Virtues in Social Work Research With Children and Families: The Ethical Accounts of Finnish PhD Theses

Anna Pekkarinen, M.Soc.Sc. (doctoral candidate)
Tampere University
anna.pekkarinen@tuni.fi

Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics, Volume 17, Number 2 (2020)

Abstract

This article addresses virtues in child and family social work research by analyzing the accounts of Finnish PhD theses from the last decade. The purpose of this paper is to participate in the revived scientific discussion concerning the virtue-oriented approach in social work with regard to the Finnish perspective. In this paper, I explore virtues that are embedded and nurtured in social work research with children and families. The data are analyzed by using thematic reading. From the data, I have distinguished five virtues: respect for human dignity, engaging in the polyphony of voices, confidentiality, justice/responsibility and integrity. The three former virtues are discussed in greater detail than the latter.

I suggest that even though the data do not explicitly virtues, they are located from the ethical questions of the analyzed theses. I propose that a virtue-oriented approach is essential to interpret and balance ethical codes and rules and make context-bound ethical decisions in research. In this respect, the "moral self" acts as a yardstick in determining how to reconcile principles that lead to diverse directions. Methodological choices hold the power of definition over the ethics of research, and dissertations express a balance between virtues of social work and scientific research, and, the theses reflect a virtue range of their own, a hybrid of two discourses. In practice, the division of virtues is highly abstract because virtues operate as ranges, and therefore, they are weaved together.

Keywords: virtues, research ethics, human dignity, polyphony, confidentiality

Introduction

Within this article, I examine virtues that are embedded in social work research with children and families. Ethical care in social work research with children and families because children are vulnerable and have diverse and competing voices and relationships within a family. The intrusion into the privacy of family life and the multi-dimensional sensitivity of the research topics are present. The ethically and morally complex nature of this sort of research calls for sustainable ethical practice, as codifications (in codes of ethics) alone are not key to recognizing and resolving ethical quandaries (Banks, 2018).

Virtue ethics have been revived both in scientific research (e.g. Emmerrich, 2018; Resnik, 2012; MacFarlane, 2008) and in social work (Banks & Gallagher, 2009; Barsky, 2010; Clark, 2006; Pawar, Hugman, Alexandra & Anscombe, 2017a; Papouli, 2019; Martínez-Brawley & Zorita, 2017). Virtue ethics can act as a complementary counterbalance to principle-led research ethics that emphasize reason over emotion (Banks & Gallagher, 2009), and thereby, it has the potential to support ethical practice (Banks, 2018).

In this paper, I explore the virtues of *respect for human dignity, engaging in the polyphony of voices* and *confidentiality* in detail. The data consist of 16 Finnish doctoral dissertations from the last decade that explicitly address social work

with children and families. The data were analyzed using the method of thematic reading (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). The primary focus of this paper is to combine empirical analysis and theoretically oriented research in order to gain insight concerning virtues in social work research and to continue the debate over a virtue-oriented approach in social work research.

Ethical Complexity of Social Work Research With Children and Families

Social work research with children and families poses particular ethical dilemmas, many of which relate to under-aged participants and the vulnerability of children (Gabb, 2010; Liamputtong, 2007). Ethical questions are often perceived to be different, when conducting a study that includes children as participants rather than adults (Punch, 2002, p. 323). Attention is paid to issues of informed consent and confidentiality. These questions are often more or less juridical, depending on the national context (Eldén, 2013; Bogolub & Thomas, 2005; Munford & Sanders, 2004; see also Nieminen, 2010). They are relevant, especially from the perspective of ethical regulation. However, more abstract ethical considerations are also required, and they should include the relationship between the researcher, the child and possible other adults in the field (see e.g. Christensen & Prout, 2002; Punch, 2002; Hämäläinen, Pirskanen & Rautio 2014).

Social work research with children and families is problematic regarding the ethics of researching families per se—as a family is more than one of its members and more than the sum of its parts (Gabb, 2010; Pösö, 2008). The diversity of families ethically challenges social work with children and families, as the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable, ordinary and extraordinary become more obscured (Forsberg, 2013). In a similar vein, Hämäläinen et al. (2014, p. 56) have addressed questions of ethical writing and stigmatizing the nature of concepts, that may arise when researching sensitive family topics.

Family life positions itself in the private sphere, especially in the Western world (Notko et al., 2013; Hämäläinen et al., 2014; Gabb, 2010). Families can also be subjects to moral accounts (Gabb, 2010), and thus, family research requires ethical sensitivity. Moral accounts refer to the ethics of utilizing knowledge (Pohjola, 2007). Family research can be utilized to make moral judgements, in order to understand families and like all knowledge areas, are both moral and political (see Denzin, 2009, p. 154). Hämäläinen and others (2014, p. 57) have suggested that family relations are particularly emotionally charged because, for the most part, each member possesses a normative conception about the essence of family. The right to research controversial or sensitive family relations has also been addressed, as concerned statements question whether research of this kind exploits and deprives its participants of agency (Pösö, 2008; Hämäläinen et al., 2014).

Research with families can pose considerable risks to participants, for example, ones that relate to personal disclosures (Hämäläinen et al., 2014; Gabb, 2010). Pösö (2008) consider that families represent the diversity of competing voices, liquidity and the ever-changing nature of relations and diverse webs of power. These perspectives place significant ethical demands on the ethics of research. In this sense, disclosures and non-disclosures challenge research ethics. Reporting the personal voice of a single participant is ethically a considerably different case than reporting about sensitive and contested family relations; even if there is only one narrator, there might be several voices and colliding interests. Therefore, the ethics of social work research with children and families is constantly contested ethically, and because of it, we should not only be interested in the rightfulness or wrongfulness of a certain action but also pay attention to the actor's morality (see Bibus, 2013).

Virtues as an Ethical Approach in Social Work Research With Children and Families

The regulation of ethical conduct is, by nature, prescriptive (Banks, 2018). However, virtue

ethical approaches are successful in explaining the human motivation behind the ethical conduct, whereas principle-based perspectives are not always able to do so (Resnik, 2012; Banks, 2018). For example, we do not strive to honor confidentiality in research only because it is our duty, but because we are morally driven to do so, as we want to be good people.

A virtue-oriented approach to research ethics reaches its diverse nature, but does not shut out the principles or outcomes of actions (see Banks & Gallagher, 2009; Banks, 2018; Bibus, 2013). Banks (2018, p. 23) remarked that Beauchamp and Childress (2001), who have developed duty-based perspectives to research ethics, also recognize the multi-sourced nature of ethical knowledge production. According to Beauchamp and Childress, "in everyday moral reason, we effortlessly blend appeals to principles, rules, rights, virtues, passions, analogies, paradigms, narratives and parables" (p. 408). Moral rightness constructs from practicing virtues and following rules (Resnik, 2012, p. 5). When understanding virtues as complementary to principles, virtues and principles do not clash with each other. They are fundamentally different types of approaches and thus not commensurable with each other (Banks, 2018, p. 23-24). There is a shift of focus regarding virtue ethical perspectives and approaches in social work. The emphasis turns into moving, context-bound qualities that are more than the attributes of a single moral agent (Pawar et al. 2017a; Barsky 2010; Clark 2006). In broad terms, virtue ethics is concerned with the character of the moral agent (see Banks & Gallagher, 2009; Banks, 2018; Emmerich, 2018; Resnik, 2012). However, in their work, Pawar and colleagues (2017b) reason that virtues go further than the character or qualities of an individual. According to them, virtues are located at the intersection of principles/values, qualities/attributes, roles and functions (p. 2–5). Virtue ethical approaches are criticized for responsibilization, especially among care professions such as social work; an individual can accept her or his moral responsibility in situations, where the matter is not about the individual's morality i.e. when institutions flounder (Clifford, 2014; Banks, 2018). The conceptualization offered by Pawar and colleagues (2017b) challenges this critique because their interpretation concerning the nature of virtues take them beyond the morality of a single agent and, in this context, an individual social work researcher. Therefore, virtues are elements of ethics that are admired; they are not the traits of an individual's character. Nor are they principles. In this sense, they are abstract entities, in which different dimensions, such as functions, roles, values and qualities, are combined.

Concerning the virtues of scientific research, MacFarlane (2008) highlighted the virtues of courage, respectfulness, resoluteness, sincerity, humility and reflexivity. Resnik (2012) expanded the virtue repertoire of the researcher provided by MacFarlane and argued that in addition to MacFarlane's six virtues, virtues such as fairness, openness, conscientiousness, flexibility and integrity should be added to the list. According to Pietarinen (1999), the virtues of the researcher consist of the requirement for intellectual interest, conscientiousness and honesty, eliminating danger and harm, respect for human dignity, the requirement for social responsibility, promoting exercise of a profession and collegial respect. Whereas Banks (2018) explored the virtues of the social researcher and argued that integrity creates a certain kind of cardinal virtue that unites and channels the other virtues of the researcher such as courage, care, trustworthiness, respectfulness and practical wisdom.

Shaw (2007) has asked, whether social work research is in fact distinctive. As an answer to his question, he reasons that it is more relevant to ask what makes social work research distinctively good. Among other benchmarks, Shaw viewed that reference points for distinctively good social work research are consistency, with broader purposes of social work, and attention to aspects of the research enterprise that are close to social work, but at the same time, taking the aspects of the research mission that seem, at first glance, far from social work (Shaw, 2007). In his work, Barsky

(2010) specifically visited the virtues of the social work researcher. He determined the virtues using three perspectives: universal social work values, researcher-role virtues and method-specific virtues. Barsky's (2010) analysis points to the pluralism of the social work researcher's virtue range and the diversity of the field in which social work researchers operate. Barsky's view of the plural virtues of the social work researcher resonates with Shaw's scrutiny on the distinctiveness of social work research; for a social work researcher to attain research integrity (for the concept, see Banks, 2018), different and complex ethical dimensions of social work research ought to be considered, even when these dimensions are not measured by the same standard.

Conducting of the Study

The aim of this paper is to gain insight into the virtues in social work research and conceptually develop a virtue ethical approach by using empirical analysis as a tool of understanding. From this perspective, the research questions are as follows:

- What kind of virtues are absorbed into ethically desirable decisions in research, and how they are expressed and reconciled?
- What does the analysis reveal about the nature of virtues?
    - The second question is approached by combining empirical analysis with a theoretical discussion.

For the analysis, I used the method of thematic reading (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data consist of Finnish doctoral theses from the last 10 years that address social work with children and families. I have explored doctoral dissertations starting from the year 2009 from the databases of each domestic university. Six universities in Finland offer education in the academic discipline of social work. In order to qualify as a social worker in Finland, a master's degree (M.Sc.) in social work is required. Finland diverges from several European countries in the sense that it is possible to obtain a PhD specifically in social work, instead of completing a doctoral degree in other social sciences (Mäntysaari, 2005; Enroos & Mäntysaari, 2017, p. 10).

The doctoral theses were selected from the degree programmes of social work. In total, 16 doctoral dissertations were retrieved. Nine of the theses were traditional monographies, and seven were peer-reviewed article-based dissertations with extensive summary sections. I excluded dissertations that approached the topic solely from a professional perspective. I wanted to focus on dissertations that held a client perspective due to the complex and diverse ethical landscape of social work with children and families. Therefore, theses which fell in the scope of child and family social work research and concerned clients of social work were chosen. I chose to capture the depth of certain virtues in social work research, and therefore, the study was limited to Finnish dissertations. The research itself was conducted between January and July of 2018.

I acquainted myself with both to the peer-reviewed and concluding articles, as I did not want to pass on relevant ethical considerations that may come from the theses formulated as collections of articles. However, it became evident that the richest ethical contemplations were articulated in the concluding articles of the dissertations. I did not limit my study only to the ethics chapters of the selected dissertations, but paid attention to every passage I viewed that addressed ethical dimensions. Some of the dissertations expressed great explicitness in the ethical decisions made and situations encountered, and in some dissertations, the ethical contemplations were kept by the researchers themselves and did not include vast considerations in the research report.

In the beginning of the analysis process, I separated ethics speech from the data. After this phase, I simplified the sections that addressed research ethics and then abstracted and coded the data by naming central arguments relating to research ethics. After coding the various ethical considerations of the doctoral dissertations, I formed discussion threads that operated as thematic entities, keeping in mind the theoretical framework

of virtue ethics (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, I have not directly drawn the virtues from discussions concerning virtue ethics; the data itself guided the identification and the naming process.

On this account, it is worth noticing that doctoral theses that represent the data in this article did not address virtue ethics explicitly (see also Bibus, 2013). Virtues were embedded and nurtured in the ethical weighing. I retrieved five virtues: respect for human dignity, engaging in the polyphony of voices, confidentiality, justice/responsibility and integrity. However, in this article, I closely analyze only the first three virtues. The scope was determined based on my aim to address ethical questions and considerations that hold special relevance to child and family social work research. I do not claim that justice/responsibility or integrity would not hold significance in the mentioned context, but rather these virtues and their expressions in the doctoral theses touch more the general dimension of social work research ethics. It would not do justice to the virtues found, if all of them were analyzed briefly due to the space constraints. I have also translated the data extracts from Finnish to English.

A table of the data, including summations of the studies and the virtues emphasized in each dissertation, is provided in Table 1. I have listed the most prominent virtues addressed in the theses based on my interpretation. For reasons of clarity, in the collections of articles, I have named only the summaries.

Next, I introduce the three virtues more closely. Firstly, I shall address respect for human dignity, secondly—engaging in the polyphony of voices and, lastly, confidentiality.

Respect for Human Dignity

Respect for human dignity is expressed in the doctoral theses through several kinds of decisions. Many of the questions are familiar from the ethical codes of conduct. However, the virtue of respect for human dignity is much wider than ethical principles lead to believe. The respect for human dignity constructs of informed consent, right to self-determination, empathy and sharing of emotions, protecting the participant and other parties involved and general respectful treatment.

Questions related to gaining (informed) consent from potential participants are contemplated diversely in the doctoral dissertations. Gaining honest, non-coerced consent is viewed as an ethical dilemma. Kannasoja's (2013) thesis includes under-aged participants, and especially in this context, consent is viewed to be highly problematic. According to Kannasoja, gaining informed consent from young people is questionable, as generally, the decision about the participation is made by the gatekeepers, usually the parents. Kannasoja describes that young people were allowed to make their own decisions about participating, after their parents had given consent (Kannasoja, 2013, p. 193). Korkiamäki (2013), however, decided not to ask for consent from the parents but instead requested written consent to use the essays and interviews from the young people themselves. Her reasoning for this was based on her wish to highlight the autonomy of the young people and deconstruct the expert power she held as a researcher and as an adult among the youths that participated in her research (Korkiamäki, 2013, p. 104).

Consent is not portrayed as unambiguous when conducting research with adult participants either. The project of gaining consent relates to boundary issues; therefore, this ought to be recognized in the process of gaining consent from the participants. Regardless of their age, blurry boundaries between researcher and authority might have a serious impact on whether consent is actually informed or is given because of false expectations or misunderstood duties. Enroos (2015) considered the motivations of participants and the voluntary nature of participating and explains it as follows: "I think a lot about how I can be sure that for example prisoners see the voluntary and confidential nature of the situation, in which I come to conduct an interview, escorted by an employee" (p. 85). Similarly, Poikela (2010, p. 85-86) contemplated whether the participants of her research felt as though they should participate in order to advance their own cases.

Researchers seek to gain consent in a communicative relationship with potential participants, and in practice, this is realized through

discussion and negotiation (Kiuru, 2015; Enroos, 2015; Eronen, 2012; Veistilä, 2016). Negotiation is a result of a genuine encounter with the potential participant, in which background information and information about the execution and the objectives of the research are offered. Gaining consent is not described as a ticked box but as a process.

Gaining informed consent reflects the participant's right for self-determination and autonomy. The dissertations described diverse lines of action for securing an open and permissive atmosphere, that also makes refusal and withdrawal possible. Kiuru (2015, p. 92–93) analyzed the shared language between the participant and the researcher that creates places for not answering. Enroos (2015, p. 67) weighed if the inmate-participants experienced that they were genuinely able and allowed to refuse the interviews due to the inherent distrust of the prison as an institutional environment. Eronen (2012, p. 71) brought forward her efforts to respect silence; she explains that she did not pose a question when it felt too intrusive.

The sympathetic understanding of emotions and sharing them is a discussion that arises in many of the theses. Experiencing and displaying empathy and compassion relate closely to respecting and promoting human dignity

Table 1. The data

Thesis	Summation	Virtues emphasized
Enroos, R. (2015). *Prison, parenthood and children: Different perspectives on family practices.* Collection of articles University of Tampere	The thesis examines the parenthood and family relations of prisoners, and how the relations are negotiated when a mother is in prison with the child. The data consists of interviews with mothers in prison with their children, group interviews with staff members from Criminal Sanctions Agency evaluation units, group interviews with staff members from the prison's family units, members who work closely with family unit and documents. The study shows how different parties balance and negotiate between family responsibilities, organizational tasks and perceptions of ideology.	Confidentiality; respect for human dignity; justice/responsibility
Eronen, T. (2012). *Children's home as part of the life story: a narrative study on the stories of former children's home residents* Collection of articles University of Tampere	The thesis focuses on the narrativity of childhood lived in a children's home as a part of the personal life. The data consists of autobiographies, interviews and group discussions/interviews of former residents of children's homes. The research shows that in a narrative of life story shaped by child protection, overlapping stories, emotions, relationships and practices are entwined.	Respect for human dignity; engaging in the polyphony of voices; confidentiality
Helavirta, S. (2011). *Children as producers of well-being knowledge* Collection of articles University of Tampere	The research addresses children's conceptions of well-being. Additionally, the study examines how different methodological decisions reach children's experiences and what sort of conditions are attached to questions of methodology when researching children. The data is comprised of questionnaires and empathy-based stories from 8–15-year old children and interviews from 5–11 years old. The study shows that the well-being knowledge produced by children manifests itself as protected, hushed-up, sparse, emotion-provoking, non-verbal and as shattering self-evident truths.	Engaging to polyphony of voices; integrity; respect for human dignity
Hietamäki, J. (2015). *The outcomes of the assessment in child welfare from the parents' perspective* Monograph University of Jyväskylä	The research concentrates on the experience of parents of the assessment and its outcomes in child welfare from the perspective of a realistic evaluation. The data comprises of structured and cognitive interviews, structured interviews and a questionnaire. The research brings forward that the social worker should invest in a good relationship with the client, review family's strengths and give the summary of the assessment made as well as work with the whole family.	Integrity; confidentiality
Hämäläinen, K. (2012). Meanings given by foster children to their home and family relations Monograph University of Jyväskylä	The research focuses on the meanings given by foster children to their home and family relations. The research data consists of interviews of 8 to 12 years old foster children, network maps and diaries kept by the foster children. The research points out that children's views are in many ways in conflict with child welfare practice.	Respect for human dignity; confidentiality; engaging in the polyphony of the voices
Kannasoja, S. (2013) *Social functioning among young people* Monograph University of Jyväskylä	The study focuses on social functioning among young people. The data is comprised of group interviews with young people, photographs taken by the young and a survey data. The research highlights the importance of the living contexts of young people.	Respect for human dignity; engaging in the polyphony of voices; confidentiality
Korkiamäki, R. (2013). *No friend left behind! Social capital and young people's peer relations* Collection of articles University of Tampere	The research addresses social capital in the peer relations of young people. The data consists of scientific literature, a survey data, young people's written narratives and individual and pair interviews. The study brings forward that social capital as described by the young people themselves is expressed as a relative process.	Respect for human dignity; engaging in the polyphony of voices; confidentiality

Table 1. continues

Thesis	Summation	Virtues emphasized
Kiuru, H. (2015). *A story of tragedy: The life of young people– ended through suicide. As told by the parents* Monograph University of Turku	The research concentrates on the suicides committed by young Finnish people, and it utilizes the perspective of human and social dimensions. The data is comprised of narrative interviews with the parents of young people who had committed suicide. Some of the youngsters were underage. The study makes visible that the parents criticize widely the assistance work, and their critical agency increases the visibility of the complex relations between the individuals and the society.	Respect for human dignity; engaging in the polyphony of voices; confidentiality
Krok, S. (2009). *Good mothers and everyday survivors: Single mothers on the margin* Monograph University of Tampere	The research addresses on how low-income single mothers living on a suburban housing estate experiences the everyday life. The data consists of interviews of women. Theoretically the research is engaged to marginality, research on everyday life and phenomenological-hermeneutic approach. The study highlights the right of people on the margin to full citizenship, which is a social policy question.	Engaging in the polyphony of voices; respect for human dignity; integrity
Laakso, R. (2009). Everyday routines and surprises: an ethnographic study of residential child Monograph University of Tampere	The study is an ethnography of residential child care work. The study seeks an answer to the question what is the everyday child care work. The data was collected during the periods of participant observation spent in children's homes. Additionally, care workers were interviewed and other data concerning children's homes was collected. The study articulates four dimensions of residential care: everyday caring, the work with children and parents and troublesome issues.	Confidentiality; respect for human dignity; engaging in the polyphony of voices
Poikela, R. (2010). *From a client plan to user perspective in multi-professional social work: A method of emerging object with multiple voices.* Monograph University of Helsinki	The research addresses client plans in health care and social work. The client plan is studied as a method of multi-professional family work by exploring the relationship between the plan and practice client work. The data is collected from videotaped sessions from client meetings, the interviews with the client and the workers and client documents. The study points out that the settings of objectives were defined by the repertoire of institutional services.	Respect for human dignity; integrity; confidentiality
Veistilä, M. (2016). *From migration to well-being: The construction of social well-being of families with a Russian background during integration processes* Collection of articles University of Helsinki	The research focuses on the social well-being of families with children who have moved from Russia to Finland as a phenomenon that constructs during integration processes. The data consists of polyphonic interviews, re-interviews and stories of migrated children. The research brings forward that the construction of social well-being is a relational action, and constructing social well-being challenges social work into building methods that are family-centered.	Confidentiality; engaging in the polyphony of voices; justice/responsibility
Vierula, T. (2017). *Examining child welfare documents from a parental perspective* Collection of articles University of Tampere	The study addresses how parents of children who have received child welfare services regard documents about themselves and the documentation practices employed in the child welfare system. The data comprises of narrative, thematic interviews of parents whose children have been clients of child welfare services. The research shows that the documents are equivocal, and they are connected to the experiences of parents about their position as clients.	Respect for human dignity; engaging in the polyphony of voices; confidentiality
Viitasalo, K. (2018). *Aspirations and capability set of mothers: A conceptual study on mothers' financial capabilities* Monograph University of Jyväskylä	The research concentrated on financial capabilities of mothers from a conceptual perspective. The research contains both theoretical and empirical approaches. In the empirical section, the data has been collected from mothers using method of memory-work. The dissertation shows that the capability set of mothers is constructed of assets within the family, labor position of the mother and family benefits.	Integrity; respect for human dignity; engaging in the polyphony of the voices

(Kagan, 2015), even though it is commonly seen as intuitive and not necessarily considered deeply in the act of conducting interviews. The expression of empathy is thereby an expression of recognizing the human condition and the indivisible human worth of the participant. Kiuru (2015), in her thesis, weighed her right to experience emotions with parents who have lost their children. However, she portrayed the impossibility of not entering the emotions and lives of the participants, which is a consequence of the parents' total immersion into his/her narrative (Kiuru 2015, p. 92). Similarly, Vierula (2017) explained:

> The parents' stories awoke in me, in both the interview situations and when later reading and listening to them, many kinds of feelings, from empathy to disgust. In the interview situations, I shared and felt with the parents the grief, anger, shame and bitterness, as well as joy, happiness and also thankfulness… (p. 68)

Protecting participants from harm is a minimum standard for respecting human dignity that translates, at the very least, into the prohibition of inhuman or degrading

treatment. Consequently, avoiding maleficence is a central element in the dissertations. Securing the well-being of the participants in particular is discussed. Children are often viewed as especially vulnerable research participants, and hence, they have the right to receive special protection (see Liamputtong, 2007). On one hand, Helavirta (2011) and Hämäläinen (2012) associated the dimensions of the protection of children with both matters addressed in the data collection as well as threats that may arise in the research setting. On the other hand, Kannasoja (2013) focused on the harm connected to a child being denied participation by the parents and the emotions of discomfort related to participation. In other words, the respect shown for the human condition and dignity include different dimensions of practice. The protection of children in the research contexts relates not only to the need to secure human dignity in the data collection but also to the situations that may precede and follow it.

The nature of the participant's vulnerability might require unexpected lines of action in order to respect and promote the participant's human dignity. However, the excessiveness of a virtue is a vice (Banks & Gallagher, 2009). In a research setting, too much respect for human dignity creates a vice of paralysis (see e.g. Kannasoja, 2013; Pekkarinen, 2010). Thereby, it is a question of striking a fair balance; the excessiveness of respect towards human dignity does not promote it because it leads to an inability to take action. The boundaries between inhumane and acceptable harm are, however, highly complex as well as vague.

The sensitivity of the research topics shows a need for human protection (Kiuru, 2015; Helavirta, 2011; Kannasoja, 2013; Vierula, 2017; Eronen, 2012; Hietamäki, 2015; Enroos, 2015; Hämäläinen, 2012; Krok, 2009; Viitasalo, 2018; Pekkarinen, 2010). Several theses address the issue of the well-being of the participant during and after data collection, which is connected to the balancing act mentioned above. However, the dimension of protecting participants from immoderate anxiety and distress is portrayed as fundamental.

The researchers express care toward the participants, especially if the participant showed strong emotional reactions during the research. For example, Kiuru (2015) described returning to the participant's state of the mind in the latter part of the interviews and after in the days that followed. In her dissertation, Kiuru walked through a situation in which the participant began to feel physically sick during the narration and described becoming frightened herself about the reaction of the participant (p. 87-90). This reaction mirrors the importance of emotions in balancing virtues. Emotions may work as an ethical radar.

Respectful treatment is a necessary expression of respect for human dignity. Respect is portrayed as highly practical. It is expressed through respectful gestures such as offering lunch (Eronen, 2012, p. 74; Viitasalo, 2018, p. 53), a small gift (Veistilä, 2016, p. 84–85; Enroos, 2015, p. 66; Hämäläinen, 2012, p. 88), using respectful language, addressing the participants formally (Veistilä, 2016, p. 84–85), conforming to the thoughts of the participants (Kiuru, 2015, p. 95) or writing about the participants in a way that respects their values (Krok, 2009, p. 41).

Writing about the research and especially about the participants requires safeguarding the dignity of the participant (Enroos, 2015; Vierula, 2017; Eronen, 2012; Kiuru, 2015; Laakso, 2009; Helavirta, 2011; Hämäläinen, 2012; Krok, 2009). Respect for human dignity is also shown through weighing the human condition of the participants. Hämäläinen (2012, p. 89) concludes that naming children who participated in her research was an ethical decision, as it articulated the authentic and genuine nature of children in contrast to simply numbering the interviewees.

The manner through which the researcher conceptualizes the research phenomenon is described as meaningful (see e.g. Helavirta, 2011; Krok, 2009; Viitasalo, 2018; Hämäläinen, 2012; Känkänen, 2013). Showing sensitivity in the language used is an important element of respecting the dignity of others. The participants represent individuals, groups, communities and the phenomena per se. Thus, language has great power in recognizing or denying the dignity of a person. Promoting human dignity is portrayed in

the theses as highly practical, and therefore, it does not exist just at a theoretical level. In this respect, promoting and respecting human dignity is not only ontological but is embedded in particular decisions made in particular circumstances.

Engaging in the Polyphony of Voices

The virtue of engaging in the polyphony consists of a diverse range of ethical expressions that include others as well as researcher self-regard (see Banks & Gallagher, 2009). In the doctoral theses, hearing one's voice and the right to act in participation are particularly emphasized. The theses also illustrate the spheres of beneficence. Engaging in the polyphony also reaches the core relationship that is formed between the researcher and the participant. I conceptualize the polyphony of voices as a moral virtue that has an deep connection with the ethics of child and family social work research.

In the dissertations, beneficence-related aspects relate closely to the experience of meaningfulness (gaining something from participating). For example, the objectives of empowerment are considered. Empowerment is not particularly emphasized, but the possibility of it is touched upon. For example, Enroos (2015, p. 67) thinks that participation might be empowering by nature because, in the interviews, participants can talk about their lives, make constructions and share their stories for general use. In the dissertations, empowerment is framed as a potential experience—not a self-evident truth (Enroos, 2015; Vierula, 2017; Eronen, 2012; Helavirta, 2011; Veistilä, 2016; Korkiamäki, 2013; Krok, 2009; Viitasalo, 2018; Känkänen, 2013). From the perspective of the participant, the experience of being heard and the potential of the research to help other people outweigh the distress that might relate to the participation (Vierula, 2017; see also Kiuru, 2015). All things considered, the potential of empowerment is deeply connected with the polyphony of voices because therein lies the potential of empowerment being formed as a by-product to help others.

Hearing the participant's voice penetrates the doctoral dissertations examined in the article. Hearing, listening and giving a voice to the participants relates to respect for equality as well as to the respect and promotion of diversity, which are all conceptual components of the polyphony described here. An important objective of the ethical considerations made in the theses is to bring the voices of the participants to the same level as the dominant voices and discourses. A need to fill the research field with diverse voices also prevails in the academic community. In this respect, promoting the possibilities to be heard and listened to simultaneously relates to the promotion of pluralism per se as well as to actual equality.

Kannasoja (2013) contemplated young people's right to participate in research. She discussed equality in a context, in which the guardian has not given consent for a young person to participate. She deliberated the decisions she made in order to strengthen the right to act in participation and concluded that the research ought to include a general project, where everyone could participate regardless of their parents' consent (Kannasoja, 2013, p. 193–196; see also Helavirta, 2011; Hämäläinen, 2012). This reflects engagement in the polyphony, as she decided to openly promote the equal treatment and worth of all children.

For me, Helavirta's (2011) reasoning includes expressions committed to equality, as she shares the feedback she received on her unfinished dissertation. Her colleagues emphasized her responsibility to protect the children, especially ones who are users of child welfare services. Parallel to this, the decision to approach well-being knowledge from the perspective of children was questioned due to the conception that child welfare clients are subject to considerable strain. As an answer to this conception, Helavirta reasoned that the voices that questioned the legitimacy of researching child welfare clients from their perspective categorized and over-simplified the clientship of child protection and the experiences of children (Helavirta, 2011, p. 54, see also Hämäläinen, 2012, p. 86). This illustrates the pursuit to avoid monophony, in

other words, the lack of the virtue of polyphony. The vice described here can be portrayed as the discrimination of voices; a view that some voices are too poor to be heard.

The pursuit of the democratization of voices in the context of data collection is addressed in the dissertations and the agency of the recognized participant. Eronen (2012) wrote: "…and I tried to find a place for the researcher that gives for both me and the narrators of their own lives an opportunity to act as subjects who talk and write" (p. 69). According to Vierula (2017, p. 63), her relationship between the participants was a subject-subject relationship, which helped construct a shared space of knowing. The methodological decisions made can strengthen the polyphony of voices and, thus, be a part of the ethical dimensions of the research. For example, Heino and Veistilä (2015, p. 147) argued that their methodological choice of using narrative reflection as a method of analysis can be described as shared 'researchership'. Similarly, Eronen (2008) and Känkänen (2013) shared their ideas of participants as co-researchers. Eronen (2008) explained that co-researching can equalize the relationship between the participants and the researcher, when collecting the data and in some respect, during the analysis (p. 23). Känkänen (2013, p. 54) addressed questions concerning the best ways of being present in young people groups and in relation to each another and to the staff of a theatre. However, Hämäläinen (2012, p. 91) discusses the limitations of interpretation. She views that the researcher, who studies other people's experiences, must also acknowledge and recognize the constraints of understanding (Hämäläinen, 2012, p. 91).

The democratization of voices must be challenged by the inherent arrangements of power. Enroos (2015) showed the pronounced power relations in the prison context. She reflects on her own freedom to leave, whereas the freedom of the inmates was stripped, and they were forced to stay in prison after the interviews. Enroos described trying to balance the power relations by laying herself on the line in order to communicate. She described the actions she took to create equality between her and the inmates (Enroos, 2015, p. 66–67). Similarly, Helavirta (2011) made a methodological decision to free children from the fixed definitions and interests of adults and decided to use empathy-based stories produced by children. She concluded that trusting the stories would give more space for the children's own narratives (Helavirta, 2011, p. 45). Korkiamäki (2013) chose to use different research methods to reach the pluralism that is connected to her research topic, the peer relations of young people. She concluded that qualitative data made it possible to address important questions by utilizing the voices of the young people themselves (Korkiamäki, 2013, p.107). Therefore, without confidentiality and the desire to promote the voices of the socially and institutionally oppressed, a diversity of voices cannot be achieved.

Eronen (2012), Vierula (2017), Laakso (2009) and Poikela (2010) described their relation to the theme of research and participants. Pekkarinen (2010, p. 52) claimed that the researcher ought to acknowledge their subjective starting points as thoroughly as possible. Eronen (2012, p. 64) noted that the positioning of the researcher and writing about it are connected to the questions of conducting research and the production of knowledge. Hence, engagement in the polyphony of voices is, in this respect, self-regarding: the flexible positions reflect the polyphony of the researcher's own voices, as the positioning is not static. Instead, the different positions create different voices. This includes moral dimensions in the sense that the shifts in positions are often provoked not only by shifts in research strategies but by moral awareness, which manifests through emotions such as shame, courage and compassion.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality lies in the relationships between people, and in this respect, it is portrayed as being personal. In the research context, this relationship is generally centered on the participants, the researcher and on the findings. However, confidentiality does not return wholly to its personal dimension, as confidentiality is also

procedural: for example, the researcher has the duty to report planned, serious infringements of criminal law in order for them to be prevented (The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity, 2019).

The doctoral theses raise concerns about the voyeuristic nature of social work research, which is inherently connected to conducting research that supposedly involves vulnerable participants (Eronen, 2012; Enroos, 2015; Krok, 2009; Hämäläinen, 2012; Viitasalo, 2018; see also Korkiamäki, 2013). Hence, confidentiality is indivisibly connected with the question of anonymity. Securing anonymity represents a highly practical and procedural sphere of confidentiality that is not straightforward. Kiuru (2015) reflected: "In my estimate, the risks related to the safety of anonymity are lesser than the loss that would have occurred by overly masking the life stories. The fates of the people are too valuable not be heard" (p. 95). In turn, Pekkarinen (2010, p. 52) addressed the tensions between the participants' right for privacy, when the participants do not even know that documents concerning their child protection processes have been chosen as the data of the study, and the need to perform research on a subject that carries significant societal importance. Put differently, she discussed the tension between a fundamental private interest and a general interest.

It is recognized that removing identifiers does not guarantee anonymity, and instead, it is perceived to be a more pervasive project. For example, Enroos (2015, p. 87) stated that in addition to just replacing identifiers, she also had to choose the analytical methods, bearing in mind the objective of anonymity. Furthermore, she reflects on finding a balance between relevant descriptions and questions of confidentiality. In turn, Veistilä (2016) and Kiuru (2015) described not using data extracts from especially vulnerable interview situations and the stories produced in those contexts. In my view, they address avoiding deprivation, which goes further than the questions of anonymity and the right to privacy. The atmosphere of confidentiality is preserved and cherished: even though the stories of the participants are meant to be told behind the curtain of anonymity, some tales are too sensitive to be utilized directly without potentially harming the participant.

Creating closeness and distance in relation to the participants is expressed to reach further than securing and strengthening the participant's right for privacy and anonymity. In my opinion, it relates to something fundamental, reconciling the virtue itself. The balance between the closeness and the distance of relationships is not objective, which is why it needs to be weighed contextually. Kiuru (2015) considered that:

> The common language is built on a parent by parent basis, based on an appropriate amount of closeness or distance, and the mutual ability to ask about things honestly, but so that the other person can still choose not to answer (p. 92–93).

Trust is built through small but meaningful gestures that are connected with the position of the researcher. It appears that displaying personal dimensions outside the role of a researcher is significant in the theses. For example, trust is built by telling something personal to the participants. Enroos (2015, p. 66) described telling the interviewees, who were mothers in prison, something personal that the participants can relate to, for example, being a relatively new mother. In this respect, confidentiality and trustworthiness are built through expressing humanity and personal ties to the phenomenon being researched.

During the data collection, considerable weight was given to external circumstances. Veistilä (2016, p. 73–74) described that when conducting interviews with families, the families were allowed to decide where they wished the interviews to take place. According to her, most of the families chose their own homes as the sites of interviews. Eronen (2012, p. 74) conducted the group interviews in her own home. She justifies this decision by explaining that if the interviews were conducted in the homes of the participants, the circumstances would have resembled home visits by a social worker in an overly stressful manner. Vierula (2017) reasoned

that the decisions about the place or space where the interviews took place were based on the right of self-determination of the participants. She brought forward the spheres of power that relate to the spatial dimensions of conducting interviews in places and spaces chosen by the participants (Vierula, 2017, p. 57–58). Korkiamäki (2013, p. 103) took notice that the environments where the interviews were conducted influenced the depth and intimacy of the interviews. In schools, the interviews were shorter, and interviews that were conducted in a clubroom were deeper, intimate and intensive. Hence, it appears that questions about place and space hold significant force to the conditions of confidentiality of the research. Arguably, decisions made concerning the space or place of data collection can either strengthen or weaken the confidentiality, especially the subjective nature of it.

Thus, an excessive amount of closeness is portrayed as a risk for participants; this risk relates to breaking confidentiality, when the researcher reports the study in order to proceed in accordance with good scientific practice. Eronen (2012) argued that:

> On the other hand, the researcher is in an intimate and confidential relationship with people sharing their life stories and, on the other hand, a responsible member of the scientific community. To the interviewees the ethical responsibility includes guaranteeing the dignity, privacy and well-being of the participant, whereas the claims of scientific community are connected to exactness, authenticity and interpretation (p. 67–68).

In a similar vein, Viitasalo (2018, p. 50) contemplated her positioning as a researcher. She considered that the role of the researcher is one of a ballast between the pull of science and the loyalty to the participants.

Parallel to this, Vierula (2017) discussed her emotions of guilt. She viewed that the emotion of guilt emanated from breaking the private nature of the interviews by interpreting and bringing what was said to the public sphere (p. 69). Emotions are fundamental for morally desirable action but also for wrong conduct. Ithas been pointed out that the emotions of guilt and shame are actually "emotions of self-assessment" (Stempsey, 2004, p. 50; see also Banks & Gallagher, 2009, p. 67). Hence, Vierula (2017) observed the current state of affairs in relation to how matters ought to stand (Stempsey, 2004, p. 50), which highlights the tension between deep confidentiality and the conditions of practicing science; disclosure is a condition of existence for research.

Eronen (2012, p. 71) contemplated if through her personality, she charmed the interviewees to tell her things that they had not planned to. Correspondingly, Laakso (2009, p. 85) claimed that in the context of doing ethnographic research in children's homes, being a researcher is also a question of relationships, gaining closeness and keeping separateness. She pointed out that the researcher might seek to create as close a relationship with the participants as possible, but this can be also a precarious concern (Laakso, 2009, p. 85). Viitasalo (2018, p. 51) considered that her position as a researcher shifted between empathy and alienation. These considerations reflect the goal of avoiding the excessiveness of confidentiality, which can be realized if the relationship between the researcher and the participant becomes too close or intimate, and by way of that challenges the conducting of research

Excessiveness of closeness can operate in both ways: the researcher's closeness to the participant and the participant's closeness to the researcher. Ordinarily, the researcher comes to the participant's life as an outsider and is present and deeply interested in the life of the participant for the fleeting moment that research process takes. In her thesis, Laakso (2009, p. 89–90) reflected on the justification for the researcher to enter and exit participants' lives and described the difficult encounters with children who might not have understood the temporary nature of the researcher's stay in the children's homes. By way of this, she

visited the risk of too close a relationship between the children and her as the researcher. On the other hand, the secession from the intimate relationship with the participants can be a journey to the researcher as well. Eronen (2008, p. 23) depicted that disengaging from a close research relationship took a lot of time and was a harrowing experience.

Thereby, confidentiality is constructed and expressed through human relationships. Technical confidentiality and the more abstract, relationship-orientated sphere of confidentiality intertwine. Confidentiality is proposed to be an interplay between concealment and disclosure, togetherness and separateness and, finally, between closeness and distance. The expressions of confidentiality that are embedded in the doctoral theses analyzed expressively mirror the central element of virtue ethics—the aspiration for a reasonable amount of confidentiality, which is positioned confusingly close to the idea of the golden mean.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, I aimed to capture ethical dimensions of child and family social work research utilizing a virtue-based perspective and to continue the debate concerning the nature of virtues in that context. The relationship between ethical codifications and more situational ethical decision-making is portrayed to be a multi-faceted one in the theses analyzed. The doctoral dissertations express concerns about the insufficient nature of codes of ethics in the complex reality of conducting research. Therefore, when implementing codifications, the researcher must consider what moral values and other intentions the codifications reflect, and how these can be transferred into an ethical research practice. In practice, however, this is far from straightforward, as the codes of ethics might mirror the various interests of gatekeepers of a particular domain (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2008, p. 491–492).

MacIntyre (1999) has looked into the relationship between principles and virtues and argued that "principles and rules also play an important though not exhaustive or exclusive role for evaluating whether or not we are being virtuous" (p. 111). Furthermore, Banks and Gallagher (2009, p. 49) noted the nature of virtues that the virtue ethical approach can operate as a "counterweight to deontological and teleological perspectives". My study is aligned with these notions; weighing ethical quandaries is not only a question of a particular act, but that the abstract virtuous self can be used as a tool of moral reasoning. Put differently, an action can be right only if a virtuous moral agent would perform such an act given the circumstances (Adams, 2009, p. 97). Therefore, I suggest that a virtue-oriented approach is essential for interpreting and balancing ethical codes and making context-bound ethical decisions in research.

The data addresses the inner conflicts between the varying roles of the researcher. As discussed above, the questions of the roles of a "pure" researcher, a social worker and a companion arise in the theses. Eskola and Suoranta (1998, p. 55) also have pointed out that occasionally social work students have experienced that they have adopted a role of a social worker when conducting research interviews. In order to focus on the position-related tensions, it is relevant to return to the conceptualization of virtues by Pawar et al. (2017b), who have argued that virtues are at the core of functions, values/principles, roles and qualities/attributes.

In my view and based on my analyses, these dimensions are interwoven. Thus, the liquid nature of roles leads to confusion in the functions as well; the function of research is—at least partially—different than the function of social work practice or general companionship. Due to the shared mission of social work, this kind of confusion is presumably impossible to avoid.

However, the complexity of roles, functions, values and attributes in social work research requires balancing and careful reflection. According to Pawar et al. (2017b), the same range of virtues can be expressed in social work with different emphases. This does not, however, signify that virtues would be relative by nature, but instead they appear bound to time and place (Pawar et al., 2017b, p. 8; see also Banks & Gallagher, 2009). Barsky's (2010) view of

the social work researcher's virtues paints a diverse picture of a virtue repertoire. On the one hand, the social work researcher is bound to the values of social work, just like a social work practitioner, but on the other, the researcher harnesses virtues that serve the scientific world.

The ethical accounts of the explored dissertations are expressed mostly through methodological contemplations, but these are interlaced with broader values of social work and the more general virtues of a researcher. The interplay between the differently oriented traits of virtues appears to be complex, and the ethical accounts sometimes speak with diverse, worried, competing and even paradoxical voices, but all the traits share a common denominator, which is not to harm the participants. However, even this denominator is not completely inviolable because it would make conducting research utterly impossible (see Pekkarinen, 2010). From this perspective, virtues do not take the form of a blanket rule but instead help to weigh different interests.

Put differently, virtues are embedded in the reports of methodology, but the choices also carry ethical accounts that are not merely method-specific. It is explicit that, in the dissertations studied, methodology in particular holds the power of definition over the ethicality of research. Methodological choices are colored by a social work value-driven lens, and the virtues of the researcher in general seek to be reconciled in the accounts. From this perspective, social work researchers harness differently oriented virtues to serve the ethics of research that in fact reflect a virtue repertoire of their own, the virtues of social work research that synthesize the virtues of social work in general and the virtues of scientific research.

The virtues of social work, if understood as a practice, might not be completely aligned with the virtues of social work research because the latter is positioned at the intersection of two dissimilar worlds. Barsky (2010) has pointed out that a certain virtue of a social work researcher might be in conflict with another, but in order to resolve these conflicts, researchers ought to use virtues balance them to ensure critical analysis. To address potential virtue-related conflicts, we should return to the nature of virtues. Virtues do not work well individually, but instead they should be seen as holistic (see Martínez-Brawley & Zorita, 2017). The three virtues I discussed in this paper are a vivid reflection of this argument; each of the categories—respecting human dignity, engaging in the polyphony of voices and confidentiality—hold diverse lines of thinking, doing and being that shape ever-changing map-like patterns. A single virtue can be identified by utilizing theoretical conceptualizations, but the division is completely artificial because virtues work as ranges and repertoires along with other virtues. Therefore, I could have used several of the data extracts in conjunction with other virtues presented in the paper.

The contextual, not relative, nature of virtues poses challenges to the ethics of child and family social work research. Virtues are not black and white, nor is a single virtue a virtue in every circumstance. As Barsky (2010) emphasized, virtues require a critical eye, striking a balance, moderation and circumspection, and therefore, virtue ethics is not an easy way out of an ethical dilemma. For instance, I referred to Korkiamäki's (2013, p. 104) argument concerning consent in participating in the research. Korkiamäki asked for consent only from young people themselves and not from the parents, which I regard as a reflection of respect for human dignity, as she reasoned that the line of action she chose would deconstruct the expert power she held as a researcher. Undeniably, her judgement could be viewed as an expression of an unethical decision because parents are the legal guardians of under-aged children, and therefore, they should be allowed to be heard in decisions concerning their children. In this sense, a certain kind of moral order has been broken by giving another moral normI appreciate the care everyone is taking to review their credit card statements. I the child's moral right to participation—priority over the moral norm that reflects the right of parents to put their responsibilities for the child's wellbeing into practice in ways they perceive as most suitable.

This example shows how the abstract virtuous self is used to balance competing ethical

claims because the researcher knows the principles but is not bound by them (after Martínez-Brawley & Zorita, 2017, p. 112). In this respect, the "moral self" acts as a yardstick in determining how to reconcile abstract principles that point to different directions. In this vein, the ethical sustainability of choices made is reflected mainly in the arguments of the researcher, and as such, the responsibility for the protection of ethical decision-making is distributed among the researcher, the participant and the reader of a given study. We might not always be able to be moral agents, which challenges the practical relevance of virtue ethics (see Clifford, 2014); however, if virtue ethics is perceived to be something more than the traits of an individual's character, this critique becomes less compelling. For this reason, the nature of virtues also needs to be analyzed.

References

Adams, P. (2009). Ethics with character: Virtues and the ethical social worker. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 36*(5), 83–105.

Banks, S. (2018). Cultivating researcher integrity: Virtue-based approaches to research ethics. In N. Emmerich (Ed.), *Virtue Ethics in the Conduct and Governance of Social Science Research. (Vol. 3*, pp. 21–44). Bingley, UK: Emerald

Banks, S., & Gallagher, A. (2009). *Ethics in professional life: Virtues for health and social care*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.

Barsky, A.E. (2010). The virtuous social work researcher. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics* 7(1). Retrieved from https://jswve.org/download/2010-1/6virtuous-sw-researcher.pdf

Beauchamp, T.L., & Childress, J.F. (2001). *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bibus, A.A. (2013). Applying approaches from moral philosophy, especially virtue ethics, when facing ethical dilemmas in social work. *Journal of Czech and Slovak Social Work*, *13*, 33–50.

Bogolub, E.B., & Thomas, N. (2005). Parental consent and the ethics of research with foster children: Beginning a cross-cultural dialogue. *Qualitative Social Work, 4*(3), 271–292.

Braun, V., & Clarke V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101.

Christensen, P., & Prout, A. (2002). Working with ethical symmetry in social research with children. *Childhood, 9*(4), 477–497.

Clark, C. (2006). Moral character in social work. *The British Journal of Social Work, 36*(1), 75–89.

Clifford, D. (2014). Limitations of virtue ethics in the social professions. *Ethics and Social Welfare, 8*(1), 2–19.

Denzin, N. (2009). The elephant in the living room: Or extending the conversation about the politics of evidence. *Qualitative Research, 9*(2), 139–160.

Eldén, S. (2013). "You child is just wonderful!": On ethics and access in research with children. *Journal of Comparative Social Work, 8*(2), 1–24.

Emmerich, N. (Ed.). (2018*). Virtue ethics in the conduct and governance of social science research*. Bingley, UK: Emerald.

Enroos, R. (2015). *Vankila, vanhemmuus ja lapsi: Näkökulmia perhekäytäntöihin* [Prison, parenthood and children: Different perspectives on family practices]. Tampere, FI: Tampere University Press.

Enroos, R., & Mäntysaari, M. (2017). Sosiaalityön tutkimuksen mielekkyydestä ja missiosta [About the meaningfulness and mission of social work research]. In R. Enroos, M. Mäntysaari & S. Ranta-Tyrkkö (Eds.), *Mielekäs tutkimus: Näkökulmia sosiaalityön tutkimuksen missioihin* [Meaningful research: Perspectives to the missions of social work research] (pp. 7–38). Tampere, FI: Tampere University Press.

Eronen, T. (2008). Lastenkoti dokumentoituna, kerrottuna ja yhdessä Muisteltuna [Children's home as documented, narrated and reminisced together]. *Janus, 16*(1), 19–34.

Eronen, T. (2012). *Lastenkoti osana elämäntarinaa: narratiivinen tutkimus lastenkodissa asuneiden kokemuksista* [Children's home as part of the

life story: A narrative study on the stories of former children's home residents]. Tampere, FI: Tampere University Press.

Eskola, J., & Suoranta, J. (1998). *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen* [An introduction to qualitative research]. Tampere, FI: Vastapaino.

Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. (2019). *The ethical principles of research with human participants and ethical review in the human sciences in Finland*. Helsinki, FI: Author.

Forsberg, H. (2013). Contested family practices and moral reasoning: Updating concepts for working with family-related social problems. In J. Ribbens McCarthy, C-A. Hooper & V. Gillies (Eds.), *Family troubles? Exploring changes and challenges in the family lives of children and young people* (pp. 305–314). Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Gabb, J. (2010). Home truths: Ethical issues in family research. *Qualitative Research, 10*(49), 461–478.

Heino, E., & Veistilä, M. (2015). Integration, recognition and security: Discourses on social support by families with a Russian background living in Finland. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research, 5*(2), 91–98.

Helavirta, S. (2011). *Lapset hyvinvointitiedon tuottajina* [Children as producers of well-being knowledge]. Tampere, FI: Tampere University Press.

Hietamäki, J. (2015). *Lastensuojelun alkuarvioinnin vaikutukset vanhempien näkökulmasta* [The outcomes of the assessment in child welfare from the parents' perspective]. Jyväskylä, FI: University of Jyväskylä.

Hämäläinen, K. (2012). *Perhehoitoon sijoitettujen lasten antamat merkitykset kodilleen ja perhesuhteilleen* [Meanings given by foster children to their home and family relations]. Helsinki, FI: Väestöliitto.

Hämäläinen, K., Pirskanen H., & Rautio, S. (2014). Sensitiiviset perheaiheet haastattelututkimuksessa: Eettiset haasteet, perhesalaisuudet ja intervention mahdollisuus [Sensitive family topics in research interview: Ethical challenges, family secrets and the possibility of intervention]. *Janus, 22*(1), 53–68.

Kagan, S. (2015). Dignity, evidence and empathy. *Geriatric Nursing, 36*(5), 394–396.

Kannasoja, S. (2013). *Nuorten sosiaalinen toimintakyky* [Social functioning among young people]. Jyväskylä, FI: University of Jyväskylä.

Kiuru, H. (2015). *Tragedian tarina: nuoren itsemurhaan päättynyt elämä vanhemman kertomana* [A story of tragedy. The life of young people—ended through suicide. As told by the parents]. Turku, FI: University of Turku.

Korkiamäki, R. (2013). *Kaveria ei jätetä! Sosiaalinen pääoma nuorten vertaissuhteissa* [No friend left behind! Social capital and young people's peer relations]. Tampere, FI: Tampere University Press.

Krok, S. (2009). *Hyviä äitejä ja arjen pärjääjiä: Yksinhuoltajia marginaalissa* [Good mothers and everyday survivors: Single mothers on the margin]. Tampere, FI: Tampere University Press.

Känkänen, P. (2013). *Taidelähtöiset menetelmät lastensuojelussa—kohti tilaa ja kokemuksia* [Arts-based methods in child welfare—towards own space and experiences]. Helsinki, FI: Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos.

Laakso, R. (2009). *Arjen rutiinit ja yllätykset: Etnografia lastenkotityöstä* [Everyday routines and surprises: An ethnographic study of the residential child care work]. Tampere, FI: Tampere University Press.

Liamputtong, P. (2007). *Researching the vulnerable.* London, UK: Sage.

MacFarlane, B. (2008). *Researching with integrity: The ethics of academic inquiry*. New York, NY: Routledge.

MacIntyre, A. (1999). *Dependent rational animals: Why human beings need the virtues*. Chicago, IL: Open Court.

Martínez-Brawley, E., & Zorita P. M-B. (2017). Contemporary Social work practice and

education: A call for re-examination of virtue ethics. *Cuadernos de Trabajo Social, 30*(1), 109–118.

Mertens, D.M., & Ginsberg, P.E. (2008). Deep in ethical waters: Transformative perspectives for qualitative social work research. *Qualitative Social Work, 7*(4), 484–503.

Munford, R., & Sanders, J. (2004). Recruiting diverse groups of young people to research: Agency and empowerment in the consent Process. *Qualitative Social Work, 3*(4), 469–482.

Mäntysaari, M. (2005). Propitious omens? Finnish social work research as a laboratory of change. *European Journal of Social Work, 8*(3), 247–258.

Nieminen, L. (2010). Lasten ja nuoren tutkimus: Oikeudellinen tarkastelu [Research of children and young people: Juridical examination]. In H. Lagström (Ed.), *Lasten ja nuorten tutkimuksen etiikka* [Ethics of research concerning children and young people]. Helsinki, FI: Nuoristutkimusverkosto.

Notko, M, Jokinen, K., Kuronen, M., Pirskanen, H., Malinen, K., & Harju-Veijola M. (2013). Encountering ethics in studying challenging family relations. *Families, Relationships and Societies, 2*(3), 395–408.

Papouli, E. (2019). Aristotle's virtue ethics as a conceptual framework for the study and practice of social work in modern times. *European Journal of Social Work*, *22*(6), 921–934.

Pawar, M., Hugman, R., Alexandra, A., & Anscombe, A.W. (Eds.) (2017a). *Empowering* social workers: Virtuous p*ractitioners*. Singapore: Springer.

Pawar, M., Hugman R., Alexandra, A., & Anscombe, A.W. (2017b). Introduction: The role of virtues in social work practice. In M. Pawar, R. Hugman, A. Alexandra & A.W. Anscombe (Eds.), *Empowering* social workers: Virtuous p*ractitioners* (pp. 1–16). Singapore: Springer.

Pekkarinen, E. (2010). *Stadilaispojat, rikokset ja lastensuojelu: viisi tapaustutkimusta kuudelta vuosikymmeneltä* [Stadi-boys, crime and child protection: Five case studies from six decades]. Helsinki, FI: Nuorisotutkimusseura.

Pietarinen, J. (1999). Tutkijan ammattietiikan perusta [The foundation of the researcher's professional ethics]. Teoksessa S. Lötjönen (Ed.), *Tutkijan ammattietiikka* (Professional ethics of a researcher] (pp. 9–19). Helsinki, FI: Opetusministeriö.

Pohjola, A. (2007). Eettisyyden haaste tutkimuksessa [The challenge of ethics in research]. In L. Viinamäki & E. Saari (Eds.), *Polkuja soveltavaan yhteiskuntatieteelliseen tutkimukseen* [Pathways to applied social research] (pp. 11–31). Helsinki, FI: Tammi.

Poikela, R. (2010). *Asiakassuunnitelma asiakaslähtöistä auttamista tavoitteellistamassa: Kohteen rakentumisen moniääninen menetelmä* [From a client plan to user perspective in multi-professional social work: A method of emerging object with multiple voices]. Helsinki, FI: Yliopistopaino.

Punch, S. (2002). Research with children: The same or different from research with adults? *Childhood, 9*(3), 321–341.

Pösö, T. (2008). Kiistanalaiset perhesuhteet ja tutkimisen moraali [Contested family relations and the morality of research]. In M. Notko & E. Sevon (Eds.), *Perhesuhteet puntarissa* [Family relations on the scale] (pp. 93–107). Helsinki, FI: Gaudeamus.

Resnik, D.B. (2012). Ethical virtues in scientific research. *Account res, 19*(6), 329–343.

Shaw, I.F. (2007). Is social work research distinctive? *Social Work Education, 26*(7), 659–669.

Stempsey, W. (2004). Guilt, shame and medicine. In M. Evans, P. Louhiala & R. Puustinen (Eds.), *Philosophy for medicine: Applications in a clinical context* (pp. 47–63). Oxford, UK: Radcliffe Medical Press.

Veistilä, M. (2016). *Muutosta hyvinvointiin: Tutkimus venäläistaustaisten lapsiperheiden sosiaalisen hyvinvoinnin rakentamisesta integraatioprosesseissa* [From migration to well-being: The construction of social well-being of

families with a Russian background during integration processes]. Kotka, FI: Kymenlaakson ammattikorkeakoulu.

Vierula, T. (2017). *Lastensuojelun asiakirjat vanhempien näkökulmasta* [Examining child welfare documents from a parental perspective]. Tampere, FI: Tampere University Press.

Viitasalo, K. (2018). Äitien pyrkimykset ja toimintamahdollisuuksien valikko: Käsitteellinen tutkimus äitien taloudellisista toimintamahdollisuuksista [Aspirations and capability set of mothers: A conceptual study on mothers' financial capabilities]. Jyväskylä, FI: University of Jyväskylä.