



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH

**JOUR FIXE at the  
European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research**

**Vienna, 17. Dec. 2020**

**13:00 – 14:00 online**

**Social Work and Policing – and Public Sociology**



**SOCIAL WORK  
AND POLICING**  
Vocational Training in Public Order Management

The aim of this paper presentation is threefold: It shall be informative, reflexive, and provide food for thought for policy makers. First, I will present the current project "SWaPOL – Social Work and Policing". This is a European education & training project that wants to improve the collaboration between the two professions of social work and police. Equipped with fundamentally different work ethics, social workers and police officers are often confronted with the same "clients": Substance abuse and problems of disorder in public space call for both law enforcement and health & welfare services. In this project we have developed a curriculum for a common vocational training to encourage an exchange of professional stances and practices for the benefit of marginalised groups in society. In pilot-trainings in all partner countries we discussed solutions for a fruitful compromise between crime prevention and social support action.

In the second part of this presentation, I use the SWaPOL project as an example to offer some general reflection on the relationship between research and the public. I will ask two questions: (1) Who is the target group and who do we address in this project? (2) What kind of knowledge do we use and produce in this project? The particular combination of academic and non-academic audiences on the one hand, and instrumental and reflexive knowledge on the other, will offer interesting views on the dialog between research and the public. Drawing on the concept of "public sociology" (Burawoy, 2005), I will critically review the SWaPOL project and trace different approaches in sociological work: professional, applied, critical, and public.

This theoretical framework, that is here expounded in a practical example, may be a starting point for a discussion on academic labour at universities and the positioning of extra-university research institutions such as the *European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research* in Vienna.

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