

Experience-based knowledge of acquired brain injury- The value of shared knowledge and mutual learning processes

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Introduction

The context for the present study was a supportive network for people with acquired brain injury (ABI) based in an urban region of Sweden. The network consisted of patient organizations and rehabilitation and welfare services providers. The network organized several activities and those in focus for this study were: a blog group (men with ABI) and a group developing a web-based education (health care professionals and project staff with intention to involve people with ABI).

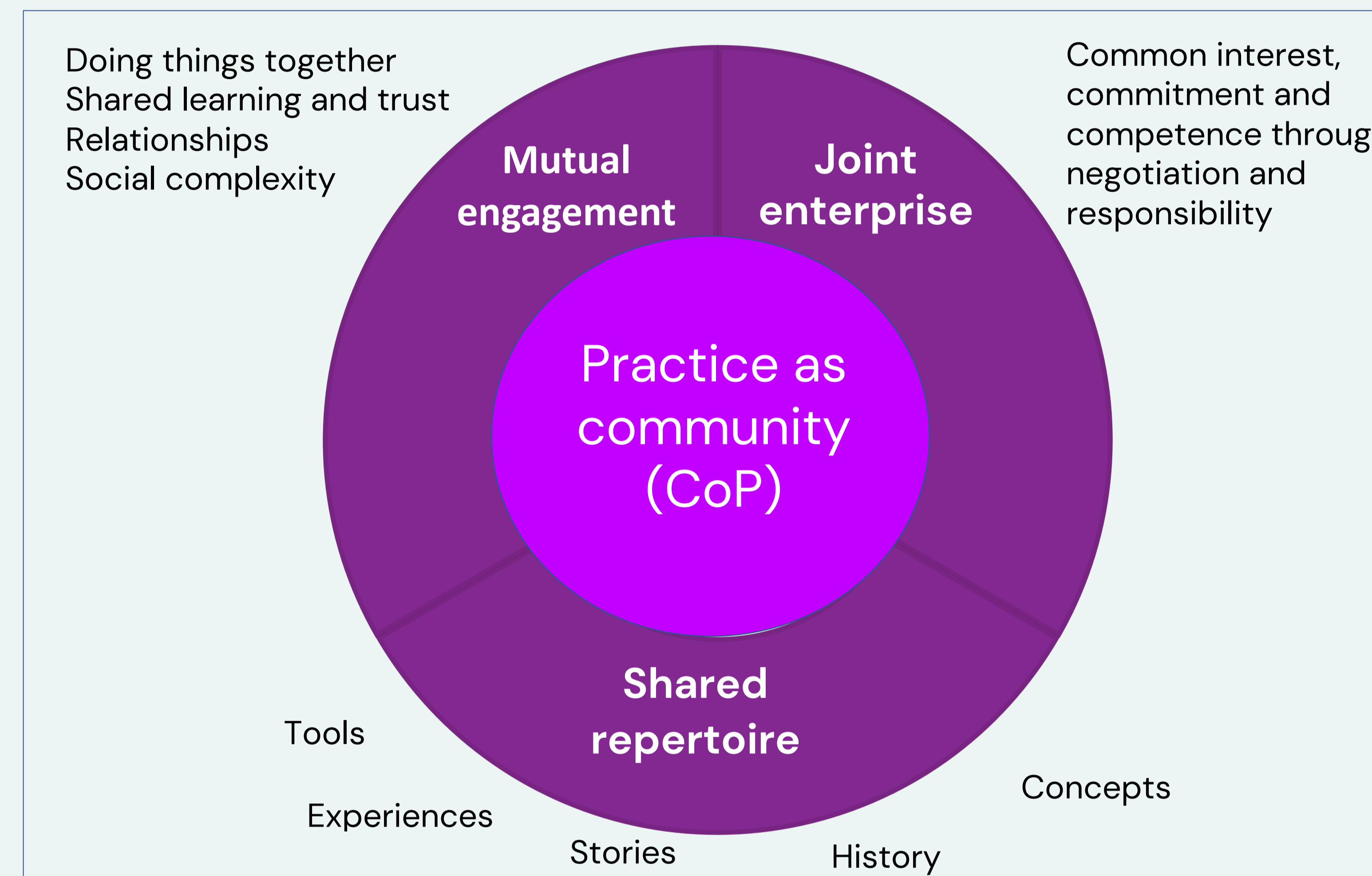
The aim of this study is to explore experiences of sharing experience-based knowledge of ABI in two communities of practice, with a particular focus on the conditions for sharing and learning, and the legitimacy of such knowledge.

Method

Data consist of 41 collective blogs, 16 semi-structured individual interviews with health care professionals and project staff (n=8) and people with own experience with ABI (n=8).

Findings were analyzed by utilizing community of practice framework¹ and Fricker's² concept of epistemic injustice.

Three dimensions of communities of practice



Results

- The members belonging to the communities of practice created a common area of interest through negotiation and renegotiation. Both groups, exemplify well-functioning CoPs.
- It was difficult to achieve epistemic justice in the education group that was dominated by professionals where the CoP's shared repertoire, solely built on knowledge of people without experience of ABI.

Conclusion

- It is important to validate people with own experience as subjects of knowledge.
- Gaining legitimacy requires recognition by people belonging to influential groups.
 - If services users are not adequately supported, they cannot contribute.

This study is part of a larger research project conducted at Karolinska Institutet, Ihop- [Together] for participation and belonging in Society. In wich academic researchers collaborate with community researchers.



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¹ Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of practice. Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
² Fricker, M. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice. Power & the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.