable should always be considered.

Moral treatment linked activity to recovery and, according to Stein and Cutler (2002), this was one of the key concepts that laid the foundation for occupational therapy. The nineteenth-century psychiatric reformers like Tuke (1784–1857), Pinel (1745–1826), Reil (1759–1813) and Rush (1745–1813) changed the course of caring for individuals with mental illness from a perspective of custodial neglect to a model of humanistic concern (Stein and Cutler, 2002). It was human intervention that kept patients active in producing arts and crafts and in physical tasks while they were institutionalized. In her Canadian historical study, Friedland (2003) points to the Arts and Crafts movement, in which craft was embedded in the importance of art for all, surrounded by socialistic ideology about equality and community interdependence. Kielhofner (1983) claimed that thought and action are fused in craft and this provides the most immediate context for Reilly's vision of occupational therapy as a process binding hands and will to a common purpose. In an Australian perspective, Lyons (2004) describes the life of the pioneer, Margaret Mort. In her work there is an unambiguous commitment to the use of creative activities, and Mort saw this as central to the therapeutic process.

The use of craft activities in Norway in the 1950s was rooted in a social-democratic understanding that everyone should participate in society, and that

craft activities were important for all*, and in the ideas from the Arts and Crafts movement, which were implemented in the Norwegian Craft Organisation (Sundt, 1975), which was established in 1910. Sundt (1975) saw arts and crafts activities in the 1860s as an opportunity for poor people to receive income. According to Winge (1917) treatment through participation in everyday activities and craft activities was stipulated in the first Norwegian law concerning mentally ill persons (law of 17 August 1848). This progressive law stated that patients should do craft activities according to therapeutic reasoning and not just as an income for the institutions. The political agenda in Norway in 1952 focused on rebuilding the country after World War II. There was a need to mobilize workforce reserves, which were defined as handicapped men and women and married women (Midré, 1990). The Norwegian Social Democratic Government came to a governmental resolution (Stortingsmelding, 1953) where it defined the need for occupational therapy in order to enable people with disabilities to obtain work.

The above review shows that craft activities have been a central therapeutic medium in our profession. In Scandinavia there have been few studies of the history of occupational therapy (Nilsskog, 1999; Bjørklund, 2000; Ness, 2002), but none that focus on craft activities, including its historical and social development. The aim of the present study was to describe the use of craft activities as treatment during the period 1952–1960, by interviewing six retired Norwegian occupational therapists.

Method

Participants

Six of the seven occupational therapists who worked in the central region of Norway in the 1950s agreed to participate in the study. They were all women aged between 64 and 81 years at the time of the interview. They practised from 1952 to 1960 (Table 1) at institutions where people with polio, epilepsy, tuberculosis and psychiatric diseases were treated or rehabilitated. In addition, books, journals and objects that participants mentioned (Haworth and MacDonald, 1945; WFOT, 1958) were referenced. All the participants (Ragna, Magda, Agnes, Pauline, Mary, Jenny) were educated in Oslo, where the programme lasted 1.5 years with a prerequisite of 1.5 years of handicraft studies (Munthe, 1962).

Data collection

The empirical material was gathered through interviews in the form of guided conversation with each participant (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). A conversation

*Arts and crafts are still an obligatory subject in primary school in Norway, with 627 hours of education in arts and crafts activities from the first to the tenth grade (Department of Education, 2006), but in the occupational therapy education at the university college in the region studied there has been almost no education in craft activities since the 1980s.

TABLE 1: Data for the participants				
Fictitious name, age	Year of education	Year of retirement	Field of work at the studied period	Fieldwork after the studied period ¹
Ragna, 74 years old	1953	1995	Tuberculosis, Psychiatry	Psychiatry, Community service
Magda, 64 years old	1957	2004	Psychiatry, Epilepsy	Child-rehabilitation, Education
Agnes 81 years old	1954	1992	Tuberculosis, Polio	Institution for elderly,
Pauline 78 years old	1954	1993	Psychiatry	Community service
Mary 66 years old	1958	2001	Psychiatry	Education, Psychiatry
Jenny 71 years old	1955	1998	Psychiatry	Community service

¹The year of retirement in Norway is 67.

guide was developed to ensure that key points were addressed. The key points included:

- issues about the physical and social environment
- equipment and materials
- crafts as an activity and treatment
- the relationship between activities of daily living and craft activities
- stories about patients who benefited from the use of craft activities
- reflections on teamwork
- reflections on craft activities from today's perspective.

The interviewer elaborated on topics that each respondent initiated and the meeting had a timeframe of approximately four hours. Participants were invited to bring objects from the defined practice period. All conversations were recorded, with the participants' permission, and were transcribed verbatim by the interviewer. A reflective journal (Lincoln and Gruba, 1985) was written after each conversation. Three of the participants invited the interviewer to revisit them for further discussion on the topic. After the initial analysis of the material the participants reviewed the text. Four of them supplied additional materials and stories that they associated with the categories. Documents addressing the development of the profession of occupational therapy in Norway were included in the material (Munthe, 1962; Nilsskog, 1999).

Data analysis

The purpose of this paper is to create some understanding of the past through textual analysis of stories told about craft activities in the early years of occupational therapy in Norway. Textual analysis has previously been used in occu-

occupational therapy studies (Peachy-Hill and Law, 2000). The process of analysis started with reading and coding the transcripts to define the main ideas discussed in the conversations. All authors read the transcript to gain an overall sense of the content. The text was then analysed and coded in three steps (Kjeldstadli, 2000) by the first author.

The first step was to assess special words and terms that were used in the material, which showed descriptions of different diagnostic terms and different craft materials that are used today. The participants talked about diseases such as tuberculosis and poliomyelitis, and materials such as walrus tusks, copper, leather, amber, ivory and rosewood. The next step was to look for meaning units, or the message in the text, such as crafts were a motivating force in rehabilitation, and strong beliefs in the value of crafts being used in addition to the medical treatment that occurred. The third step was to encode the data for emerging themes, organizing them into a coherent and meaningful whole, which represented challenges and ambiguity between the occupational therapy practice studied and the institutional and societal contexts in question. This was done through discussion with the other authors and by assessing this discussion, together with documents about professional development.

Results

Analysing the material resulted in four themes, all of which are connected to the challenges of implementing a new profession:

- craft activities identified as a therapeutic tool
- ambivalence about how to frame the intervention
- participants in a power relationship
- occupational therapists and patients as equals.

Craft activities identified as a therapeutic tool

The analysis showed that most therapists in Norway started their career in an institutional setting where workshops already existed. Men and women worked in separate settings. On the whole, the women did weaving and the men did basket-weaving:

We did a lot of basket-weaving at that time, because we did not have baskets from abroad. The baskets were attractive for sale and could be used to store knitting and yarn. People had few objects after the Second World War; it was a different time from today. (Magda)

Further, there were activities such as leatherwork, needlework, copper-tooling and metalcraft. To produce such items advanced skills were needed both from

the therapists and the patients, as was the requirement to make creative adaptations to meet goals such as exercising upper arm strength and lung capacity.

The analysis revealed that the overall argument for using craft activities was to use activities to enable patients to participate in society. It was also clear from the analysis that the actual act of producing objects was important, because the objects could be sold, to give the person and the institution some income:

We delivered products to craft shops because one of the reasons for making them was to earn money. We also arranged Christmas fairs, where the products were sold. (Ragna)

In this way, the patients learnt valuable skills, which were useful, and at the same improved their physical condition. They could also use their new skills to start small businesses when they were discharged. The craft activities could be a therapeutic tool for promoting work skills, joy in life, repairing or maintaining function in diverse parts of the body, or just giving the long days at the hospital a meaningful content, or a combination of all these. The study participants spoke mostly of a belief in crafts as a therapeutic tool that could motivate patients to regain functions so that they could participate in society again.

Ambivalence about how to frame the intervention

According to the data analysis there were issues that the participants emphasized as identifiable to the frame of intervention. These issues were related to the dilemma of choosing between individual and group interventions, whether the intervention should be argued from a medical or a humanistic perspective and about who should decide which intervention should be used by the occupational therapists.

The analyses gave a picture of therapists working in huge institutions. Most of the patient training was collectively adapted in workshops, even though occupational therapy interventions should be prescribed by the doctor:

It was difficult to give individual consideration with such big groups of people when it was expected that you should even follow them to the toilet. (Pauline)

The participants' perspective was that the patients should work with enjoyable activities that would motivate them in their process of rehabilitation. When Agnes started working with patients suffering from tuberculosis her expectations were not fulfilled:

Everyone was sitting around a large table with a table-loom. I was surprised. I had expected patients to be doing different kinds of activities. (Agnes)

Agnes argued for more individual adaptations, but the doctor told her that the patients needed to exercise the muscles around their lungs, and her arguments were not even considered:

But, isn't it possible to find activities that promote both the strengthening of the muscles and joy in life at the same time? (Agnes)

This story, among others, expresses the dilemma of choosing a medical or humanistic framework, or a synthesis of both.

Craft activities could be meaningless:

I remember. Oh, yes I do. Her name was Dagny and she was blind, she was told to knit small towels. When she finished, the therapist unravelled them and she had to start again with the same wool, which got more and more dirty. 'Knit another small towel, Dagny,' we said. I wonder if she sometimes understood what we did to her. (Magna)

The analysis identified that the participants discussed whether craft activities were therapy or just an activity to pass time in the long days at the institutions. The occupational therapists had learnt in school how to intervene as professionals, but the reality of the institutions did not always seem to be in accordance with their learning. They discussed the theoretical dilemma, among others, at union meetings, but often they just had to find practical solutions in an everyday life.

The analysis identified the therapists' ways of integrating educational and personal knowledge:

I did read and think a lot to find out how I could use my knowledge to become a real occupational therapist and not a craft teacher in my first job. (Magna)

She was the only one who received supervision, but all faced challenges to work in ways that were consistent with their profession. Before the occupational therapists entered the institution, nurses and artisans were in charge of the workshops and they were not always supportive of the occupational therapists.

Participants in a power relationship

The analysis identified how the demands from employers were not in line with the knowledge from occupational therapy education. The participants pointed out that the doctor or nurse in charge often implemented the demands from employers, and the culture at institutions seemed anti-ethical to the humanistic framework of occupational therapy. The participants brought forward different opinions about how it should have been:

It was hard for me to keep on working. I did not take part in meetings, I was so tired of keeping the patients occupied that I did not have the energy or courage to protest. The way we worked was not like I had learned in school. (Jenny)

Further, the data analysis revealed a gap between the participants' professional knowledge of craft use and the institutional demands. Craft activities could serve as an important motivator for people, but the reality did not always give fruitful frameworks for such processes. Agnes tells of an experience from her first work position:

It was a living room with 17 looms used for production of tablecloths, curtains, rugs and carpets, as well as linen cloths for different uses. The person that had worked here before me was a 74-year-old nurse. I was 25. The nurse in charge told me to produce 300 metres of curtains before Christmas. It was an order. 'I cannot put pressure on them,' I told her, 'but I shall try my best.' One of the patients made seven metres every day in thin yarn, the same pattern day in and day out. It was terrible. I suggested a new curtain pattern to give a little variation. (Agnes)

It is obvious that the reason for this weaving activity was the tradition of self-support at institutions, rather than the needs of the patients. In addition to these analyses of the exercise of power at the institutions, the participants also seemed to execute their own hidden agendas, as when Pauline told of her work at a psychiatric hospital:

One day a young woman of 28 came into the crafts room. We had a little talk about craft activities and she looked interested. I wondered if she could weave linen cloth. You know that is quite simple, but then I thought I should find something more interesting for her. I asked the nurse in charge if I could prepare a loom for making pillow textiles. 'No,' she answered, 'that is not allowed,' and she grabbed the carpet loom and shook it. Then the doctor came to me and said, 'Just do what you like to do'. She [the patient] became very interested. The patient said, 'When I lay I bed in the evening I thought about what colours I should choose and how I should put them together and then I look forward to the next day.' The pillow was so beautiful. This was in December, and in March she was discharged after four years in hospital. No one knew what had happened, but I knew, even though I did not tell anyone. (Pauline)

After telling this story, Pauline pointed to a chair in her living room. The pillow was on the chair and represents silent evidence of the therapeutic power in using craft activities in occupational therapy. The analysis showed that the

phenomena of becoming rehabilitated through activity are a little secret that no one but the participants knew about, and they may also have connection to the power relationship at the institutions.

In the analysis of the participants' stories, the power relationships at the institutions are evident. Nurses and doctors gave orders to the occupational therapists who, in turn, gave orders to the patients. What seemed to be typical in those power relationships is that decisions are taken but not explained to the people at the lower level in the relationship. We can see that this hierarchy was promoted by the long traditions of self-support in these institutions and by the morale related to the building of the welfare state.

Occupational therapists and patients as equals

Finally, the idea of occupational therapists and patients as fellow humans was a central result from the analysis. Because of long distances in Norway, and patients' limited funds, patients could spend years at institutions without going home for visits or receiving visits from their relatives:

We had to do a lot of activities to make people feel at home. Norway's national day, Christmas and other important holidays were central. As occupational therapists we felt it was our responsibility to make people feel included. (Mary)

The participants said that their encounters with the people who had to stay in hospital for years touched them emotionally. It became important to evoke some joy in life and to vary the boring pattern of everyday life:

If we had a good time we continued after the working day with basket-weaving, making jewellery like earrings and such . . . products we all enjoyed. Sometimes I brought my guitar. We sang a lot. I am not sure if the work with clay had good health effects, or if it was the pleasure of making nice things that was important. (Jenny)

During the conversations with the participants, all of them present products such as embroidery, woven pillows and hand-woven tapestry. The objects were kept like sacred relics. Ragna had a little wooden box with jewellery that she had received as gifts from several patients. The jewellery was made from materials from that time and was kept in red velvet. Their stories seemed to be woven into their own activity histories. Through the presentation of objects the participants showed how much they cared for the patients, and this may be seen as further support of the idea of both therapists and patients as fellow human beings.

Discussion

The analysis provide rich material for the purpose of the study, which was to explore the use of craft activities as a therapeutic tool in occupational therapy during 1952–1960.

Implications from the context of craft activities

Governmental resolutions legitimized the development of occupational therapy in Norway in the period studied (Stortingsmelding, 1953). The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) had minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists (Munthe, 1962).^{*} Societal ethics of that time, and the professional and social structure of the institutions, were important contextual frameworks. As this was a retrospective study, the participants were deeply concerned about describing the context for the craft activities during the period studied. They explained that crafts were valued and seen as important and valuable in the years following World War II. As noted in the Introduction, occupational therapy was established as a new profession in Norway, to enable handicapped people to be part of the workforce. If people were unable to return to their former or new employment, they had skills to produce crafts at home. Income from crafts could enable survival, and empowered people who had limited access to the cash economy (Dickie and Frank, 1996; Lyons, 2004).

The politics of social democracy in the 1950s was to give everybody the right to participate in society rather than being offered help from the welfare state (Birkeland, 1997; Nigel et al., 2002). At the same time it was considered unethical not to take part in the tasks of society unless you had very good reason. Participants repeatedly referred to this common opinion of the time. This is a significant factor in Midré's (1950) studies of the Norwegian welfare state in the 1950s, a politics that demanded a high degree of conformity from all individuals. Seen this way, the occupational therapists became moral servants of governmental policy, something the analysis of this material also shows.

Related to the medical context, the participants had many challenges since the doctors and nurses were in charge. They were pioneers: young women and there were few of them. Most institutions had been using craft activities long before the occupational therapists started. The new profession offered professional reasoning for the use of craft activities, but this conflicted with the established traditions at the institutions. Both patients and therapists were obliged to do what the people in charge expected. A hierarchy of power may be seen in most of the participants' stories. They did not feel equal to the doctors and the nurses in charge. Only one participant reported that

^{*}Ingrid Pahlsson, Vice-President of WFOT visited Norway in 1954 to inform about the minimum standard.

she felt free to develop occupational therapy according to her professional knowledge base.

The production of craft activities was used to gain skills which were necessary to get a job, stimulating activity, earning money, being valued in society and increasing socialization. The participants argued that the production of craft activities gave meaning to patients' everyday lives and provided challenges in creating patterns for objects to be produced. In their stories the participants related that craft activities were part of the social context at that time, and that it was important to use craft activities to evoke joy in life. As stated by Kielhofner (1983), the experience of crafts is the most tangible context that brings individuals closest to everyday reality. In the craft context there is no ulterior motive; work is done for the products and for the process of creation (Kielhofner, 1983). However, our study has shown that both patients and therapists created and produced products in the context of the policy of the time. At the same time they tried to implement new ideas from the developing knowledge in the profession (Munthe, 1962). This discussion also appears in documents of the time (WFOT, 1958; Nilsskog, 1999; Bjørklund, 2000), the occupational therapy curricula and articles published in the Norwegian professional journal. The search for a professional identity is seen in the participants' implementation of craft activities, but this was a challenge related to the traditions sustained by the doctors and nurses in charge.

Implications from the content of craft activities

The content in the participants' accounts of craft activities shows a belief in the importance of people being active. This was a perspective that they had been socialized into by teachers, and later experienced for themselves. Some arguments were related to valuing the core of occupational therapy as it was described in the curriculum (Haworth and Macdonald, 1945). The participants believed that the patients had to find a motivation for the rehabilitation, and craft activities could evoke this motivation. This is a central belief in humanism and the assumption that a healthy human existence requires being occupied (Kielhofner and Burke, 1977). Similarly, participation in normal daily activities in a context of a cheerful, secure and supportive milieu was essential in the moral treatment movement, which influenced many of the philosophical assumptions for the occupational therapy profession (Stein and Cutler, 2002). The analysis confirms this attitude. The discussions contain resistance against medical reasoning. The occupational therapists valued being together with the patients in everyday living and celebrations. This aspect of practice is significant to Hopkins (cited in Hopkins and Smith, 1978), who underlined that the interpersonal relationship is an important factor in the occupational therapy process.

Both doctors and occupational therapists in the Nordic region discussed the terms 'occupation' and 'activity' from the 1940s to the 1960s. According to the

Swedish occupational therapist, Bjørklund (2000), the theory base of the profession was empowered by this discussion. Nevertheless, the analysis illustrates examples of the therapeutic and non-therapeutic use of craft activities. The participants revealed that they often lacked prescriptions for each patient related to the restoration of function, goals to be achieved and stimulating patients' interests to make sure that the use of activities was therapeutic. At the same time, the participants shared the opinion that they did not always dare to criticize the doctors and nurses, or to talk about their professional reflections and arguments. This reticence must be viewed in relation to the fact that these pioneers had a short educational programme and no professional language about the concepts of their occupation (Kielhofner, 1997).

Limitations and implications for future research

Contemporary understanding of memory identifies it as relational, changeable, developing, dynamic and subjective (Lowenthal et al., 1994), and thus memories are not stored in the form of representations defining exactly how things were. In line with such reasoning, we argue that the participants in our study constructed memories that were related and influenced by the interviewer and the questions. In this way, the outcome of memories may change related to the context in which they are told, and this might be seen as a limitation of a historical study. Further, the small sample ($n = 6$) may be seen as a limitation of the study, but at the same time there were only a few pioneers. Further research is needed to identify possible evidence of the therapeutic efficacy of craft activities. Craft activities today are enjoying a renaissance (Drake, 1999) and are connected to a re-exploration of shaping objects with the hands and of giving culturally related value to our time (Creek, 1997). Our subjective perspective, our meaning and value of the activity change over time. One central discourse emerges from the pioneers' use of craft activities: are occupational therapists able to give contemporary reasoning and evidence of the therapeutic use of craft activities and do we consider it as important? Our pioneers are now retired and cannot pass their stories and experiences to colleagues. This makes it important to document their experience and to reflect on this as seen among others in Lyon's (2004) article about Margaret Mort. The history of our pioneers can give young occupational therapists a perspective on how their profession developed.

Conclusion

The study indicated that the pioneers were young, few in number and it was difficult for them to share their knowledge in the hierarchy of others, such as doctors and nurses in charge. The consequence of this reticence was that their understanding remained relatively isolated among occupational therapists. The

relative unarticulated understanding of craft activities as a therapeutic modality may have led to less use of craft activities in Norway. In many countries there was, in the 1950s, a growing pressure for occupational therapy to appear more scientific (Kielhofner, 1997; Drake, 1999). Pressure is also seen in the Norwegian pioneers' stories we studied, but this pressure seems to be linked to the institutional culture and customs, and not only to the demand for more scientific practice.

It is obvious from the study that the discussions about craft activities as treatment during the period 1952–1960 were anchored in a personal and professional belief in the importance of being active and healing through occupation, and these beliefs were founded on holistic reasoning with philosophical roots in humanism. These attitudes gave future occupational therapists an important foundation for later practice.

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Paper II

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Paper III

The kingdom of the subjunctive:

Theatre as meaning making of the self

AV SISSEL HORGHAGEN

ABSTRACT

This article is based upon a study where homeless people were invited to participate in a theatre project by three cultural workers. The performance was a result of the participants' narratives and most of them participated in the performance together with professional performers. In drama, subjunctivizing realities are used to explore human possibilities rather than settled certainties. Such thinking is applicable to narratives where people express their way of thinking about the world, taking the form of personal reflections on the past and hopes for a future. The aim of the study was to explore narratives presented by homeless people in ethnodrama and how they relate them to meaning in their everyday life.

The material was collected through participant observations. Through the paradigmatic analysis of the narrative data, four subjects were identified and presented in the result: The experienced injustice disturbed their storyline, The rewritten narratives presented in the performance created possibilities and changes, The narratives had subjunctive aspects, and Lack of relations that could be trusted.

The discussion highlight how drama can be used as a method to liberate people's resources and through the subjunctive they are offered possibilities to consider themselves differently and find ways to participate in everyday life occupations. Such methods are also useful to create an information exchange between people living in different spaces in the same world.

Keywords: homelessness, drama, narratives, participation, everyday life



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In almost every city in the world, there are a number of people who are constantly or intermittently homeless. Cziksentsmihalyi (1997) claims that two separate and distinct worlds exist in one city; one is affluent, well-educated, technologically skilled, and obsessed with conception. The second is poor, demoralised, and consumed with mere survival. This article is based on a project involving homeless people. They were invited to share their experiences through developing a drama to enact together with professional performers. Such projects may highlight avenues for change required to support marginalised people. In this article the use of drama is explored to gain insights into homeless people's narratives and how they relate them to everyday experiences. The introduction presents possible understandings of the term homelessness and drama as research on subjunctive possibilities, which indicates a hypothetical state such as a desire or a kind of imaginary situation.

Possible understandings of homelessness

The Medline definition of homeless people is *Persons who have no permanent residence. The concept excludes nomadic peoples*. The United Nations describe «absolute homelessness» as the condition of people without physical shelter who sleep outdoors, in abandoned buildings or places not intended for human habitation. Further they describe «relative homelessness» as conditions for those who have a physical shelter, but one that does not meet basic standards of health and safety. This is the definition that is most frequently used in health-related research (Hwang, 2001), but homelessness is an indistinct term with diverse use (Andersson & Sward, 2007). Homelessness is one of the most pressing social issues of the world. The physical and mental health of homeless people is worse than the general population and the prevalence of mental disorders is three to four times higher among the homeless population (Shelton et al., 2009). A disproportionate number of homeless people report experiences of childhood adversity, including poor relationship with parents, neglect, physical and sexual abuse and being placed out of the home (Koegel, Memamid & Burnham, 1995).

Some homeless people are illegal refugees with limited rights to medical and social services. The Norwegian Association for Asylum Seekers (NOAS, 2009), estimates that there are approximately 25 000 people without legal residence just in Norway. Persons with ethnic minority background are over-represented amongst people with an unsuitable habitation (Järvinen, 1992; Hwang, 2001).

This article focuses on homeless people in Norway that were offered public shelters (where the person has to spend most of the day outside); they lived occasionally with friends or in abandoned buildings. They had periodically slept on the streets.

Drama as research on subjunctive possibilities

There are challenges when conducting qualitative research on homeless people, because they are often not accessible, might have mobile living patterns, and do not use modern communication as most people do. This invites research-

ers to employ creativity and flexibility such as we may find in ethnographic methods. Some researchers (Rossiter et al 2008) have taken interest in drama as a unique method of analysing data and interpreting findings. Drama has been a means to inspire thoughts, critical reflections, emotional engagement, and personal transformations. Different drama genres have been used for such aims (Denzin, 1997; Gray et al., 2000; Kwon, 2004; Fox & Dickie, 2010; Horghagen & Josephsson, 2010). The form of drama utilised in this article has similarities to ethnodrama. Ethnodrama is defined by Saldana (2005:2) as the written script, which consists of dramatized, significant selections of narratives collected through, for instance interviews or participant observations.

In drama, subjunctivizing realities are used to explore human possibilities rather than settled certainties (Bruner, 1986). Such thinking is applicable to narratives where people express their way of thinking about the world, taking the form of personal reflections on the past and hopes for the future (Alsaker & Josephson, 2010). Several research traditions have focused on narratives as a prime source of data within ethnographies of healthcare, and consider narratives to be the best way to discover persons' lived experiences of particular events (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000). Stories may provide a place for those who may find themselves stripped of their voices. A rediscovery of the voice is significant for those who feel themselves misunderstood and voiceless in the health care system (Mattingly, 1998). Inability to perform activities that are considered normal in a society may, according to Creek (2008), lead to a feeling of exclusion and worthlessness. Engagement in activities for an underground group of people may be highly valued and lead to a sense of connectedness with the people belonging to this specific culture. Such engagement may create social meaning, and the term meaning in a narrative sense is about how individuals establish causality between experiences, actions and images of future events into a coherent and understandable whole (Eikeland, 1989; Ricoeur, 1991; Reed, Hocking, Smythe, 2010). In this article stories are used to describe human action and how the participants interpret events and actions.

Through listening to peoples' stories we might learn about the impact on individual level occupation. The participants in this study are consciously presented as people with unique knowledge and experiences. Through narratives people may express a way of thinking about the world, taking the form of personal reflections. Therefore the aim of this article is *to explore narratives presented by homeless people in ethnodrama and how they relate them to meaning in their everyday life*.

Method

Project Description

The theoretical and methodological foundations of the project were supported by ideas from ethnodrama (Saldana, 2005), narratives (Mattingly, 1998), and ethnography (Hamersley & Atkinson, 2007). Narratives play a po-

werful part in the construction of our selves. This choice of conceptions was made to match the aim of the study.

The project was initiated by three cultural workers including the current author. The intention was to create an art expression from the experiences of homeless people. The context of events within which the participants acted was a city in Norway with approximately 150 000 inhabitants and according to NIBR, 200 homeless people. Illegal homeless people are not included in the figure.

The performance was placed outside and inside of the locations of a community centre: outdoors as this was where the participants stayed periodically or permanently, and indoors as a metaphor of hope and being included in the warmth of the society, the participants themselves argued. Such performances may diminish the boundaries between the illusion of the theatre and the reality of the outside world (Thompson, 2003).

Participants

The act of establishing contact with homeless individuals for the purpose of recruiting them to the cultural project became a long social process. This phase was defined as a starting point to explore the homeless peoples' way of living, where they spent their days and nights, what their daily life was like, and what they were concerned about. The team recruited participants through spending time walking around specific areas of the city as well as spending nights on the street, in order to find out what it was like to be homeless, as well as to establish contact with homeless people. We met people belonging to a, for us, unknown society. We presented ourselves as the persons we were, cultural workers including a researcher that wanted to involve homeless people in a cultural project. Through these activities the twelve participants were slowly recruited. They were adults around fifty years old; which was coherent with our own age, but significantly older than the average homeless person in Norway.

Four were asked to participate in the research project. These were the persons that we got the most stable contact with. Inclusion criteria were: dependent on social services, living below the poverty level and being homeless. The four participants were three men and one woman in the age range of 40 - 55 years, and all of them were ethnic Nordic. All of them had long experience of being homeless according to the UN definitions. Two of them had spent their childhood in institutions, one was a drug addict. Their living patterns changed related to the seasons in Norway. Before the informed written consent was collected, we made sure that the participants were aware of their rights to withdraw from the study, as well as the consequences of the consent. For ethical reasons, names are fictional, the age is approximate, and personal descriptions are limited. The four chosen participants are in this article called Ulf, Undis, Ulrik and Ulvar. To protect their anonymity we do not describe them in any detail.

Data Collection

The data consisted of field notes and the created manus-

cript. The collection of data followed recommended guidelines from an ethnographic design (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Extensive field notes and reflections were written shortly after each rehearsal and performance. The field notes were structured in three categories: context, experience, and reflections. Data collection took place one day a week for a six-month period. Two persons wrote field notes individually. Notes were then shared and discussed. In total, the period of data gathering, creating the manuscript, and presenting the performance lasted for one year.

The process of developing the manuscript implemented themes such as telling stories about my life, physical impressions, voice techniques, and the act of dramatising events from life narratives (Eik, 2004). We focused on the everyday life and practical details to understand the participants' perspectives, actions, incidents, norms and values (Bauman & Sherzer, 1996) through an open, unstructured design, which could increase the opportunities to catch sight of the unexpected. The questions we asked in order to make them tell stories were related to their way of living, as well as what they had done before, and their wishes for the future. We had to be patient because appointments were often changed. At the end of the process of data gathering we started to work dramaturgically with their stories to highlight important plots in them together with the persons involved.

Data Analysis

The preliminary analysis started after the first field encounters and continued through the data gathering period and afterwards, consistent with the ethnographic method (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Experiences were shared between participants, the cultural workers, and the researcher and evoked numerous discussions related to the content of the performance. The preliminary analysis, done by the cultural workers and the researcher, highlighted subjects that became the structure in the performance:

- 1) Everybody has a story to tell
- 2) The treasures in my suitcase
- 3) I want to get rid of a stigma
- 4) The experiences of injustice by adults at institutions
- 5) Different versions of the same space
- 6) I am a pilgrim, and
- 7) The challenges of being a whistleblower.

In the next phase the material was analysed by the author, to be presented in this article. The data material was narrative in its form, but the analysis was paradigmatic. Paradigmatic analysis of narrative data seeks to locate common themes from several stories (Polkinghorne, 1995). To do so, systematic readings were done to obtain an overall sense of the data through repeated reading of the fieldnotes. Then the overall sense of data was broken into parts. All topics relevant to the research aim were identified and gradually four themes appeared from the analysis:

- The experienced injustice disturbed their storyline
- The rewritten narratives created possibilities and changes

- The narratives had subjunctive aspects
- The lack of relations that could be trusted

Ethical and Methodological Considerations

The project was approved by Norwegian Social Science Data Service. We repeatedly talked with the participants to determine whether they felt comfortable to present their stories in the performance. Those who were most highly profiled had no doubts about this, because they wanted to tell society about years of oppression and anger; some were in a user organisation for children and had spent their childhood in institutions.

Describing the project on paper, it appears as if we inhabited several positions, for instance as cultural workers and researchers, however in the process this was not perceived as difficult. I experienced it as if we were in the position of society-involved researchers.

Findings

Each of the major findings will be presented by an illustration from the performance, followed by the result of the analysis supported by quotes, examples, and discussions.

The experienced injustice disturbed their storyline

After my second year at school, the child welfare authorities and the police came to our home. They placed me in an institution for children. I lived there for nine years and they pigeonholed me, said I was not as smart as the others, how come; I managed to get a driver license when I was 19 years old! Now I am 49 years old and I want to get rid of this stigma that has hindered me a lot in my life.

When telling stories, the participants talked mostly about the past. One issue in their stories about the past was abuse and neglect in their childhood. Some had spent years of their childhood in special institutions for children. One participant said he had never told his (ex-) wife and children that he had been a pupil at this special school. *Two years ago I joined a supportive group for pupils from... (Name of the school). Then I managed to talk about what I have been through. But I still haven't told my children about those experiences of mine.* One interpretation of this story is that traumatized experiences from childhood hindered him from linking together the past and present times of his narratives, and this disturbed him from living an ordinary life. All participants except one person organized most of their everyday life according to where they could have free meals. One had recently got lodging for homeless people from the community. Some days they sold the street magazine. One of the three was a drug addict and had therefore a pressure to get money for this activity.

Two of the participants explained that some teachers at the institutions sexually abused many of the pupils. A user organisation had recently been established for people that had been pupils at this special institution. The mayor of the city deplored officially to those pupils and verified that many of them had been exposed to gross neglect and that they could apply to get compensation. It may be considered that this encouraged some to dare to tell about those

experiences and this subject became an important part of the performance.

Some plots described helplessness related to experiences when they were taken into care and sent to live in institutions. Ulrik explained that many of the so-called problem-children were sent to institutions. Some were labelled mentally retarded even though they, as described by both Ulf and Ulrik, were maybe hyperactive or filled with anger and sadness because of their life situation. *Against the will of my mother I was sent to a special institution. I was eight years old. I was crying.* Both Ulrik and Ulf often focused on those issues when we were talking to them. In the interpretation of the material it seems to be a kind of healing power in their stories. They managed to reflect on both a personal and a societal level, but at the same time their personal storyline never went into present or future time. It might seem that the injustice they experienced disturbed their storyline. When they linked their narratives or plots to the future, the narratives were connected to a wish for justice that was out of their control.

To summarize, the participants' stories concerned both their actions and experiences. There seemed to be a weak link between past, present, and future in their stories. One might suggest that such lack of coherence might affect people's feeling of who they are and who they want to be in life. They strived to establish causality between experiences, actions, and images of future events into a coherent and understandable whole (Ricoeur, 1991), and this may affect their abilities to create strategies for making changes in their lives.

The coherence in rewritten narratives created possibilities and changes

Yes, I did set fire to that house, and I am very sorry for the person who died in that fire. I did not do it on purpose. I have fulfilled the punishment. In prison I became familiar with Fritz Moen that was wrongfully convicted for two distinct felony murders serving a total of 18 years in prison. This case is termed the largest justice scandal in Norway of all time. Moen was deaf with a severe speech impediment. He was also partly paralyzed. I dream about making a film about him that shall present the injustice, but also the real Fritz; the nice man that was my friend; presenting the good sides of us. Imagine...

Working with the performance, the participants' plots were prepared for the performance by the instructors in cooperation with the participants. Undis told stories about how she felt her life had been destroyed due to injustice by the authorities. One story was about her experiences when the child welfare authorities took her new-born child into their care. She ultimately chose three stories from her life that she wanted to share with the audience. At the performance she sat in a chair with a box of three fabrics in her lap. One story was connected to each fabric. She took a fabric out of her lap, sensed it, and told that this fabric had been a blanket that belonged to the daughter she had lost. *But now I shall redesign it into pillows; pillows that I can hug and feel comfort from.* From our interpretation of her per-

formance we see that this act contributed to meaningfulness and pride for Undis. She had invited all her family members to the performance, and through this act it seemed that some kind of reconstruction of her identity took place through her narratives. She proudly presented her stories.

As we interpret it, the act of telling stories, dramatizing them, preparing and presenting them, created meaningful activities for the persons involved. Through playful but professional theatre methods they reflected on their own stories. The analysis of the material indicates that this promoted new experiences and insight. In narrative theories as well as in the theatre, the term «plot» is used. Plots are structuring devices that give poetic narratives their capacities to deal in universals by placing actions within a coherent whole (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000). *It is like I take myself more seriously working with this performance... changing my own view on myself, remembering how I viewed myself as a creative person when I was young* (Undis). The plots appeared to establish relations between themselves and the events while enabling them to construct, together with the instructors, a meaningful story and not merely an assembly of facts. Through the process of dramatizing their narratives and embodying them through the actions, they were given possibilities of reshaping the meaning and results of what had transpired. Ricoeur (1991) uses the concepts configuration and reconfiguration about this process, and Bruner (1986) expresses how we create our identities through storytelling. We could see how problem-solving occurred through storytelling; participants were challenged to view their lives in another perspective and this engaged positive and empowering energy. For instance, Ulf's story was dramatized so he could present himself as a person with resources and not only as a person that experienced himself as a victim of injustice. In the performance we made a royal seat for Ulf and from there he told his stories: *When I go to the social services no one asks if I can do something. I just get the social insurance. Next time I will say: people who know me say I am a good driver. Maybe I can get a job as a driver? Or can you use my other resources? My name is Ulf and I want to be a part of this society.*

The subjunctive aspects in the narratives

If I get economic compensation for the years of child abuse and neglect in the institution, I want to pay my debt, get a place to live and maybe buy a car. I have a girlfriend in another city and I could help her with small repairs in her house. – And we could go on holiday together in that car... She is the love of my life... And I would like to take a course in computing and buy a PC. – But most important is that a compensation would give me dignity; like an official apology.

Through the work with the performance, subjunctive possibilities occurred. Ulf expressed that he hoped to receive financial compensations for the injustice suffered at the institution. We asked him if the compensation could change his life and in what way. Followed by such stories they made reflections of what they had done, what they

wanted to do now, and their hope for future occupations. One decided he should organize himself as a seller of the street magazine to get an income. Some started to talk about dreams they had for their lives when they were younger. This has an element of subjunctive (Ricoeur, 1991) and became an important part in the performance. The element of subjunctive was used consciously to link together their narratives about the past to the present and to thoughts about the future. The subjunctive was used as a dramaturgic handle. In the process of making the performance, they were asked for hypothetical perspectives and when they raised them they were asked to be specific and exemplify them. In this way the hypothetical perspectives could assist the participants to use their narratives to think with.

The subjunctive was used dramaturgically when the participants did not have the courage to perform. Some withdrew from part of the performances, but the team were allowed to say what was supposed to be said. We solved this dramaturgically in this way: *At this chair Undis should have been standing. Then she would have raised her head like this, and told you her story.* Most of them were amongst the audience at the performance on those days when they did not feel well enough to perform. Through interpretations of the material we saw how storytelling became a significant action used to pursue the direction they wished their life to take; though it felt like a huge challenge for some of the participants. It seemed obvious that storytelling offered them a way to make sense of what had happened and weave their storyline together.

The lack of relations to trust

When I started at the new school as a nine-year-old, I told my schoolmates that I was living at the orphanage. They became suspicious. No decent child lived at an orphanage. I could understand that this was what they meant. It was stupid of me to tell them the truth. They could not understand my situation. None of them wanted to spend time with me...

The term narrative is relational. Stories are told to someone and consist of plots that involve relations as well. Most of the participants' stories were about significant relations, but they described many of those significant relations as bad. Some talked about the lack of relations in which they could confide; they told sad stories about having few or no persons to trust as children in an institution far away from home. They had experienced degradation by others and had been offended by persons that they should have been able to trust. In our interpretation of the material we see that maybe the worst was when their stories and experiences were not considered as being true by the adults they should have been able to trust.

In the performance some of the texts were dramatised and presented tape-recorded in the performance because they were too painful to tell: *Around twelve o'clock I was lying in my bed in the dormitory, it was totally dark, and I was listening to the footsteps. Would the steps stop by my bed this night...* A possible interpretation of those stories is that

some of the participants had experienced feelings of powerlessness for sexual abuses that took place at some institutions. As a child you cannot hinder the assailant to stop the sexual abuse. A national mapping of institutions for children with special needs, The Befring-report (2004), concluded that sexual abuse took place and that few assailants have been convicted because of the high requirements of the law.

Through participation in the theatre performance some of the participants told powerful stories about themselves as persons that had lived a hard life; but also as persons with rich experiences and resources. At the performances they were surrounded by people that wanted to listen to their stories. *That my family came to the performance meant so much to me* (Undis). In our analysis we see that the stories serve as both an aesthetic and a moral form. Mattingly (1998) claims that we may create story-like structures through interactions. She emphasises the events of the stories and she names this as therapeutic emplotment. They are a result of an ongoing process with people we interact with. Despite the participants having experienced betrayals from adults, they were now in social surroundings where they were believed, and this encouraged them to move forward.

The stories of the homeless people in the study had extensive political consequences and were woven into a collective story of how children with special needs had been treated: stories about how children were in some cases wrongly diagnosed. In these instances many children experienced gross neglect at the institutions and did not have a childhood with trust, care, and love. While the intention of the study was to find out more about the everyday life of the homeless people, they themselves wanted to tell painful stories that had hindered them from participating in the society as ordinary people having home, work and family. It is obvious from this study that the participants involved were concerned about being respected and treated with dignity, and did not focus that much on their living conditions.

Reflections

Different interpretations of narrative structure

The aim of this study was to explore homeless people's narratives presented in a performance and how they related these narratives to meaning in their everyday life. A central discovery from the interpretation of the material was that there was a weak link between past, present, and future in the narratives of the participants. It seems that their experienced injustice disturbed their storyline. For most of us creating such links may be described as a mental process where emotional, conscious, and unconscious imaginations play a role (Eikeland, 1989). Rösen (2004) claims that the ability to link together the past, present and future helps us to instruct ourselves for our actual life. Few of the participants told stories about more practical life aspects of contemporary time. When they did, they told stories about how their days were structured by opportunities for free meals and when they had to go to the

hospices to get a bed for the night. Their stories lingered on injustice in their past.

The participants' stories were dramatized by the instructors together with the person involved. In this case the stories had a dramaturgic structure with moments such as: presenting a plot, rising action, turning point, falling action, and the end of the story. Of course, there are always many possible truths and realities when people construct stories. From the interpretations it seems that this rewriting satisfied the participants and demonstrated that they could tell stories that were important and meaningful for them to share with others. As well this included that they got warmly response from the audience.

In the process of making a manuscript out of participants' stories, we reasoned that the stories were fragmented and in many ways not what we had expected. The stories were not structured around just one plot and were not presented in a linear structure. Bruner (1986) claims that such implicit expectations originate from the western dominant traditional discourse of what a story of the self should look like. On the contrary, postmodern narratologists assume that narrative characteristics are not inherent in human nature (Sermijn et al 2008). This implies that a universal definition of the essence of a story is difficult to construct.

Theatre as a subjunctive space

The use of ethnographic methods may enable researchers to work with knowledge production in a bottom-up position, using one's resonance consciously in the interpretation of the material. Doing a project like this involves the researcher as a human being, scientist and culture worker. Many artists of today are concerned with the more direct integration of art into the realm of urgent social problems such as homelessness. The position of the artist is however undergoing a mutation and mingles with, for instance, the scientist, the occupational therapist, etc. (Kwon, 2002). It may seem that art is more and more about matters that traditionally belonged to politics, and that art has to reshape political conflicts at the risk of testing the limits of its own politics. Considering this, it became obvious that the current project implemented human relations outside the traditionally defined objectivity of the researcher. Bourriaud (2002) introduces the term «relational aesthetic». He claims that contemporary art creates free arenas that differ from other communication zones. In this way, the performers, instructors, and the audience created a space where people were more open-minded to understand each other. The work with the performance triggered many thoughts among the participants. Some of them wanted to do more projects. We did follow-up on this to some extent: we made a short film with one of the actors involved in the project and we wrote an article that was published in a street magazine.

Limitations and implications for future research

Demographic characteristics of homeless people vary significantly from country to country and the term homelessness has different nuances and diverse use (Hwang, 2001;

Anderson & Sward, 2007). Such dilemmas, as well as the causes of homelessness, have not been discussed in this article, but there is a need to discuss this further, as the 'typical' homeless person changes, and this has huge implications for the countries' health and social services. A limitation of this study related to this issue is that all the participants were born approximately during the same decade (1950 - 1965).

It may seem that homelessness is neglected by medicine and psychiatry (Folsom & Jeste, 2002) and more research is needed to identify better ways to deliver life opportunities to this population. There is also a need for further experience and knowledge of how drama as an activity may be a medium that can support marginalised groups such as homeless people in clarifying their needs. It is obvious from this study that their needs go beyond getting a home.

Conclusions

Through the work with the performance and the interpretations of the material, it was obvious that the meaningfulness in the subjunctive of the participants' stories created possibilities for changes. All the way through the work with the performance, the participants were offered a new space, where they could create a performance based on their stories together with cultural workers. The results reveal how the participants were offered possibilities to construct and change their identities related to how they wanted to be perceived by others. They could present themselves as performing persons with rich experiences that other persons wanted to listen to. Through the perspective of considering the participants to be persons with possibilities, we could highlight the knowledge from their stories and reflect how such knowledge has an impact on the occupational opportunities available for individuals.

The point of departure in this project was linked to the discourse in occupational science and occupational therapy regarding people's rights and possibilities to participate in the society. Living in one of the richest countries in the world, there are still many homeless people living below the official poverty line. Despite the parole of a society for all, society has difficulties in integrating everybody. There is a need for more professional considerations of enabling homeless people to live in homes, considering their resources, and making adaptations for part-time work or opportunities to engage in meaningful and relevant occupations. Using drama as a method obviously liberates people's resources, and through the subjunctive they are offered possibilities to consider themselves differently and through this find ways to participate in occupations. Such methods are also useful to create an information exchange between people living in different spaces in the same world.

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Paper IV

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GENERAL DISCUSSION

The following section will consider the findings in relation to the research question of the thesis. This will be discussed in light of the theoretical foundations and research presented earlier in the thesis. From this the following structure for the discussion is chosen:

- The personal transforms when engaging in craft and creative activities
 - From victim to being in charge of one's own life
 - Transforming new characters into existence
 - Transforming learning strategies to manage everyday occupations
 - Transformation through occupation

- The social transforms when engaging in craft and creative activities
 - Transform from invisible to visible
 - Promoting and enabling peer support
 - Participation in craft and creative activities facilitate meaning

- The transformations between the participants and the local community
 - Power structures restricting transformative processes
 - Transformations between the participants and their local communities

The personal transforms when engaging in craft and creative activities

One of the key findings arising from all the studies was that that the participants went through personal transformations when engaging in craft and creative activities. The findings present that most of them had become victimised as a course of problematic life situations, and that they, through their engagements in organised craft or creative projects, were enabled to become more in charge of their own lives and were gradually transformed into new characters. They also learned strategies about how to manage everyday life.

From victim to being in charge of own life

The findings (Papers II, III and IV) presented how most of the participants experienced that they were not in charge of their own lives, had lost power to make choices in their lives, and found life was becoming out of control. For instance, the asylum seekers described their future as in the hands of the authorities. Another interpretation is that some might let faith rule

in such situations. Some of the homeless had experienced assaults and injustices in their childhood and youth, with consequent drugs or criminal activities that had made their lives different from what they had wanted and this led to social exclusion. At the meeting place some told how they had lost control over their everyday lives as a consequence of mental problems. Mead, Hilton and Curtis (2001) describe that when a person does not belong to the ordinary society, they can suffer from social or cultural ostracism and feel rejected or forgotten by society. This was the case for the participants (Papers II and III), where there were mechanisms that made them develop a sense of self as a victim or as a patient-identity or as dependent on others and social benefits. The findings (Papers I, II, III, and IV) included stories and descriptions about how some felt they had lost dignity and self-respect. One might interpret that their life situations developed an inner sense of vulnerability that for some became a feeling victimisation. In this position they felt powerless and passive. The study participants were at various stages of this victimised position, with some requiring professional support to manage everyday life. Wilcock (2006) proposed that when people are unable to engage in everyday occupations, they are unable to demonstrate who they are and hope to be. Polkinghorne (1996) explains how important it is that children experience the world as trustworthy and responsive to their attempts to accomplishment. From these experiences people develop life tones that prevail in life stories, and these life tones are influenced by their experiences of the world's trustworthiness. The life tone can be either optimistic and include hope, or be influenced by mistrust and resignation. This raises the question of how to reverse/change this position. There are many different approaches for achieving this, and the best methods will differ from person to person. The next section of the thesis will discuss how participants' experiences in craft and creative occupations could start the processes of change.

The findings revealed that when participants were invited to organised craft and creative occupations, they gained experiences from their engagements in these occupations that transformed their view of themselves to someone who could manage. The participants seemed to link their practical wisdom gained from their doing with self-possession, through which they seemed to sense that they could better control their lives. Yerxa et al. (1990) describe that the term 'occupation' means to seize or take possession, and the findings presented how they possessed the different craft or creative occupations in which they were involved. They further experienced that they had unique knowledge and experiences that others wanted them to share. Slowly their victimised position changed. Polkinghorne (1996) underlined that a

major principle in occupational engagement is that people have personal power to author their choices, which is in line with one of the main findings in Paper I. Polkinghorne (1996) emphasises that persons who are agents of their own lives, set goals, strive to achieve those goals, overcome obstacles and actualise ideals. In contrast, he claims some people might view themselves as victims or pawns of circumstances. They have given up or lost the power to control and direct their lives. Slowly, through their engagement in craft and creative occupations, the participants (Papers II, III, and IV) gained practical wisdom that led to change. They experienced meaningfulness, responsibility, purposefulness and an ability to plan and organise their days. From being in victimised positions they experienced how they could contribute to their collective goals, i.e., complete the theatre performance or the craft products, and present their products to others. Slowly their participation and engagement in these occupations transformed them into persons who set goals, which they achieved, and through this, they experienced being agents of at least a part of their lives.

There is no evidence in the findings that their transference was something that would last, but nevertheless, they had gained the experience of belonging to a more empowered position. A description of those processes, from being victimised to being in charge of own life, is one of the key findings of this thesis. With this in mind I will further discuss how new characters were transformed into existence through their engagements in craft and creative activities.

Transforming new characters into existence

The findings presented here show how the vulnerable life situation of the participants, caused by family, culture, health matters, politics and structure of the society, excluded them from active citizenship and minimised their repertoire of roles and occupations, which is in line with the research of Laliberte Rudman (2010). It is reported how most of the participants had developed fewer roles than people in general, had lost roles, or had roles they were ashamed of. There are substantial costs to a person's identity when someone is no longer recognized as a brother, son, friend, worker and so on (Briar, 1980), which was verified by the story of Rose (Paper II), who had been living at an asylum centre for seven years without her family. According to Kielhofner (2008), we think of and experience ourselves according to the roles we inhabit and the occupations that we do. In this way our roles and our doings are weaved into our identities. There is research (Briar, 1980) that links the role of unemployed to suicide, depressions, and stress-related health problems. Molineux (2010) argues that people who are

socially segregated are not given the same possibilities to orchestrate their occupational engagement in their environment, as most people do. Therefore, it can be a healing process to transform new roles or characters into existence, not necessarily as employed, but within meaningful roles in craft and creative activities for each individual.

The findings presented how the participants were given possibilities to bring new characters or roles into existence. This was not only true for those that were engaged with the theatre occupations, but also those at the meetingplace that were given characters as being someone who does things, that creates, and is a part of a social group. Goffman (1959) argued that society could be compared to theatre, where teams of actors perform different roles. He believes that we have many social selves and that we tailor our performances to the audience that we meet in each situation. In this way we try to influence how the others view us. Wilcock (2004) has also looked into the form of theatre as an occupation. She explains that when theatre brings new characters into existence, it might give possibilities to experiment and development of people's different social selves. Through the act of telling his narrative, Ulf (Paper III) started to reflect that, during his routine visits at the NAV-office, he was never asked if he could manage to have a job. He had not thought about it, and did not expect them to ask. He got his social benefits monthly. From this, one might interpret that the social case-worker did not believe that he could manage to have a job. Ulf reflected that a part-time job could have changed his life. He told that being viewed as someone being competent would underline an apprehension of being respected and valued, and he started to describe his competences related to concrete jobs that he reckoned he could manage, and he reflected that an economic income could make some dreams come true. Through participation in craft and creative occupations, the participants started to reflect about their own lives. They were given possibilities to test different social selves in a secure and playful environment.

How can personal transforms through craft and creative activities take place? The participants in study III were instructed in methods (Boal, 1979; Freire, 1998; Saldana, 2005; Thompson, 2003) through which they could control their own story, known as entering the "King's chair", a position from where they could tell their stories with proudness. Paper III presented how the participants, together with the theatre instructors, rewrote the stories to bring forward the subjunctive (Bruner, 1986), the 'what if'. In this way they started to talk about dreams, and they could imagine things that could happen, a process they had not previously dared to do. Surprisingly, the findings from study III revealed that the homeless participants were not

most concerned about having enough food and a place to sleep. Rather, they repeatedly stressed that they were most concerned with being treated with respect, and to experience dignity. Some talked about getting rid of a stigma from the years when they were placed in institutions for children with learning problems. The findings presented how the rewritten narratives placed the guilt with the authorities. Presenting themselves as individuals within their historical context affected the participants, but also their family members and friends that were watching the performances. They could view their dearest with different lenses. As a researcher I was surprised by the participants' abilities to reflect upon their own lives at an advanced society / meta-level. At the time when the performance was presented, the authorities apologised for the fact that children had been sexually assaulted, beaten and treated disrespectfully at most of the schools and homes for children with learning problems. One of the male participants had let his beard grow, and on the day of receiving this official apology, he cut the beard. In their new characters they dared to tell about what had happened to them, to place blame with those who were guilty, and to stop blaming themselves. One participant told how he had not even told his wife about abuses at the institution when he was a child. Using the subjunctive form to tell 'what if', they started to open their minds, to be proud of themselves, and to see future perspectives of how to handle everyday occupations. Despite losses and wounds, one of the participants (Paper IV) said: *Despite all, I am glad I am the one I am*. Expressed this way, one might say that she had taken control over her own narrative, transforming slowly to master everyday occupations at the meetingplace. She was enabled to explore and try out characters of herself that she had forgotten, or characters she had never dared to bring into existence. One might say that the participants were offered a safe "room" with possibilities to transform new or old characters into existence.

Transforming learning strategies to manage everyday occupations

The findings (Papers I, II, III and IV) presented here demonstrate what happened to the participants when doing craft and creative activities. Through these events they started some transformative processes (Townsend, 1997; Watson, 2004) that enabled them to handle everyday occupations, which had previously been perceived as chaotic and difficult. Through these activities the participants also reached a higher activity level (Paper IV). The findings presented how the participants were transformed to become persons who were more self-confident and conscious of their own competences and possibilities. These experiences allowed them to discover and see future perspectives (Papers III and IV).

The findings from Papers II and IV presented how the participants' engagements in occupations influenced their everyday structures. Some told how their sleeping patterns had changed during their engagement in the organised craft or creative activities. The time structure of the activities made them follow the rhythms of people who were employed, and it helped them escape a more passive lifestyle and made them engage in meaningful occupations. The time of the theatre rehearsals or the time schedule of the crafts group encouraged them to get up in the morning. This might be interpreted as if their engagement in meaningful occupations promoted structures and habits in their everyday occupations and vice versa. Astrid (Paper IV) explained that the process of reclaiming control of her life had taken a long time. She had a support person who followed her to the meeting place, and she told how for the first two years she had sat in the same corner of the sofa at the meeting place. It had been challenging for her just to achieve that. Gradually she managed to participate in the craft group, where her joy of making glass-jewelry motivated her. From the interpretation of the material, it seemed that this participation prevented chaotic habits for the participants and provided stability to their everyday structures and routines. As a consequence of this, most participants reached a higher activity level even after their engagement in craft and creative occupations was completed. In this way the studies as a whole presented a dynamic link between structure in everyday occupations, meaningfulness and activity level.

Obtaining greater structure in one's lifestyle was a transformative process where the participants were slowly enabled to develop skills and problem-solving procedures. Kielhofner (1993) claimed that the experience of crafts is the most tangible context for bringing persons closest to everyday reality, stating that there is no ulterior motive in the craft context; work is done for the products and for the process of creation. It became obvious that the participants gained belief in their own abilities, and developed coping strategies to handle challenges. Skills and hopes for the future can be weaved together: *And when I go to bed and think about what colors I shall put together, then, for the first time in many years, I look forward to the next day* (Paper I). It was obvious that the act of creating and the skills involved brought hope and future prospects to the participants.

However, we know from research and experiences that the challenges of handling everyday occupations are not always positive stories. The processes of changing habits and structures of everyday occupations are difficult. It is difficult to change one's lifestyle, routines and habits,

but changing occupational patterns with craft and creative activities allowed the participants to experience and learn strategies to manage everyday occupations, and this appeared to strengthen their view of their own possibilities.

Transformation through occupation

Using theatre as an occupation for the asylum seekers and the homeless participants offered them the possibility to transform through occupation. Such occupations invite people to get involved in the creative processes, through which they can experience and unfold their resources. One might say that the inherent possibilities of using theatre as a method provided them the opportunity to explore the subjunctive, the dreams and the fiction. In theatre the actors play with subjunctivising realities (Bruner, 1986): *What might happen if?* In the process of developing manuscripts the participants were asked to tell stories about their lives. When the participants (Paper III) told of injustice in their past, the instructors asked them to reflect about what they had done and experienced, what they wanted to do now and what were their hopes and dreams for future occupations. Some started to talk about dreams they have had for their lives when they were young. These conversations had subjunctive aspects (Ricoeur, 1991) and became an important part of the performance. The subjunctive aspects were used dramaturgically in the performance: One of the participants was sitting in front of the audience with a suitcase with three fabrics in her lap. She slowly took a fabric out of her suitcase and sensed it. She told one story related to each fabric. She told the audience that this first fabric had been a blanket she had sewed for the baby that had been taken from her after giving birth. This memory still filled her with sadness, shame and anger, she told. Touching the fabric gently she told how she wanted to redesign the blanket into pillows, pillows that she could hug and feel comfort from. She would start to redesign more old fabrics with her sewing machine. In the work, within the performances, dreams and visions for the future were visualised.

Theatre can be considered a form of entertainment (similar to poetry, song and dance) (Scott, 2009), but might also have a more political form, as it has been used to empower people (Boal, 1979; Johnston, 1979). This thesis presents how craft and creative activities can have a supporting role in the handling of challenges encountered in the everyday life of vulnerable people. Such forms of activities create bonds between the participants and their local community. The thesis brings forward the complex structures of everyday occupations and

how they are influenced by ecology, power, geography, politics and historical significance. Through participation in the occupations, the participants learned skills related to the activities as well as strategies to handle everyday occupations (as these activities gave them possibilities to orchestrate their occupational engagement). The experiences and knowledge gained from one activity could thus be translated into a competence to handle other challenges and occupations. These activities were performed in groups, and provided possibilities to learn from other participants. It was these activities that offered the participants the possibility to take the step from alienation to social connections, which will be highlighted in the next chapter.

The social transforms when engaging in craft and creative activities

Transform from invisible to visible

The findings (Papers II, III and IV) presented how the participants underwent social transforms from being invisible to becoming more apparent as people through doing craft and creative occupations. However, it became evident from the studies that to be urban poor or vulnerable made most of the participants feel discriminated against and marginalised. Most of the participants lacked a safe environment and had undergone a loss of labour, lack of continuity of caregiving by family and community. They had less familiar productive assets (e.g., housing and household relations), neighbours and friends and poor access to health services.

The invisibility of the participants in the studies (Papers II, III, and IV) was both abstract and concrete. This means that some experienced an inner sense of invisibility, and had lost contours of their identities and the sense of who they were, as a cause of less participation in everyday occupations. An example of this was Iris (Paper II), who isolated herself at the asylum centre, or Astrid (Paper IV), who had isolated herself at her home for years as a cause of traumatic events. Most of the participants were invisible in the society. The possibility of doing provided them mechanisms for social interaction. These processes are described in the four papers of this thesis, and can be understood by the theories of Wilcock (1999), who argues for the transformative nature of doing, being and becoming.

How then did the transformative processes unfold from invisible to visible through the participation in the organised craft and creative occupations? This was accomplished through

their engagements in the projects they were given, opportunities to occupy another space, a space with transforming possibilities where they could break down inner and outward oppressions. Boal (1979) and Freire (1998) describe in their theatre methodology how people gained tools to express their frustration with being in a perceived locked situation. People in locked situations might be destructive. The findings in Paper II present turning points of destructive activities. The findings (Papers II, III, and IV) describe how their activities became an arena where the participants learned how to communicate within the group; they developed respect for other cultural values, social interactions and the ability to trust others. This was also an arena with discussions and negotiations about how to solve disagreements.

Who knows a homeless person or an asylum seeker? The findings presented that through the theatre performances the participants could present themselves and their stories to other people in their local environment in a way that they themselves could control. Through the performances they presented their subjective knowledge and lived experiences for others to see. The participants in the organised craft group sold their products at markets and presented the meeting place and their own doings in a positive way.

Another possibility is that the homeless were, in fact, visible to the society, but were negatively stereotyped. There is much power in such stereotypic thinking, and I claim that it contains power that builds oppression. We know from media that people in a society might fear that accommodating people with differences may pose a threat to safety as well as the economic and social stability of the environment (Pollard & Kronenberg, 2009). The findings (Papers II, III, and IV) presented how the craft and creative activities eliminated some of these stereotypes and oppression. The participants were visualised as individuals, and not as a homogeneous group. Pollard and Kronenberg (2009) discuss how public self-representation in theatre and performances might generate evidence of their abilities. One might say that the participants had opportunities to present themselves as individuals with different abilities and personalities.

Theatre facilitates fiction, and this generated hopes and wishes; hopes that had been held back as a result of living conditions. From the findings (Papers I, II, III, IV) there seemed to be a strong link between the process of being empowered and being visualised by others. Such processes can be seen as a part of political processes, which are fundamental in gaining active

citizenship (Pollard & Kronenberg, 2009; Whiteford & Pereira, 2013). These processes also reduce negative stigmatisation and invisibility.

Promoting and enabling peer support

Another key finding (Papers II and IV) shows how engagement in craft and creative activities facilitated peer support amongst the participants. For instance, the act of sitting by the table making diverse crafts made small-talk easy, through which they presented dilemmas about everyday occupations and gave advice to each other. They also supported each other with techniques and procedures for craft making. The findings (Paper I, IV) presented that this peer support meant a lot to the participants, and it was encouraged by the staff. It illustrated that peer support is critical for managing and trusting others. This developed participants' self-esteem, and made them feel freer from constraints of mental and social disabilities. This is in line with Dennis (2003), who claims that the availability of peers to discuss personal difficulties is a strong interpersonal resource that might strengthen people's self-esteem. The findings further presented how they gave emotional support to each other. They listened to each other as like-minded, gave advice, cared for each other, and encouraged each other. Dennis (2003) describes how such emotional support fosters experiences of feeling accepted, cared for, admired, empathised, respected, and valued, despite the person having personal difficulties. Looking at the peer support in the craft and creative activities in the findings raises a discussion of how to view the values of these supportive occupations. Upon reflection, it is likely that low-cost and low-threshold occupations could be more frequently adapted in the health and social services. The hierarchy in the therapeutic sessions disappeared during these informal activities, and participants were more easily able to present themselves with personalities and as people with competences.

The peer support was also evident in Paper II. Through the theatre methods (Boal, 1979; Freire, 1998; Saldana, 2005), the involved participants became well known to each other and as part of a group, rather than being alienated from one another. Smith (2005) reports from her research on refugees, that the ability to trust others develops people's feelings of safety. The instructors of the theatre project encouraged the participants to take care of each other. In the beginning of the project, the participants did not manage to comfort each other when someone was very sad. They did not interact. After weeks together they started to share meals, developing ways to be generous with each other and presenting images of themselves

as persons they were proud to be. Some supported each other in concrete ways (e.g., Mimmi was knocking on Iris' door every morning, making arrangements about when to take the bus to the theatre project). These were small, but important supporting strategies that changed their everyday occupations into positive circles. They obviously became empowered by the relational activities and became more visible through this peer support. In my opinion, when the participants were able to support each other, they gained feelings of connectedness. When people experience affiliation with others and feel like them, they feel connections (Mead & Curtis, 2000). These connections are a deep, holistic understanding based on mutual experiences, where people are able to do and be with each other without the constraints of the expert (i.e., patient-relationships), as described by Mead and Curtis (2000).

These findings suggest that peer relations could be used more effectively as supporting interventions in the concept of health promotion. This thesis has demonstrated that craft and creative occupations have inherent possibilities to develop peer relations and support. The findings show how peer support empowered the participants into more positive and active positions in their everyday occupations. Peer support is a system of giving and receiving respect and responsibility and is based upon an emotional understanding of another's situation (Mead, Hilton & Curtis, 2001). As the professional and political focus in health care shifts from treatment of disease to health promotion, peer support is a concept that can be used to achieve this. Using peer support more consciously in the work of health promotion can be a way to facilitate personal, relational and social change.

Participation in craft and creative activities facilitate meaning

Taken together, the findings (Papers I, II, III and IV) brought forward how engagement in craft and creative occupations facilitated senses of positive life tones and meaning.

Some findings were surprising. For example, in Paper III it could have been expected that the homeless participants were mostly concerned with survival. Even though Ulrik was homeless, the most important thing for him (and some of the others) was to present experiences of the injustices to orphans in the 1960s. He experienced that his engagement in the theatre gave him dignity; he related stories of injustice that no child should experience. He and some of the others had not dared to talk about this earlier, as they were not believed when they were children. According to Hammell (2004), there seems to be a relation between our values and

meanings, and that meaning is an important factor for achieving therapeutic occupation (Hammell, 2004). From this I interpret that Ulf (Paper III) experienced that it was a type of therapy for him to participate in the theatre project. He was believed and received respect when he told his stories. For him, this was more important than talking about his everyday struggle for survival. Therefore, one might interpret this as a therapeutic process. Narratives are ways of making meaning as life unfolds and as new circumstances present themselves (Bruner, 1990). One might interpret Ulf's doings and narratives in this way. In many ways this argues against the more traditional way of considering what is the most important for people, as, for instance, explained in Maslow's pyramid of needs.

These findings indicate that their doings in meaningful occupations strengthened the participants' belief in their own competences. For instance, it strengthened and sustained Erna's identity as a grandmother (Paper IV), who throughout her life had created self-made gifts for her relatives. The findings from the articles brought forward the link between the doings of meaningful occupations and how this made Erna proud and strengthened her feeling of managing. Such links between doing, meaning and identity have been stated by several researchers in occupational science (Reed et al, 2009). Hasselkus (2002) argues that creative activities can be vehicles for self-expression. The attempts to understand meaning are essential in clarifying the nature of occupations (Reed et al., 2010). From these studies it is obvious how the craft and creative occupations bridged gaps in the participants' everyday occupations as well as the fact that these occupations made connections in the local culture where these events happened.

The participants described that their everyday lives could be messy and/or unpredictable. They further described that they became more conscious about how to understand and handle what seemed messy and chaotic in everyday life through engagement in meaningful occupations. The symbolic interactionist, Blumer (1969), identified three basic principles about meaning: people act on the basis of meanings, these meanings emerge from interaction with others, and they have to be interpreted by the persons concerned. Looking at the definitions of Blumer (1969), I reflected that when people live in vulnerable situations, such experiences of meaning will occur more seldom, as they have fewer opportunities to participate in activities and fewer opportunities to socialise with different people, as, for instance, Iris (Paper II) who had isolated herself with sorrow at the asylum centre. When the participants were given opportunities to participate in meaningful occupations, they were

enabled to transform their knowledge from meaningful activities into stepping stones to other everyday occupations and increase their social interaction.

The transformations between the participants and the local community

Reflecting on the material, there seemed for me to be transformations that extended beyond the social transforms. It made me think of how the participants as a group affected their local environment. For instance, the participants, a group of homeless people, officially invited people to their performance and were given a theatre review in the newspaper and on television. Through this the habitants of the city could view them differently. The mayor of the city officially showed his gratitude to the asylum seekers for their performance, and these activities created a set of tracks in the local community. This chapter discusses how these transformations and the restrictions of such transformations unfolded.

Power- structures restricted transformative processes

The findings (Papers I, II, III, and IV) revealed that different political or power structures influenced the participants' engagements in occupations before they participated in the organised projects of craft and creativity. It was not the purpose of the studies to bring forward what restrained their occupations, but these were strong findings in all of the studies. This was especially true regarding the power structures at pedagogic, health and social institutions, and in the discussions of the asylum and refugee politics.

The findings showed how political or power structures constrained the participants from engagement in everyday occupations. The power structures appeared differently. For instance, two of the homeless participants (Paper III) told of their childhoods at institutions in the 50s, and 60s, and about their significant relations to adults. They experienced that most of those significant relations were negative. The participants were offended by some of the adults and were exposed to sexual abuse. Living at institutions, they had no adults who believed their stories or whom they could trust. A national mapping of institutions for children with special needs (The Befring Report, 2004) concluded that sexual abuse took place and that few assailants have been convicted because of the high requirements of the law. Some might argue that this belongs to history, but a newspaper article dated 27 December 2012 (Adresseavisen, 2012), indicated that children in institutions today lack a confidante. This was also experienced by the young asylum seekers (Paper II). The findings presented how the

experienced injustice disturbed their storylines, made them dwell into the past without being competent to handle everyday occupations in contemporary time, and restricted their transformative processes. Rösen (2004) describes how human's abilities to link together past, present and future helps us to construct ourselves for our actual lives.

Being powerless and subject to others' decisions was also reported as a finding in Paper II. The asylum seekers indicated that their futures were in the hands of the Department of Foreign Affairs. They felt helpless and their current existence was experienced as a process of waiting. The participants had been waiting for various lengths of time and experienced different degrees of social isolation. From this it is obviously necessary to ensure that people who spend time in institutions have meaningful occupations and social connections with at least one other person. Researchers (Morville & Erlandsson, 2013; Schisler & Polatajko, 2002; Smidt, 2005; Whiteford, 2007) have underlined the risk factors of living in asylum centres and how this makes people passive. Dear (1996) stated that people's lives are bound by a prism of time and space, and for the asylum seekers one might claim that such living conditions limit human development. Asylum politics is complex, but the long application processes are inhumane. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres (2006), identifies deliberate attempts by many countries to dehumanise asylum seekers and present them as criminals or carriers of diseases or someone who is an easy target for disdain.

The findings in Paper II presented questions about who should have access to theatre use. This question was raised by the participants. They asked: *Can unprofessional actors act? Is our performance good enough for presentation?* These questions stimulated reflections about who is culturally qualified to perform. This is an important question, as it can help us to clarify our conscience about who can be artists. Which groups in the society have been generally privileged to perform? Who do we expect to perform? Who is defined out of its sphere (Becker, 2004; Horghagen 2010)? Do we believe that there are connections between the parents' educational and social status and the choices of their children? Do we believe that it is important for a society that people from different ethnical and social cultures can enter the stage, and is it important for a society to adjust to this? Papers II and III provide some reflections on these questions. A relational aesthetic (Bourriaud, 2002) was developed from the work with the performances, which also developed a tolerance for cultural differences. As the form of applied theatre operates beyond the boundaries of theatre buildings, it involves

audience participation and communication between the actors and the audience (Thompson, 2003). This form has similarities to the political theatre designed and developed by both Boal (1979) and Freire (1998). Studying such forms of theatre bring forward that it might enable the participants and the audience to interpret the emerging space among cultures. Through the studies of theatre as an occupation (Paper II and III) the relation between the performance and the audience in a community perspective arose. Through these interactions transformations of knowledge and experiences were shared and made both the participants and the audience see ‘the others’ with a changed perspective.

Transformance between the participants and their local communities

All of the Papers (I, II, III and IV) presented how the inherent possibilities in the craft and creative activities enabled transformations between the participants and their local environment. The findings (Papers II and III) presented how theatre as an occupation strengthened the bonds between the participants themselves and their local community. The form of applied theatre (Saldana, 2005; Thompson, 2003) provided the possibility to highlight personal, social, relational, and community effects, as the stories from both the homeless and the asylum seekers exemplified. Thompson (2003) and Saldana (2005) argue that theatre has inherent possibilities to teach both performers and audience about history, politics, values and contemporary conditions, which is of importance in people’s social lives and this was visualised in the findings. This occurred, for instance, when the asylum seekers presented their performance at a castle where Norwegian resistant people were executed by the Nazi regime during the Second World War.

The findings presented how both theatre and the craft groups as a form (Nelson, 1988) were occupations that united the participants. Engagements in these activities allowed the participants to get to know each other and their cultures. Fox and Dickie (2010) describe that theatre fosters collaboration in communities through the pursuit of a shared goal. The participants’ shared goals in this thesis were the performances and the market where the crafts group could present and sell their products. Theatre (Saldana, 2005; Thompson, 2003) involves many participants, such as actors, instructors and audiences. This makes possible further studies on a community level. Fox and Dickie (2010) claim that the form of the theatre offers opportunities to explore the community engagement in an occupation. It was obvious from the findings (Papers II and III) that the participants experienced being treated with

respect and dignity in their local context when they presented their knowledge to familiar and unfamiliar people. When the audience was standing in the backyard listening to the stories of the homeless participants, an aesthetic creation emerged. They were competent performers who were respected for their sharing. This is theorised by both Bourriaud (2002) and Becker (2004), who claim that the distinctions between production and consumption of esthetical expressions are now less clear than in former times (Becker, 2004). This means that there are now stronger connections between craft, art and creative expressions and social life. A consequence of this is that the division of the active and the passive participant is fading, and one single arena of symbolic aesthetic practice appears (Becker, 2004). I am sure those who experienced the performances or the craft marked with, for instance, redesigned products experienced this as enriching experiences, where people in vulnerable situations became competent contributors in their local society.

People change and develop at all life stages, but this thesis revealed experiences of injustice and how this hindered development with consequences for managing everyday occupations. A transformative perspective on occupation in this thesis brings forward how people in vulnerable life situations can change personal and social aspects of life when engaging in craft and creative activities. These activities had a low threshold for participation. Through engagements the participants visualised hopes of a better life. From their engagement in occupations they found solutions, support and strategies out of problematic situations. Through relatedness with others in these occupations humanitarian values developed. These relations differed from the traditional relation between the therapist and the patient. Humanism is about altruistic values and what happens between networks of people, where the sharing is essential. The organised craft and creative activities acted as a facilitator of change, which empowers rather than victimises.

The results and the discussion also bring forward how the participants' knowledge was embodied and habituated. Through doings in the described occupations they could try out new ways of escaping problematic situations. They experience this through the theatre activities where they can stage situations with new solutions or in the organised crafts groups where they can unfold new roles as being competent peers and supporters to each other. Through these occupations problem-solving strategies were developed through which they managed to transform their course of action and managed to transform; they paved pathways out of problematic situations, which seemed to give a sense of freedom. Through this the thesis

presents the social aspects of occupation and how people in vulnerable life situations can contribute to connections between people through different aesthetic expressions.

POSSIBLE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This thesis contributes with empirical knowledge and theory about the transforming outcomes when people in vulnerable life situations participate in craft or creative activities. The thesis describes and discusses how these activities have the potential to transform and support people to facilitate participation in everyday occupations, to share competences, knowledge and experiences with others in their local communities and how they experience dignity and respect from these transforms. What can be possible practical implications from this thesis?

Possible practical implications for professionals

The challenges of many people today are linked to loneliness, poverty, and alienation that restrict participation in ordinary everyday occupations. This understanding yields more attention to empowering people who are living in vulnerable life situations. How can we form the services to achieve this? Craft and creative activities are occupations with a low threshold for participation. All the studies present the value of participation in structured, but meaningful activities, and how the participants engagement enhance their power of resistance to enable everyday occupations. There is still a need to enhance activities that ease the transition to ordinary everyday life for those who have been excluded from it. How can they through activities learn and manage to live a safe and dignified life despite their experiences? The thesis pays attention to people's embodied knowledge and the importance of the act of doing to find new paths, which are an alternative to cognitive treatment that seems to be the most focused in health and social services in Norway of today.

Crafts are activities that most people know well. Using craft and creative activities can be a restorative agent for people, changing their roles from passive to active contributors of competences, knowledge and experiences. The findings present how the participants' engagement in these occupations meets the human needs of being seen, valued and respected. This raises questions about how we as professionals can develop more professional substance, be more innovative about these matters, be in positions where we act as catalysts for personal

and social transforms, and not just work like traditional clinicians. There remains a need to develop the knowledge of occupations to the field where most health and social workers are employed today, in the community services, and to explore the innovative possibilities of craft and creative activities in contemporary time.

To support people in vulnerable life situations to handle ordinary everyday occupations includes a broader perspective on health. There is a need to see the human occupations broader than a functional perspective. This also raises questions of whether the use of craft and creative activities and matters of human rights and injustice are sufficiently represented in the curriculums of higher education in health and social professional education. The findings also visualise that cross-over designs (for instance health and social workers/art and cultural workers) can develop healing strategies for people in vulnerable life situations.

Possible practical implications for policy makers and society

Greater knowledge about stigmatised groups of people can give insights to people in the local communities by promoting a multicultural and safe society where everybody is included and experience being valued and respected. Craft and creative activities can be media for such achievements, and human rights can be promoted through liberation of the occupational potential of people in vulnerable life situations. Furthermore, the findings present how the community meeting places are low threshold activities that prevent hospitalisation, and promote the participants' recovery in their local communities. Doing crafts in groups at meeting places can give the participants support to manage everyday occupations with structures in line with employed people. The use of peer support in health promotion empowers coping strategies and personal and social transformation. Theatre can be an alternative integration method and there are indications from this research and from experiences that this contributes to successful integration of the participants. A follow-up study of these experiences could be of value.

Possible implications for theory building and research directions

Together all the studies highlight how the participants transformed to manage more of their everyday activities through participation in organised craft or creative activities, working in an empowerment-promoting manner. However, there is still a need to explore and develop strategies for community services that foster recovery. The methodological designs of the

studies in this thesis (Papers I, II, III and IV) focused to a small degree on neither participants' internal life experiences, nor their gender differences, which carve out space for future studies. I also recommend conducting interviews about how to manage everyday occupations when participants are homebound.

There is also a need to use a global health perspective when studying human occupations. The world is changing, and there are global treats to the natural and human-made systems that support us. An unjust global economic system is created that favours small, wealthy elite over the many that have so little. A consequence of this is migrations as a course of war or natural disasters (Paper II). To minimise these differences more attention in research must be about human rights and the well-being of all. A more social, political, economic, and ecological perspective on research questions seems needed to meet the global challenges of contemporary times.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The health and social challenges of today are not necessarily restricted to the body level, but are often related to loneliness, poverty and alienation. People in vulnerable situations can be at risk of becoming isolated and passive, being excluded, and becoming part of destructive activities and milieus. This implies a need for more efforts from health and social workers in the field of health promotion for people in vulnerable life situations. We need to develop knowledge and practice in this field and dare to be experimental to make useful contributions.

This thesis has explored how engagements in organised craft and creative activities, used by people in vulnerable life situations, have enhanced their participation in everyday occupations. The overall findings (Papers I, II, III, and IV) present how power relations and lack of human rights hindered most of the participants in participating in everyday occupations. At the same time the findings presented personal and social transforms through the use of craft and creative activities, as well as communicative and cultural transforms between the participants and their local communities. At the personal level their engagements led to changes from being in victimised positions to being in charge of their own lives, transformed new characters into existence, and transformed learning strategies to manage everyday occupations. The social changes when participating in craft and creative activities were how they transformed from invisible to visible, promoted and enabled peer support, and

facilitated meaningfulness in everyday occupations. The third overall finding presented and discussed shows how their doings led to transformations between the participants and their local communities, through sharing knowledge, culture, and perspectives. This practice led to enhanced respect and insights.

The thesis presents knowledge about the transformative potential of participation in craft and creative occupations, how it activates changes of personal, social and environmental aspects of life. Further it presents how people's experiences of injustice can be communicated through these activities, and how this can lead to understanding, tolerance and respect. The thesis contributes to social understanding of occupation and how transference occurs through doing and how this can give people freedom and pave paths out of problematic situations.

EPILOGUE

One of the stories that affected me the most was a story in the performance in Paper II, a story told by a young man that had been a child slave in his country. His parents gave him away to the rich planter with promises of giving him an education, but instead he became a slave and was treated badly. As a young man he managed to escape, came to Norway, started at the illiterate program, and enjoined the performance group. We asked him to tell stories, and he told about his childhood before he became a slave. The people in his village had a working song, which told that everyone in the village had to plant a tree to hinder the Sahara Desert from expansion. They sang this song while planting trees. Through his story and this song, the ecological global perspective related to everyday occupations was added as a subject in the performance in an unexpected way. This gave me new insights about how the competences, the strengths and the doings of people in vulnerable life situations can contribute to change the world for the better in different ways.

This thesis has contributed to knowledge regarding transformation through occupations for people in vulnerable life situations. It underscores how people can envision future selves and possibilities through the act of participation in craft and creative occupations, and how these transforming processes unfold in an empowerment-promoting manner. They are given an arena with creative, transformative possibilities. Using hands and bodies transforms people, in work, school, leisure and relationships. When people create something, we are transforming our moral and social senses. We evolve; we change. We observe the mundane and see

ourselves and others in a new way. The process of creating is an evolving practice. And as the times, *they are a-changing*...these creative processes can bring new possibilities to our future practice.

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