

Profiled nursing homes on Instagram – presentations of a fun, social and active life

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Symposium 4: Providing a Non-Institutional Environment in the Nursing Home: Promising Practices from Sweden

Abstract

Instagram can be perceived as a means for visually presenting an organization, thereby attempting to affect the impression mediated to the public. This study aimed at examining how profiled nursing homes present themselves on their Instagram accounts. 338 Instagram images from four nursing homes' Instagram account were analyzed, focusing on what kind of life, people, relations and places were put on display. The findings showed that life in the nursing homes was presented as “normal”, yet filled with activities and often given a gilt edge. Relations were depicted as friendly and equal, with both staff and residents participating in activities. The residents were involved in an ongoing interaction with the outside world, by going on excursions or having guests visiting the nursing homes. Frailty, sickness and care activities were absent in the data. The Instagram nursing homes stood in stark contrast to the idea of the nursing home being an institution – rather, they presented nursing home life as fun, social and active.

Introduction

In Sweden, eldercare is part of the social services distributed by Swedish municipalities and regulated by Sweden's Social Service Act (Socialtjänstlagen 2001:453). Swedish eldercare is funded by taxes, whether provided by municipal, non-profit or for-profit care givers. The municipalities in Sweden are relatively independent from the state, meaning that each municipality is responsible for how eldercare within the municipality is organized and provided. Old persons can apply for different kinds of eldercare, depending on their needs. People in need of extensive care, due to physical or cognitive impairment, can apply for moving to a nursing home. Unless you are able to continue living in your own home, a nursing home is thereby the last place you live before you die. Approximately one third of the people who move to a nursing home die within a year after moving there (NBHW 2016). Rooms in nursing homes are formally regarded as apartments, and the residents are regarded as tenants. They live by themselves, usually in a rather small one-bedroom apartment, have their own bathroom and often a kitchenette, with access to common areas. Staff should always be available and close-by.

During the last decade, a trend is emerging within Swedish eldercare, where a growing number of residential care facilities label and market themselves as profiled. Both municipal and private care providers offer profiled nursing homes. Profiles can be based on interests, such as gardening, sports or culture. They can also be based on ethnicity or language, such as Finnish homes or homes for people who speak Persian, or be based on a hotel concept where the residents are supposed to feel like guests at a hotel. This development could be interpreted as a way to try to cater to the need for personalized care, which has been highlighted by state authorities. The value foundation regarding eldercare, saying that old persons should be able to live a dignified life and feeling wellbeing, aiming at ensuring old persons' integrity and self-determination, was implemented in the Social Service Act in 2011 (Socialtjänstlagen (2001:453) 5 ch. 4 §).

Such goals, stressing the need for personalization and self-determination, should be understood against the backdrop of the institution being a place where the individual personality runs the risk of being violated by being deprived of former roles and relations, reduced and transformed to fit the institutional practice (cf. Goffman 1961). Concerns that nursing homes – by being institutions – are places where such reduction occurs have been

voiced in both previous research and by authorities. Living in a nursing home is thus connected to imminent threats of different kinds of losses, whether it is loss of autonomy, familiarity, individuality, identity, social context, dignity or health (Scourfield 2007; Jönson 2016; Cook 2010; Lee et al. 2013; Riedl et al. 2013; Winterton & Warburton 2012; Schou et al. 2008); nursing homes are places which symbolize the “ultimate loss” of personhood (Ryvicker 2006:1).

This paper aims at examining how nursing homes present themselves through their Instagram accounts. Using Instagram as a means to visually communicating (one kind of) life in the nursing homes, and using captions to further instruct the viewer on how to interpret the images, is understood as an attempt to affect the impression mediated to the public. In contemporary Western society, organizations, especially publicly funded ones, are to be audited and held accountable. This is assumed to ensure that they are doing what they are supposed to be doing, and doing so in a way which corresponds to public expectations (Power 1997). External auditing entails, according to Power et al. (2009), that the organization are deprived of the power to influence organizational reputation, this in turn entailing a sense of vulnerability since the power to portray the organization lies in the hands of others. Instagram accounts, being a platform for communication controlled by the organization itself, is in this analysis understood as a means for the organization to display an image in line with how one wants to be seen, possibly in opposition to a public understanding of the nursing home being a place of potential threats and losses – nursing home as institutions (cf. Goffman 1961; Lundgren 2000). Furthermore, in line with Prior (2003), documentation is regarded not as mere reflections of reality, but rather as a way of constructing reality by presenting 'facts'. Which reality is constructed depends on the selection made; some things are put on display while others are not. In addition, the documentation can easily be claimed as evidence that the thing did in fact occur. By depicting situations, one provides proof that the situation did in fact happen, as well as who was there and what they were doing at the time. Such proof can also be saved and claimed later on, meaning that documentation can capture and stabilize otherwise elusive occasions. Through documenting the nursing home in images on Instagram, then, the nursing homes can protect their reputation and legitimacy by mediating a positive image.

Methods and data

This paper is written within a research project about profiled nursing homes, why only profiled nursing homes' Instagram accounts were included in the sample. To select Instagram accounts, an initial browse-through of nursing homes' webpages was made to gain information about whether or not the nursing homes used Instagram as a platform for communication¹. If webpage information was not sufficient, contact was made with nursing home managers through e-mail or telephone. Sample criteria for the Instagram accounts were 1) that the nursing homes had a profile (according to themselves), and 2) that the Instagram account was actively used as a platform for communication (meaning that images were posted somewhat frequently). The sample consists of four nursing homes' Instagram accounts. I refer to these according to what profile the nursing homes have, which is *Garden and nature*; *Arts*; *Sports and spa*; and *Finnish*. Out of the four nursing homes, two are private and two are municipal. This is to enable an analysis of whether there is a difference in how Instagram is used due to public or private administration. An initial analysis concluded that the duration of the Instagram accounts, the amount of images posted, and number of followers varied greatly:

Nursing home profile:	Total number of images (in March 2017):	Account active since:	Number of images included in data:
Garden and nature	87	May 2016	51
Arts	707	May 2014	158
Sports and spa	300	July 2014	106
Finnish	23	August 2016	23

On the Instagram account of the Arts nursing home, a vast majority of the images depicted paintings. Since this paper in part focuses on profiled activities (such as painting), but more so on the relations and roles portrayed, as well as the meaning of the place and the activities, the decision was made to only include every third image depicting a painting, whereas all images depicting people, places or other activities were included.

Another methodological issue concerns the fact that the Instagram accounts are constantly updated, making the data somewhat of a moving target. For that reason, only images posted during a one year period (March 2016 to March 2017) were included. This is to

¹ Information was gathered from 15 Swedish municipalities' webpages, as well as from Seniorval.se.

cover activities that are linked to seasons, such as holidays. Videos were excluded from the data. The total amount of Instagram images is 338. Almost all images have captions. The captions have been analyzed in connection to the images.

Initially, the data was coded depending on who were in the pictures, where they were and what they were doing. The products of documentation, such as images or texts as they are presented on Instagram, are in this paper not regarded as reflections of an “out there reality”, or sources for facts about this reality, but rather as products in which people can construct and mediate their own view of reality, of themselves or of the reader or viewer (cf. Prior 2003). After an initial coding, it soon became clear that life in the nursing homes, as it was portrayed through the Instagram images, was a social, “normal” but still fun life, meaning that the nursing homes were places which provided the possibility to live such a life. In fact, the opposite – boredom, isolation, frailty or even care activities – was almost completely invisible, meaning that the nursing homes were presented as places where such things did *not* occur. The analysis as it is presented here draws upon these findings, and focuses on what kind of life is lived in the nursing homes – and what kinds of places nursing homes are presented as, where such a life is made possible.

Analysis

Goffman (1961:xxi) describes total institutions as places of “residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life”. Such settings, he claims, will entail loss of autonomy and self-determination for the people who live there, in fact, personhood is eroded. In a similar but perhaps less dramatic way Järvinen and Mik-Meyer (2003) describe how the individual, when becoming a client or patient, is provided with an institutional identity. The institutional frames for understanding, categorizing and managing the individual’s needs and problems entail a reduction of the individual. Thus, the institution itself seems to be a place where individuals, through everyday institutional practices, are transformed and reduced. As described by Lundgren (2000), nursing homes have, when they are regarded as being institutional, been associated to estrangement, loneliness, passivity, being a patient and focus on sickness and impairments, as opposed to

nursing homes which are considered to be homelike. Homelikeness is instead associated with familiarity, coziness, security, freedom and self-determination.

In this analysis I outline themes that are occurring in four Instagram accounts, belonging to four profiled nursing homes (Garden and nature, Arts, Sports and spa, and Finnish). Judging by the Instagram accounts, a nursing home seems to be a place where one can live a "normal" life, that is, doing what most people are doing. Moving to and living in the nursing home, then, is presented as *not* hindering living life as one did before. But life in the nursing home is also presented as *more* than life outside of the nursing home. Situations and occasions which excel the normal, mundane everyday life are often put on display, such as getting a manicure, eating strawberry cake "because it is Monday", or finding other opportunities to create festive moments and give life a gilt edge. The roles and relations portrayed through the images are primarily centered on activities, both when it comes to relations between people in the nursing home, such as residents and staff, and relations between residents and the "outside world". In presentations of relations and interactions between staff and residents, the lines between these groups are often blurred. The difference between these two groups, regarding the fact that one group is there to give care and the other group is there to receive care, is not very visible, probably because care activities as such are absent in the data. The nursing homes are presented as far from isolated, more than one third of the images show either residents being outside of the nursing home, or guests visiting the nursing home. The captions are used to provide the viewer with instructions on how to interpret the images, always in a positive manner, and comments further enforce the positivity.

Life is normal, social and active

All but a very few of the images in the Instagram accounts display people, primarily nursing home residents, participating in some form of organized activity (as opposed to, for instance, "only" watching television, resting or sleeping, or sitting seemingly idle at a table). The first example is from the Sports and spa nursing home's Instagram account. Being a nursing home only a couple of minutes from the sea, it might not be surprising that many of the images show walks along the beach, most often in sunny weather, such as the one below:



The image portrays two women sitting in wheelchairs, half-way turned towards one another as if having a conversation, with their backs to the photographer (which one can assume is a member of the staff at the nursing home). One of them is holding a dog's leash, the small dog is walking beside her. It is sunny and probably warm, judging from how the women are dressed. In the background one can see a stone wall, and behind this, the ocean and blue skies. The women seem unaware that a photograph is being taken, giving the impression that they are not posing for the sake of the picture; that the way they sit and look out on the ocean is "natural". The caption reads: "Today we took a stroll down to the sea to have a good time after eating delicious ice cream on the way". Although it is not possible to see the women's facial expressions to interpret whether or not they are in a good mood, the message conveyed seems to be that these two residents are having a good time in the sun by the sea, enjoying both the weather and each other's company. The caption accentuates this message by emphasizing the delightfulness of the moment.

The activity displayed in this image probably resembles what people would think of doing on a sunny day, given that they had the opportunity; going to the beach, enjoying the weather, eating ice cream. Life in the nursing home, thus, does not seem to differ from life outside the nursing home. The nursing home is thereby presented as a place which does not limit the possibility to continue life as it has been, or at least as we think of how life "should" be. This "normality" is displayed in a great deal of the Instagram images. The Garden and nature Instagram account shows a woman sitting in a wheelchair outside,

seemingly enjoying the last rays of winter sun (judging from the lack of leafs of the trees in the background). The Finnish Instagram account shows two persons (it is unclear if these are residents or members of staff), holding buckets in their hands and bending down to pick lingonberries and blueberries in a forest. The Sports and spa Instagram account show two residents in wheelchairs, benched in front of the television, eating chips, drinking wine and watching the European football championship.

The most evident example of nursing home life being “normal” is in images portraying how holidays, birthdays or other significant days are being celebrated. The "props" used when presenting such occasions visually are in line with typically Swedish customs and traditions. For instance, pictures signaling a crayfish party contain a group of residents and staff around a table with white cloths, on the table is food and drinks typical for a crayfish party (crayfish, shrimps, cheese pies, salad and schnapps), over the table hang decorations in the form of paper lanterns and garlands; all these accessories help presenting the party in a way which probably resembles the way most such parties are orchestrated in Sweden. In the caption of the Sports and spa nursing home’s crayfish party, the viewer is informed that the party was "very successful", along with a description of the food that was served. Easter is portrayed in pictures of Easter eggs, decorating twigs in a vase with colorful feathers attached to them, a cake decorated with marzipan chickens and a text that says "Happy Easter", and daffodils; all in line with Swedish tradition. All Saints' Day is portrayed in a picture of a table filled with lit candles, Midsummer's eve in a picture of a strawberry cake, and Sweden's national day in pictures of the Swedish flag and balloons; this too according to Swedish custom. Such images give the impression that there is not much difference in the way holidays are celebrated in the nursing home, compared to how people not living in nursing homes celebrate. The props used in these pictures, such as customary food or other accessories, seem to be in line with what one, as a Swede, thinks there *should* be at for instance a crayfish party. Hereby, the message conveyed seems to be that traditions are perceived to be important, efforts are made to maintain them and this is done "by the book". The nursing homes do not deviate from the established manner of celebration and this continuation and maintenance of tradition seems important to mediate to the viewer.

All in all, images like these give the impression that the residents in the nursing homes live life as people “usually” do, at least if what is considered to be “usual” is equivalent to staying active, participating in group activities and celebrating traditional holidays. The nursing homes as they appear on Instagram are places which do not hinder living a normal life.

Life is fun and gilt edged

In addition to living a “normal” life, several images also show how the "everyday life" is made special, sometimes luxurious. Such images give the impression that there is always something to celebrate. In the image below, attention is paid to the Nobel Prize day by having a Nobel Prize dinner party; a festivity which, although it does occur, is not nearly as common as for instance celebrating Christmas or Midsummer:



Seven people, all residents, are sitting at a table, raising their glasses towards the camera, although only three of them are actually looking into the camera. On the table are a white cloth, lit candles, a ridge of evergreen, napkins, a glass of what could be wine and plates filled with food. The room in which they are sitting looks big and somewhat fancy; a chandelier hangs from the ceiling, in the background there is a grand piano and a fire place. The overall impression is that the arrangement in the picture connotes splendor. The caption says: “We at [the nursing home] say cheers and celebrate the Nobel day with a nice dinner from #Kungshultskök”. Pictures such as this one are not unusual on nursing homes’ Instagram accounts, often conveying a sense of solemnity surrounding the Nobel dinner, and seem to signal that nursing homes do not only celebrate the “usual” holidays, but rather they take the opportunity to create festive occasions whenever they can.

Similarly, one picture in the Sports and spa Instagram account shows a woman sitting at a table, holding up a glass and a folded napkin to the person taking the photograph. There are a flowers in a vase and streamers on the table. The caption reads: "Today we laid the table nicely. After all, it's Sunday!". In another picture, three women, one staff and two residents, are sitting at a table. In front of them are bottles of nail polish and a nail file. The caption reads: "Rainy weather! Then we have a cozy day with massage and manicure". The Arts Instagram account overflows with pictures of residents going to museums and art exhibitions. The Finnish Instagram account show residents singing karaoke on a Wednesday evening.

The Garden and Nature Instagram account has picture of a strawberry cake with a caption saying: "We celebrate the everyday!", showing how everyday life is given a gilt edge through food. Images of food and meals are often have captions telling the viewer that something out of the ordinary is going on, such as making Friday night extra cozy, going to a café and eating cake, or having an ice cream in the sun. Of course, food is also used as props when displaying celebration of holidays as described above.

The overall impression of these images is that they convey a message of fun or luxurious moments sprinkled on the everyday life in the nursing home. No images portray everyday life as mundane, monotonous, routinized or idle.

The people in the pictures

Residents

Whether images depict residents by themselves or, as is more frequent, being together in a group, the residents are most often engaged in some form of activity, should this be it is painting, having dinner, bowling or playing bingo. The role of being a nursing home resident seems to be portrayed as being involved in fun activities, often with others; being active, social and content with life. The satisfaction is often enforced by the captions where the residents are assigned positive feelings, such as being in a good mood, or by describing the situation in itself as fun. The role of being a nursing home resident as it is portrayed through the images, then, stands in stark contrast to the idea of the fourth age being centered on loss, frailty and vulnerability (Higgs & Gilleard 2014). If not being addressed as part of a "we" or

"us", the residents are often addressed as "residents", "tenants", "users" or "seniors" in the captions, connecting their role to the place where they live, or to their age. The Arts Instagram account sometimes deviates from this way of describing the residents, and instead address them as "the artists" in images where art activities are displayed. By doing so, residency and age are made completely irrelevant; instead participation in art activities, in line with the nursing home's profile, is presented as the core of the role.

The social aspect of the role as a resident is portrayed through images of participation in activities together with other, that is, through interaction. However, if one takes a closer look, it is rather hard to tell anything about the nature of the interaction between residents based on the images. Pictures of residents being caught up in a discussion, having eye contact, touching, gesturing or smiling at each other or in others ways signaling interaction are rather rare. There are a few exceptions, such as an image of two residents sitting next to each other at a table. The woman on the left has put her hand on the arm of the man on the right. Both of them are smiling, leaning towards each other and looking into the camera. The captions reads: "Today Olle and Inga, among others, participated in playing bingo. Inga and Olle became friends when they met here at [the nursing home]. This proves that one is never too old to make new friends". The message conveyed here draws both on the age of the persons in the picture, and on the place where they live. Neither of these factors entail loss of any kind, according to the caption. However, the image and the caption could also be interpreted as wanting to display an exception to the assumed rule that both old age and nursing homes *do* in fact hinder making new friends. If understood as such, the image, by wanting to point out the opposite, rather emphasizes the idea of old age and nursing homes being associated with loss, this being one of few exceptions. The overall message, though, seems to be that the nursing home is *not* a place of loss but rather a place for making new friends, meaning it is a place where one can gain social relations.

Staff in relation to residents

Many of the images of staff and residents together show participation in activities, as in the image below:



In this image, four people are dancing in pairs. The couple in the front are looking at each other, smiling. Apart from the woman on the far left, who looks old and could be assumed to be a resident, it is not completely clear if the people in the picture are staff or residents. The caption reads: “Some of the [nursing home’s] residents didn’t just sing but also wanted to dance. Believe it or not, but people had such a good time with the karaoke program that the staff had to carry them out after 2,5 hours????”. In addition to showing people seemingly having a good time dancing (as described in the caption), the image also shows staff and residents performing an activity together, as opposed to something being "done" by one party to or for the other party. Such a relation between staff and residents is depicted in many of the images; staff and residents having ice cream in the sun, sitting at a café table together or riding a bike together, activities where there seems to be no evident distinction between staff and residents regarding the terms of participation. Had the staff not been dressed in working clothes, or the residents most often having gray hair, wrinkles, sitting in wheelchairs or in other ways “proving” their old age, it would have been hard to make a distinction between residents and staff based on how they are portrayed in the pictures. Such a division might have been more prominent in a picture of a situation centered on care activities (handing out medicine, for example), but such pictures do not exist on the Instagram accounts (apart from staff pushing a wheelchair). Many of the images have captions describing the persons in the picture as a “we”, such as "Greeting from us"; "Today we celebrate Rune's birthday"; "We were accompanied on our walk"; “We are painting still lives” or “Here we play a MÖlkky-

game for as long as the weather allows us to". The "we", then, can signal the residents and staff being part of the same group; "we" who participate in the activity, rather than being members of two different groups whose relations are determined by being either a care giver or a care receiver. In images like these, there are no institutional hierarchal roles, no distinctions between residents and staff regarding what they are doing at the nursing home, no differences at all are made visible. Relations seem to be "private" rather than institutional, with members of both categories participate on equal terms (cf. Harnett & Jönson 2017).

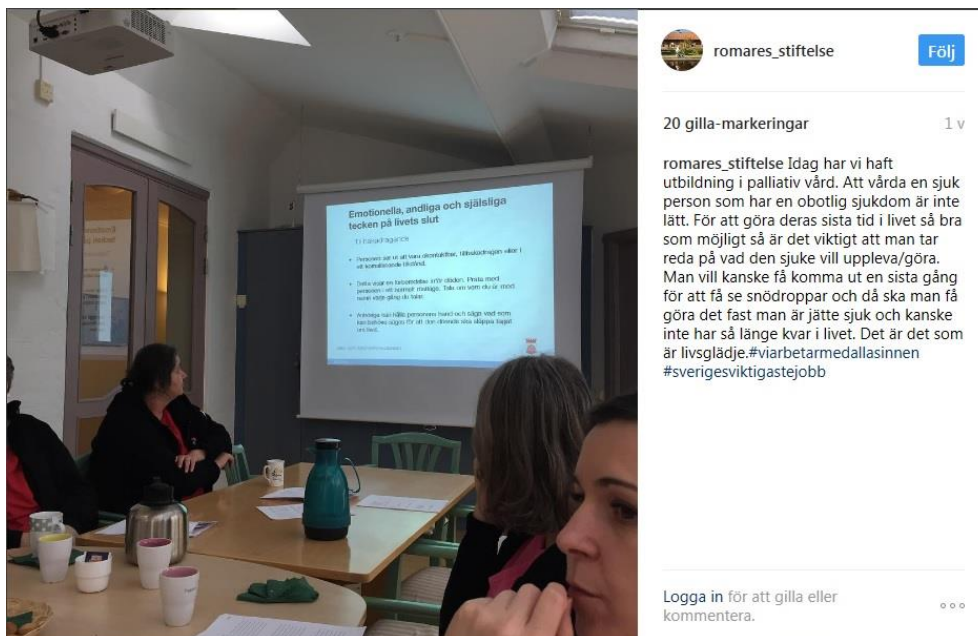
However, some images, such as the next one from the Sports and spa Instagram account where the residents are addressed as "our ladies", show a different kind of relation where staff members are taking care of the residents, also providing the staff role with additional expectations:



Like the previous image, this one shows residents and staff engaged in activity. These are five images in one, four of them portraying women sitting in a wheelchair or a couch with facial masks on, and one of a table filled with beauty products. In the top left image, a staff member puts on the facial mask on one resident. In the background of the top right picture, there is a man sitting in a wheelchair seemingly sleeping or looking down on his hands, apparently not participating or taking any interest in the activity. The overall impression is that these four women are relaxed and enjoy being pampered in this "spa-like" manner. The image also fits well into frame of the nursing home's spa profile. The table filled with beauty products adds to the "spa-likeness", and so does the caption, saying: "Today we celebrate our ladies on

International Women's Day by giving some spa treatment!". The "we" in this image refers to the staff, celebrating and giving "them" ("the ladies") a spa treatment; thereby making it clear who is supposed to give and who is supposed to receive care (although this kind of care could be considered to be more of the gilt edged kind rather than health care). It is noteworthy that the International Women's Day, a day when gender inequalities are usually highlighted and protested against, is being celebrated by giving spa treatments which could be interpreted as a somewhat gendered activity (compared to the other aspect of the profile; sports), thereby rather reproducing gender-based stereotypes of women being more interested in physical appearance and beauty.

Yet another way of depicting the staff role can be found in the next image from the Garden and Nature Instagram account:



This image stands out in comparison to all of the pictures analyzed. Overall, sickness, death or even care activities are rather absent in all four of the Instagram accounts. This one image depicts an occasion where these matters are very much in focus. In the picture, four members of the staff are sitting around a table, two of them looking at a power point slide. Only the heading of the slide is visible, saying: “Emotional, spiritual and mental signs of life’s ending”. The caption says: “Today we had a course in palliative care. To care for a sick person who has an incurable disease is not easy. To make their last days of life as good as possible, it is important to find out what the sick person wants to experience/do. Maybe one wants to get out one last time to see the snowdrops and then one should get to do that even if one is very sick

and might not have very long time left to live. That is what joy of life is about". Even though no sick residents are actually in the picture, it is clear that improving the care they are given are the focus of the education, making this image the only one which touches upon the subject of death and dying residents in the nursing home, at the same time making it very evident that the staff's responsibility is to provide the care necessary. In line with the positive feeling that is conveyed through other images (and reinforced by their captions), this image too focuses on ways to improve life in the nursing home, even when dying, here by granting the dying person's wishes. Self-determination is proclaimed to be a core value of the care given, again stressing how the nursing home practice should be adjusted to fit the individual, rather than the opposite.

Interaction with the outside world

The nursing homes, as they are presented through Instagram, are not isolated places. The barrier between the outside world and the institution is, according to Goffman (1961), the first violation to personhood, and entails loss of the roles and understandings of oneself one has acquired before moving to the institution. No such barriers are made visual in the pictures; about one third of the total amount of the images show either residents going on excursions or people visiting the nursing home. The Arts Instagram account contains both images of people visiting the nursing home to look at the art made by the residents, and residents going on art exhibitions, such as in the picture below:



The image shows a woman with a serious facial expression sitting in a wheelchair in front of the entrance to an art exhibition. The sign above the door in the background says: “Monet to Cezanne. The French impressionists”. The woman looks a bit dressed up in a necklace, earrings and lipstick. The caption says: “Hugs to children and grandchildren and greatgrandchildren from Gabrielle”, and a heart emoji. This image seems to convey several messages to the viewer. One is that being a nursing home resident does not mean that one cannot take part of life outside the nursing home, meaning that one is not isolated. Another is that the nursing home staff accommodates the wishes of the residents – the woman, being a resident at a nursing home with an Arts profile, could be assumed to take an interest in arts and art exhibitions such as this one. This conveys a message of the resident being self-determinant. Yet another, judging from the woman’s appearance, is that this is a somewhat special occasion, making her want to dress up, tying into the gilt edged life in the nursing homes.

The Arts Instagram account's pictures of residents being outside of the nursing home exclusively show visits to art related locations, such as museums or art exhibitions. The Garden and nature Instagram account is more diverse regarding the places visited. Excursions do not seem to be in line with the nursing home's profile. For instance, there are images of residents going to visit a staff member living at farm, the residents (seemingly happy and smiling) pet the horses and cuddle with a dog; one image shows two residents at a football game, an occasion which the captions describes as the happiness in rooting for one’s favorite

team; another image show a group of residents having lunch at a restaurant followed by a guided tour in a castle, as it is described in the caption. On the Sports and spa Instagram account, almost half of the images show residents being outside of the nursing home, most often taking walks along the beach or going to cafés.

Many images also show people visiting the nursing homes. The guests can be relatives, lecturers, musicians coming to entertain the residents, children coming to "trick or treat" on Halloween or children as *tiernapojat*, a Finnish tradition where children dress up as the three, or sometimes four, wise men in Bethlehem. One picture from the Gardens and nature Instagram account shows a smiling Buddhist monk, with a caption saying: "Today we granted a wish from one of our residents. A monk has paid a visit and they have been talking about life".

All in all, both images of residents being outside of the nursing home, and of guests visiting the nursing home, convey the message of the nursing home being a place in interaction with the surrounding world. The captions also often emphasize that these activities have been requested by the residents, thereby framing them as expressions of self-determination and freedom of choice.

The captions enforce positivity

If the Instagram accounts are understood as ways of conveying messages about the nursing homes, as a means to influence how nursing homes are displayed to the public, and that the intention is to present the nursing homes in a favorable light, it is not very surprising that the captions are often used to further instruct the viewer on how the picture should be interpreted by using positively loaded words. Such words are "happy", "sunny", "yummy", "wonderful", "delightful", "lovely", "enjoy", "successful", "refreshing", "lively", "pretty", "sweet", "good" and "nice", complementing the staff's cooking skills in pictures of food or using heart emojis or smileys. Sometimes opinions and feelings are assigned to the depicted residents, as in writing "A wonderful day in the sun. [Name] is happy that she had a yummy ice cream!" about an image where a smiling woman is eating ice cream, or "[Name] shines as bright as the sun" about an image of a smiling woman painting. Seemingly ordinary activities are also framed in a positive way, for instance a picture of a woman in a wheelchair looking into the camera with a faint smile on her face. She is sitting in the aisle in a grocery store with her

handbag in her lap, holding a chocolate bar, with a caption saying: "Today [Name] has been at a shopping spree at Ica Maxi". Going to the grocery store, an experience maybe not many would think of as the highlight of the day, is here reframed as going on a shopping spree, connoting the assumed joys of consumerism. Another activity, usually associated with Swedish nursing homes, is bingo. Thirteen pictures in the Sports and spa Instagram account show residents playing bingo. The activity is described as "the favorite activity", "the most popular activity" or as "Today we're doing what we like the most BINGO!". The captions, together with pictures of concentrated or smiling residents filling out their bingo cards, signals that even though this activity might be an ordinary nursing home activity, it is highly appreciated by the residents. If understood as a way to frame what is commonly regarded as an activity which is associated with eldercare institutions, these captions can be interpreted as accounts. Bingo is one of the most common and most popular activities among residents living in nursing homes, according to Kracker et al. (2011). Still, judging from the captions, it seems important to convey to the viewer that the residents do *in fact* enjoy playing bingo. Since the Instagram presentations are understood as efforts to display something *other than* institutions, these captions could be interpreted as a way of framing a stereotypical "nursing home activity", meaning that this activity runs the risk of being associated with the nursing home as an institution, as something extra fun and highly appreciated.

Discussion

Overall, the presentations on Instagram could be understood as efforts to appear not as institutions, but as something else. As Lundberg (2000) claims, care facilities for older people have been criticized for being institutional, which connotes loneliness, sterile environments, being reduced to being a patient, passivity, and staff being an authority. The opposite of this would be nursing homes that are homelike, connoting feelings of coziness, authenticity, continuity, old-fashioned furniture and interior, being a tenant rather than a patient, self-determination and focusing on health rather than sickness. This paper shows how the nursing homes are depicted as being far from institutions, but neither are they portrayed as being homelike, meaning that they do not fit in the usual dichotomy of institutional versus homelike. The Instagram nursing homes seem to be something else; first and foremost places where life revolves around activity. Whereas homelikeness usually connotes safety and

familiarity, which could be connected to continuity, the Instagram nursing homes rather emphasize development and activity; providing possibilities of a life that is *more* than what it used to be.

As life is depicted as filled with activities, the residents are also depicted as active, which might be why frailty, sickness or care activities are not displayed. Clearly, the residents are portrayed as vital, participating in activities and interacting with the outside world. Focus is on the individuals as persons, sometimes as a part of a group and sometimes by themselves, never as patients or care receivers, further adding to the image of the residents as *not* living in an institution.

It is quite possible that the platform itself affects how nursing home life is portrayed. Since Instagram provides the possibility for viewers to openly comment on images, it might be less likely that a nursing home would choose to post “sensitive” images, such as images of visibly sick or frail residents, due to the risk of getting negative feedback through the comments. However, the (with one exception) total lack of images implying that these are places which people move to because they are in need of excessive care, cannot completely be explained with the risk of getting negative comments. Instead, the nursing homes on Instagram seem to want to create a counter-image by challenging the common understanding of them being places dominated by losses and decline, where people are isolated, passive and generally speaking waiting to die. The efforts made to *not* be institutions contribute to a discourse of life being fun, social and active until the day you die.

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