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Editorial: Power relations in society

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Editorial on the Research Topic Power relations in society

Power relations affect how we understand our truths, others, surroundings, and the world around us. Power relations structure the world and are an integral part of human groups and societies. It is through power, and therefore power relations, that things from politics to education to civic activism take shape. Power relations promote divisions in societies, which may be in the social and political interests of various actors. In the other words, power relations become a social problem if they are in any way skewed or if they prevent certain people or groups of people from participating in and influencing society. In this Research Topic we asked: What kind of power relations are there, who is connected to them, and how? How should their effects be determined, researched, and evaluated?

This Research Topic shared knowledge on power relations in various sectors of society: among youth, in media, in education, healthcare, and in intelligence sectors. With the knowledge gained from the articles, we can see that power relations affect various sectors of society. Some actors appear credible, while others are framed as being less so. Various actors strive to break down existing power relations all through societies. Through the research articles, we can concur that sustaining power relations is in the interest of the gatekeeper actors, who aim to control debates and policymaking.

The article [Saltiel](#) explores the particular caring relations of Hébergement, an informal hosting initiative for transitory undocumented migrants in Brussels, through the lenses of feminist care ethics. It elaborates on how the intimate, private setting of hosting at home affects a *caring-with* relationship. The feminist care ethics approach unravels the uneven geographies of care and addresses the complexity and ambivalences of caring arrangements. This perspective deepens the debate of refugee volunteer work and the geographies of encounter and envisages how caring-with in a caring society overturns dualisms and hierarchical social categorizations. In embracing social interdependencies, a caring society challenges the hierarchical connotations of neediness and dependency; it disrupts patriarchal caring relations and allows for a caring encounter that is based on solidarity rather than charity.

The article by [Meriläinen et al.](#) explores the power relations between the archetypes of various youth and media and their connections to information operations. The article relies on a multidisciplinary theoretical framework, and the empirical data produced by young people and media. The empirical data reveal archetypes and various power relations. In particular, the data indicate how the vectors of such archetypes guide thinking about young people and their life courses. In particular, the archetypes illustrate how vocational school students have to defend themselves and their choices in their daily lives, while high school students do not. Furthermore, the empirical data illustrate how the lives of

vocational school students are mainly described as happening here and toward the future of the voiceless proletariat, while high school students are considered active and successful changemakers. The results show there is a huge gap between the idea of the Finnish education system and “ethos.” This creates opportunities for information operations where young people gravitate toward various online actors who are perceived to be on the side of young people, but in reality, are actors in information operations with the aim of destabilizing the Finnish democratic state.

The article by [Hannuksela and Tiihonen](#) explores which aspects of social capital are connected to political self-efficacy, which is an important predictor of political participation and associated with political interest. The authors focus on the mediating effect of social capital among majority and minority adolescents, since minorities can be expected to have relatively more bonding social capital and less bridging social capital. A special focus is placed on Swedish-speaking minority youth living in Finland. Belonging to the Swedish-speaking minority seems to strengthen bonding social capital (social networks and community). The civic participation, community, and social networks aspects of social capital are positively connected to the level of political self-efficacy, while generalized trust has no connection to it. All these findings indicate that societies should take measures to strengthen bridging and bonding social capital among both adolescents and minorities.

The article by [Fornaciari and Juutilainen](#) explores the concept of the ideal teacher and power relations among students and teachers. In Finland, graduating teachers are expected to become “transformational agents” who are able to critically reflect upon and evaluate what types of changes are necessary in education and who can also implement the required changes. The authors uncover unspoken sociocultural power relations that come to light in different ways, not only in the peer relations between student teachers in teacher education but also in the students’ conceptions of the teacher educators. The authors suggest that by unraveling the unofficial power relations in the sociocultural context of teacher education and by focusing on supporting every student teacher’s agency and critical reflection, it is possible to transform the perceptions about the ideal teacher.

The article by [Pietilä et al.](#) explores the conceptualization of CITINT, i.e., the intelligence activities conducted by citizens and NGOs. This article establishes a foundation and perspectives for future research and to provide for initial conceptualization of CITINT. Moreover, the article elucidates CITINT’s implications

from a legislative perspective within a Finnish context. The article illustrates the differentiation between governmentally facilitated CITINT and the bottom-up CITINT conducted by individuals and NGOs on their own terms and tools. Moreover, it discusses the shift in power relations from centralized issue ownership of intelligence activities toward a more fragmented scene in which individuals and NGOs have more relevance, possibilities, and weight to conduct CITINT in their own terms and tools.

The Research Topic Editors are grateful to the authors for their consideration of the Research Topic and all of their excellent research articles. The authors’ contributions deepen the scope of knowledge in the fields of power relations across various academic disciplines and the levels in society.

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