

Research and Change

Call No 3

March 2018

Theme:

Research as a player in the development of culture, society and democracy

This issue of *Research and Change* focuses on the relationship between democracy, research and the progress of welfare. In the Scandinavian countries, post-war research strategies have been justified, inter alia, by the supposition that research is expected to contribute to the development of modern, constantly progressing welfare systems, as well as to the onward march of democracy, human rights and social justice.

In recent decades, numerous reforms and organisational changes have challenged interpretations of the objectives of this ongoing welfare project and the measures used to achieve them. Organisational changes in the shape of a series of reforms have particularly affected the public sector: structural reforms, welfare reforms, quality reforms and so on – all of which have contributed to a dismantling of the public sector and the redesigning of it in ways which tend to obscure the contours of the modern, ongoing welfare project.

The holistic cohesion between democratic forms of life, justice and welfare is under pressure, and in some contexts even completely absent. For example, welfare institutions are being developed using organisational concepts, practices and guidelines (such as LEAN and variants of NPM) that are neither based on, nor take account of, democratic models, and which do not directly link in or involve user perspectives.

Organisational changes are often justified by expectations of increased efficiency or increased potential for innovation and further development. However, major changes are rarely justified by expectations of a greater degree of civil maturity, or improved qualities of learning, coping or justice. Psychological and sociological research signals a warning that frequent reforms and the general pace of processes of social change are increasing the alienation of ordinary people from themselves, from each other and from social life in general.

What role does research play in these developments? Can research contribute something over and above analyses that warn us of critical developments? How does research assess its own role in the development of the objectives and methods that guide our welfare organisations and the welfare professions? What influence does the reorganisation of welfare institutions have on the way the professions view the involvement of citizens, students, clients and patients?

For this issue of *Research and Change* we are calling for articles that empirically, theoretically, or in terms of methodology, illustrate the relationship between research and the democratic development of society, culture and welfare. We are looking for suggestions as to how research

can become more deeply involved in the development, criticism or justification of fundamental societal and cultural values concerning democracy, rights and social justice. How can research contribute to generating a knowledge base and to improving powers of judgment and civil maturity, for the benefit of the democratic development of culture and society? And why should democracy be a central concern of research at all?

The theme editorial team is specifically calling for articles based on civil society or user perspectives that analyse and discuss the contribution of research to the development of welfare, public issues and the good life in general. For example, articles in the coming issue might discuss issues such as the following:

- How does research contribute to the democratisation of culture and society?
- How can research benefit public issues?
- How do top-down management and funding structures affect the ability of research to contribute to the democratisation of culture and society?
- How can research contribute to a wider understanding of, and insight into, the extent and nature of significant cultural and societal changes?
- What role can research that flags critical developments play in the development of democracy and welfare?
- Can research pave the way for changes in societal structures?
- How can the conceptual and theoretical apparatus used in research play an active role in the democratisation of culture and society?

Practical information

Articles must not exceed 8,000 words.

Articles may be submitted in Danish, Norwegian, Swedish or English.

Mail: mihu@ucc.dk

Deadline: October 1, 2018

For more information, please visit: <https://forskningogforandring.dk/index.php/fof>

Best regards,

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