



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

EN ROUTE TO RECOVERY: DIVERSITY AND VULNERABILITY IN CARE WORK DURING AND AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (ER2R)

International Research Collaboration funded via Trans-Atlantic Platform

Marjut Jyrkinen

Professor of Working Life Equality and Gender Studies

University of Helsinki

marjut.jyrkinen@helsinki.fi

En Route to Recovery (ER2R) teams and key words

<https://blogs.helsinki.fi/en-route-to-recovery/>

- **Finland: University of Helsinki**
 - Marjut Jyrkinen (Lead PI), Professor of Working Life Equality and Gender Studies, Faculty of Arts, Department of Cultures, Gender Studies, <https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/persons/marjut-jyrkinen>
 - Jukka Lehtonen, Senior Researcher, <https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/persons/jukka-lehtonen>
 - Tytti Steel, Postdoctoral Researcher, <https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/persons/tytti-steel>
- **Canada: Lakehead University**
 - Kathy Sanderson (PI), Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/users/S/kjsander/>
 - Ryan Hron, researcher
 - Irfan Butt, Assistant Professor Ryerson University's School of Business Management
- **South Africa: University of Cape Town and University of the Western Cape**
 - Floretta Boonzaier (PI), Professor in Psychology, Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town, https://eratrain.uct.ac.za/converis/portal/detail/Person/20465689?auxfun=&lang=en_GB
 - Mandisa Malinga, Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town
 - Carmine Rustin, Lecturer, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, University of Western Cape
- **The United Kingdom: King's Collage London**
 - Linda McKie (PI), Professor, Executive Dean, Faculty of Social Science and Public Policy, <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/linda.mckie.html>
 - Sophie Bowlby, Professor, <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/sophie-bowlby>
 - Caitlin Bawn, Research Associate, <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/caitlin-bawn>
 - Dilesh Shah, Research Project Manager, <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/dilesh-shah>
- **Key words of our research:** care, experiences of care workers, vulnerability, gender, time-space, migrant workers, minorities, LGBTIQ, multi-method case studies

Differences and similarities

- Different socio-economic, political and cultural contexts – cross-cultural setting and analysis
 - Two European countries (one in EU)
 - Socio-political regimes: welfare state oriented and liberal/residual societies
 - Minority World, Majority world; North and South, East and West
 - Ageing societies vs. country with young population
 - Indigenous people, minorities e.g. LGBTIQ+ and migrant care workers
- Care as a common nominator
 - or, lack of care: budget cuts ongoing; individualisation of care
 - Low pay, hard work, a moral duty to accept difficult work shifts “for the honour” of being employed in a critical sector during pandemics
 - Gendered care

Care and studying care

- Care as incremental to all human (and post-human) living
 - ...“everything we do to help individuals to meet their vital biological needs, develop or maintain their basic capabilities, and avoid or alleviate unnecessary or unwanted pain and suffering, so that they can survive, develop, and function in society” (Engster 2007: 28)
- ‘Care ecology’ of institutions, organisations, technologies, discourses and practices (Bowlby & McKie 2019)
 - impacts on capacity to care
- Multi-method case studies



(Photo: Outi Tommila)

Care and vulnerability

- Care of vulnerable people, but also the carers are vulnerable
 - intersectionalities of age (young, senior), migrant status, ethnicity/race, gender and sexualities, rural/urban
 - power relations
- Precarious careers
 - low pay, multiple jobs
 - fixed term contracts, part time
 - plenty of responsibilities
- Work and non-work
 - families, own life's care responsibilities
 - leisure time, rest
- Time-space
 - tight timetables, multiplicity of responsibilities
 - migration (inside countries, from poorer areas)
- Carers as LGBTIQ persons and discrimination
 - Also as persons to be cared of and for



(Photos: PixaBay)

South Africa: research focus on domestic workers' experiences of care work

- RQ's:
 - What are the major challenges that domestic workers have encountered related to the pandemic?
 - How could inequalities experienced by domestic workers be tackled to increase resilience, human sustainability and work well-being?
 - What care-related lessons can be found that can enable recovery from the pandemic and renewal of care provisions?

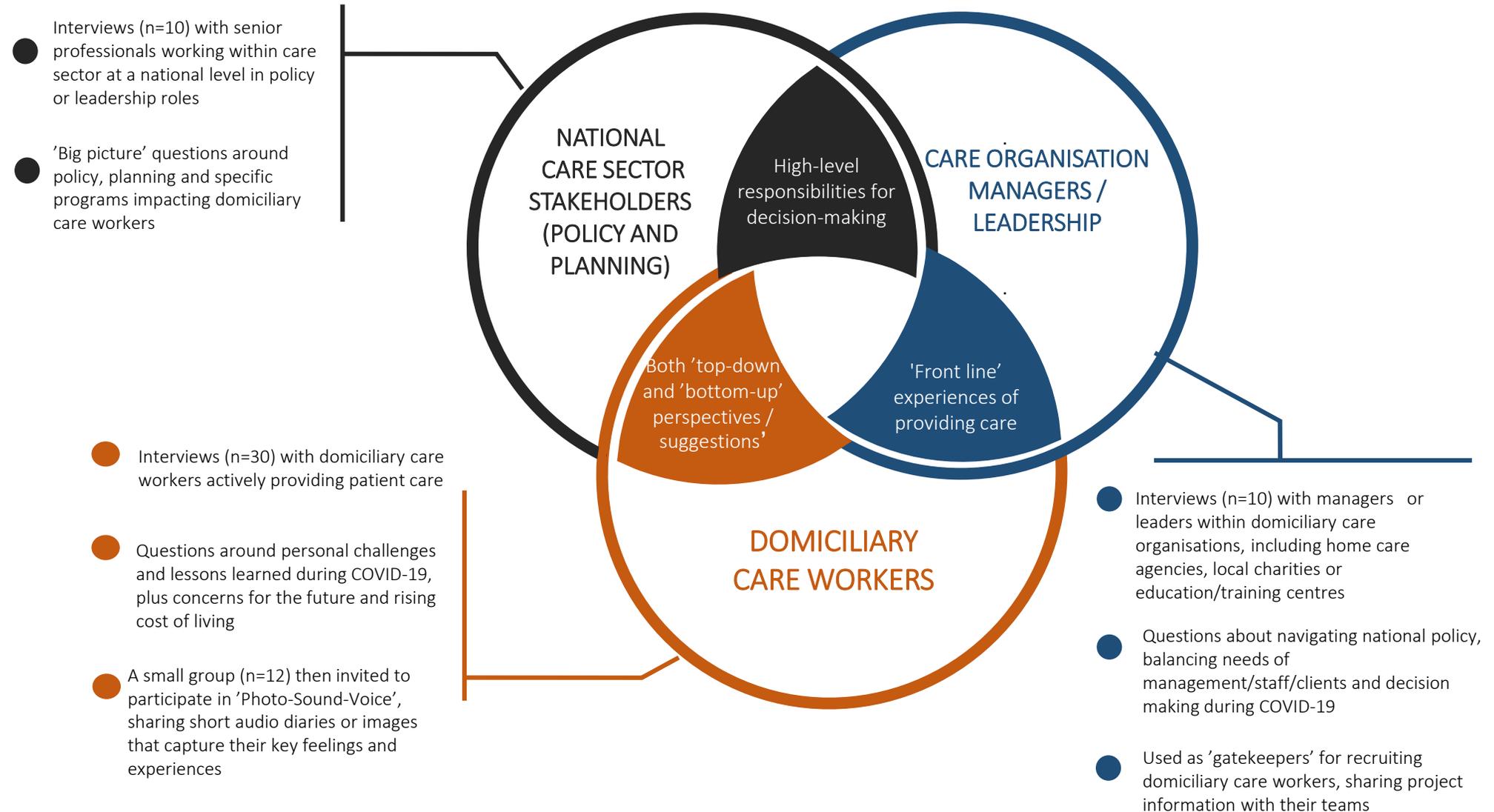
SA: on methodology

- Conducted in collaboration with the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers' Union (SADSAWU)
 - a total of 16 domestic workers were recruited (7 migrant and 9 South African)
- Photovoice methodology
 - involves individual interviews, focus group discussions, and photography
 - data collected by participants and interviews held with participants
 - photography training with all 16 domestic workers

SA: outputs

- **Research brief** publication currently in press by Social and Health Sciences - a University of South Africa (UNISA) Press Journal
- An **exhibition** in collaboration with SADSAWU
 - where participants could display and talk about their work, images, and their experiences of the project
 - participants and researchers could **invite guests and stakeholders**
- Assisted SADSAWU with getting an NGO, MOSAIC, to provide a talk on gender-based violence to the Union members
- Further analysis of data using photovoice methodology
- Initiating a second phase of the project focusing on hospice care workers in Cape Town, South Africa focusing on similar questions and methodology

UK: Strategy/Methodology Overview



UK: Recruitment

National care sector stakeholders (policy and planning)

- Interviews completed/scheduled: n=8 of 10
- Participants include:
 - Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London's, office
 - CEO of national care worker charity
 - Academics with various backgrounds in economics, technology and marketing
 - Policy advisors to UK government - including Home Secretary and Health and Social care dept.
 - Technology and mobile application experts in intervention design

Care organisation managers / leadership:

- Interviews completed/scheduled: n=8 of 10
- Participants include owners, registered managers and senior leaders within domiciliary care agencies - ranging in size from small, family-run companies to franchises of large national corporations

UK: Recruitment

Domiciliary care workers

- Challenges in recruitment: stretched workforce meaning additional workload; burn out with research and talking about

COVID-19; primary caregiving responsibilities outside of work; de-moralisation and feeling that 'nothing changes'
- Ongoing care worker recruitment strategies include:
 - Direct emails and phone calls to over 25 local domiciliary care organisations
 - Posters in local domiciliary care organisations, food banks and supermarkets
 - Contact with 5 local HE colleges who run adult social care training courses
 - Social media: posts in various Facebook groups for domiciliary care workers and local communities
 - In-person networking at relevant conferences and events (most recently Leaders in Care conference)
 - Snowball sampling, utilising connections with care managers and policy stakeholders
 - Care Workers Charity (national organisation for supporting care workers) sharing project details on social media and internally with clients
- Interviews completed/scheduled: n= 6 of 30

See: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/en-route-to-recovery>

UK: Some preliminary findings...

"We know that the need for a resilient health and care workforce will only continue to grow, as the population ages. Medical and technological advances are doing an excellent job of helping us all to live longer, but often, with multiple health conditions. Discussions about the divide between a 'free at the point of use' NHS and a means-tested social care system rumble on. The name change of the Department of Health to the Department of Health and Social Care does not seem to have made any tangible difference."

Health and Wellbeing Team, Office of the Mayor of London

"Care work, it's always been a reasonably low paid job, but it wasn't massively low paid relative to a collection of other jobs that might be competing with it [like ALDI or truck driving]... And then what's happened over the last 10 to 15 years is that it's got worse and worse from that perspective.... We spoke to lots of care home operators who basically were saying things to us like, 'the thing we dread most is an ALDI opening up around the corner from us' – because as soon as the ALDI opens up, they'll be paying a pound an hour more for workers, for a job that's very unstressful, where you can, you know, much more flexibility often on hours ... And so, you know, they just lose staff"

Professor of Economics and Advisor to Home Secretary

"Honestly [COVID] was not that different... Depending on [which client] you're going to, it can be very full on. Like, that is the nature of the work anyway. And so you go to [clients] who require very, very hands on physical support, and you come out sweating. And that's with or without COVID. COVID was just – you're even sweatier cause you've got PPE on...So it, it's a hard job physically and emotionally normally. And I think that in COVID, maybe people were like 'ohh, wow, what a tough job these people are doing during a pandemic.' But it wasn't any different to normal, and it still is the same."

Care worker/ social policy student, and founder of social media support group for domiciliary care workers

CANADA PROGRESS REPORT

ER2R September 2023

INTERVIEWS

Each country will conduct 15 to 25 interviews. 37 interviews completed

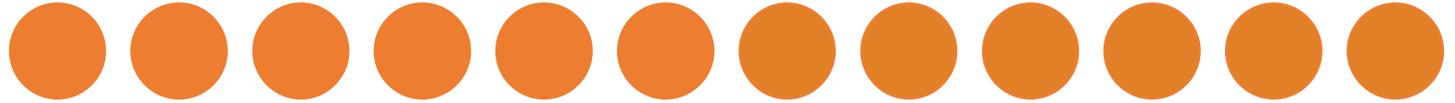
FOCUS: LONG TERM

WORKERS

15 interviews completed with care workers who have tenure of 10+ years

SOUND SOURCING

3 of 6 sound sourcing participants and recordings completed.



CANADA PROGRESS REPORT

ER2R September 2023

Systematic Literature Review



204 PDFs collected – 90 from pre-2022, 114 from 2022, will add 2023 journals in February 2024

Next Steps:

- Enter PDFs into Leximancer to identify key themes
- Examine methodologies, samples, results and recommendations
- Develop working group to write first journal article related to systematic review findings

Finland

- The **concept of vulnerability** – a structural construct rather than an individual trait
- The pandemic brought many **adversities** (such as the experience of being in a hurry) but also some **opportunities** (increased agency and job opportunities) to people in care work.
- Recovery from the pandemic has been fast
 - nevertheless, new challenges (war in Europe, high inflation)
 - ‘bubbling under’ contrasts: anti-gender, misogyny, racism
- Mutual aspects as regards to the two groups that we focus on – foreign born care workers and LGBTI people in care jobs – but also group-specific ones

Finland: data production with two groups

- Foreign-born care workers:
 - data is being produced in a **photovoice** project which as a method aims to enhance the agency of the participants
 - highlight **their cultural capital and values** in care work (proximity, intimacy and respect for the people they care for)
- LGBTI people in care work:
 - **survey** for LGBTI people on covid-19 (N=325), stories by LGBT care workers (N=4) and interviews with NGO employees and activists (N=23)
 - focus is on LGBT care workers, mainly practical nurses and their stories
 - results from the preliminary analysis: LGBT care workers often in vulnerable positions due to **vulnerabilities with care work in general and due to heteronormativity and minority stress** related to their status as members of in/visible members of gender and/or sexuality minorities



(Picture: Lotta Paakinaho)

Next **joint** efforts by the teams

- Second phases of data gathering by teams
- Systematic literature review
- Policy Press book to be finalised in spring 2023
- Second joint seminar in Helsinki May 2023
- Joint articles
 - planning, writing, publishing

To end: Paradoxes of (under)valuing care work during and after the pandemic – a Finnish example

- Lighting up of the Finlandia Hall; ‘Thumps up!’
 - ‘Thank you’ cards – but to be printed by nurses themselves at the largest university hospital
 - Social media messages to nurses
- Appreciation but no effect on salaries or work conditions
- Strike in 2022
 - But concern for patient safety, blaming, and moral guilt-laying; law amendment
 - Mixed solidarities in the public, and between labour unions
 - <https://About strike operations>



(Photos: Pixabay)

Many thanks!



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