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AUTHOR(S)

Mäntysaari, K.; Stevanovic, M.; Weiste, E.; Paananen, J.; Lindholm, C.

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Ideals of joint decision making in clubhouse communities

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Abstract

Objective: This article explores the ideological dilemmas of decision-making identified in members' and staff's talk in Clubhouse communities.

Methods: The data are drawn from a corpus of 10 video-recorded focus group interviews with Clubhouse members and staff which were collected at five Finnish Clubhouses in 2020. The method used is discursive psychology and the analysis identifies interpretative repertoires and ideological dilemmas.

Results: Clubhouse members and staff express diverse opinions regarding decision-making at the Clubhouse. We identified six interpretative repertoires and three ideological dilemmas between these repertoires. The first dilemma deals with participation and efficiency, advancing the idea that everybody should be allowed to participate in decision-making, but the decision-making should be efficient. The second dilemma regards the passivity or activity of the participants, suggesting that decision-makers should be allowed to be themselves, but participation in decision-making requires activity. The third dilemma is associated with power structures in decision-making, proposing that joint decision-making requires active resistance against power structures, but these structures are both inexorable and partially necessary.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice: In introducing a discursive perspective to joint decision-making in the Clubhouse community, this study makes visible the conflicting ideals of decision-making. The acknowledgment of these dilemmas can guide interventions aiming at improving genuinely participatory joint decision-making practices at the Clubhouse.

Impact and implication statement

The study shows that Clubhouse members and staff have conflicting ideals about joint decision-making at the Clubhouse. The staff's views constitute a potential risk, as they highlight the active role of members and associate efficient decision-making with the inexorability of power structures. By making the conflicting ideals visible, the study can inform interventions to improve joint decision-making in the Clubhouse community.

Introduction

The Clubhouse Model is based on the ideal of equal participation among members and staff (e.g., Hänninen, 2012). This ideal is reflected in consensus-based joint decision-making practices (Clubhouse International, 2023; Valkeapää et al., 2020). Although all members have the right to decide about the matters of the community (Hänninen, 2012), this ideal is not always realized. Prior studies have noted that the staff's views may overrule the members' opinions (Karlsson, 2005; Valkeapää et al., 2019).

Joint decision-making is also an interactional challenge: The staff need to encourage members to express their ideas (Raeburn et al., 2017) but also allow them not to participate (Raeburn et al., 2016). Studies examining interactions in Clubhouse meetings have shown that the staff members sometimes seek the members' agreement to the extent that risks at jeopardizing the jointness of the decision-making outcome (Stevanovic et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it is the staff members whose expressions of personal thoughts and opinions dominate in Clubhouse meetings (Paananen et al., 2021a). Moreover, support workers tend to advance their own agendas in the meetings, and even practices of positive reinforcement can sometimes highlight the power asymmetry between the staff and members (Paananen et al., 2021a, 2021b; Weiste et al., 2021).

To shed light on the gap between the ideal and practice, we study how Clubhouse members and staff talk about their experiences of joint decision-making at the Clubhouse. Here we use the analytic concepts of discourse analysis.

Ideological dilemmas in the discourse analytic approach

The theoretic-methodological framework of this study is critical discursive psychology, which is a sub-discipline of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is not a clearly defined research method, but rather a loose theoretical framework that offers varying methodological applications (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The central theoretical premises include the idea of language use constructing social reality, the existence of parallel and competing systems of meaning, and language use having consequences (Augoustinos, 2017).

This study utilizes the notion of *interpretative repertoire*. While the notion of *discourse* refers to the rather institutionalized ways in which language and language-like systems are used (Davies & Harré, 1990), interpretative repertoires are narrower, focusing on the performative routine practices of everyday speech: interconnected arguments, explanations, descriptions, and clichés (Wetherell, 2005). Repertoires refer to ideals that are based on coherent ways of speaking of some subject, while different repertoires build their own image of it. People may use multiple and contrasting repertoires, even within the same episodes of talk (Van Der Merwe & Wetherell, 2020).

In this study, we focus on the *ideological dilemmas* between interpretative repertoires. Ideological dilemmas are premised on the idea that thinking over beliefs and values is universally prone to discrepancies (Billig et al., 1988).

Using data from group interviews with Clubhouse members and staff, we ask the following research questions:

1. What kinds of interpretative repertoires related to joint decision-making occur in the interviews with members and staff?
2. What kinds of ideological dilemmas are formed between the interpretative repertoires?

By responding to these questions, we aim to provide new knowledge about the dilemmas of decision-making that can affect the feasibility of participatory, joint decision-making in Clubhouse communities.

Data and method

Our data consist of 10 video-recorded and transcribed focus group interviews that were organized at five Finnish Clubhouses in 2020 as part of the project “Social inclusion, interaction and mental illness” (2017–2021). In each house, there was one focus group discussion for Clubhouse members and another for staff. Each discussion involved 3–7 participants and one interviewer (N=44 interviewees; see Table 1). The participants had been involved in a Clubhouse community from 1 to 21 years. The five Clubhouses were chosen through purposive sampling designed to produce maximum variation. The houses varied in age, geographical location, and number of members. The interview tour continued until the saturation point was reached.

To ensure that all our participants had experienced typical processes of “Clubhouse decision-making”, we selected well established houses across the country. In Finland, there are currently 23 Clubhouses, the first being founded in 1995. Eight of these Clubhouses are accredited and are currently affiliated with Clubhouse International.

Two houses in our sample had been in operation over 25 years, two houses approximately 20 years and one house approximately 10 years. Based on the number of visits per year, one of the Clubhouses in our sample was big and four were middle-sized. At the time of the interviews, one of the Clubhouse was accredited by Clubhouse International. Two had been accredited before, but their

accreditation had expired and not yet renewed. Two Clubhouses in our sample were not accredited.

Although the overall functioning of all the Clubhouses in our data was rather similar, some Clubhouses in our sample had some unique characteristics. One house had a special focus on young people and two houses were specifically engaged in transitional employment programs. Furthermore, one house was operating as a Clubhouse training center.

Participation in interviews was voluntary for all members and staff. No background information about the interviewees' ethnic identity, sexual orientation, diagnoses, or work experience was collected. The anonymity of the participants was carefully ensured during the transcription process. The study was reviewed by the Ethical Board in the Humanities and Social and Behavioural Sciences at the University of Helsinki (decision date: December 17, 2019; number: 69/2019).

Table 1.

Participants in focus groups.

Focus groups	Female	Male	All
Members	10	13	23
Group 1	3	1	4
Group 2	2	5	7
Group 3	1	3	4
Group 4	2	2	4
Group 5	2	2	4
Staff members	18	3	21
Group 1	3	0	3
Group 2	3	2	5
Group 3	5	0	5

Group 4	4	1	5
Group 5	3	0	3
All	28	16	44

The focus groups were face-to-face meetings at the Clubhouses' facilities. The main theme of the interview was everyday life and interaction at the Clubhouse. The structure was similar in each interview. The interviewer gave the groups twelve picture cards and asked them to choose three cards that would best represent decision-making at the Clubhouse. Thereafter, the interviewer encouraged the group to continue the discussion freely, asking some follow-up questions when necessary. Here, we focus only on those segments of each interview in which the participants talked about decision-making at the Clubhouse.

The data analysis was based on critical discursive psychology (e.g., Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Color codes were used to find cross-cutting themes and recurring topics in the interviews. These dealt with the valuation of decision-making topics, the limits of participation, and the perceived failed participation in decision-making. Next, we identified interpretative repertoires by analyzing the previously discovered themes as for their vocabularies and routines of language use. As a result, we found six interpretation repertoires, which formed three thematically connected but dilemmatically related pairs.

Results

In the analysis, we identified six interpretative repertoires and three ideological dilemmas between these repertoires in the talk of the interviewees. The analysis is divided into three subsections. First, we present the dilemma that deals with participation in decision-making, advancing the idea that everybody should be allowed to participate in decision-making, but the decision-making should be

efficient. Second, we discuss the dilemma that regards the passivity and activity of participants, suggesting that decision-makers should be allowed to be themselves, but participate in decision-making actively. Third, we demonstrate the dilemma that is associated with power structures in decision-making, proposing that joint decision-making requires active resistance against power structures, but yet these structures are both inexorable and partially necessary.

Participation in decision-making

We first discuss the pair of interpretative repertoires according to which 1) *everyone should be allowed to participate in decision-making*, and 2) *decision-making should be efficient*. The first repertoire was found in the talk of both Clubhouse members and staff, whereas only the staff used the efficiency repertoire. The ideological dilemma between these two interpretative repertoires arises when the interviewees consider whether decision-making should be primarily efficient or inclusive.

The first data extract shows a case in which Clubhouse members consider the first interpretative repertoire, *everyone should be allowed to participate in decision-making*.

Table 2.

Extract 1. Interview 1, Clubhouse members (M=member).

Original	Translated
M2: Siinä tulee se, et kaikki on niin kun tasavertaisesti tekemässä sen.	M2: It comes to everyone making it (the decision) equally.
M4: Kyllä. Kehityspäivässä on usein ollu tällasta, että siellä on niin kun jotain yhteisiä leikkejä, lauluja ym.	M4: Yes. It has often been like this in the development day, that there is like playing and singing together and so on.
M1: Täällä ei oo mitään semmosii kassakaappisopimuksia (naurua).	M1: There are no such safe deposit agreements here (laughter).
M2: Kahdenkeskisesti...	M2: In dyadic...

M1: Kahdenkeskisesti päätetään.

M1: Making the decision dyadic.

M2 tells how everyone is equally involved in decision-making. The sense of community is emphasized through the words “everyone” and “together.” M1 goes on to say that “safe deposit agreements” are not made at the Clubhouse, meaning agreements between specific (two) persons that would exclude others from decision-making. The participants show with laughter that such a situation would be impossible at the Clubhouse. Thus, highlighting the unthinkability of “safe deposit agreements”, the interviewees reinforce the norm that decisions should be established together.

Next, we show an example of a repertoire according to which *decision-making should be efficient*. This data extract is taken from a staff interview.

Table 3.

Interview 5, staff (I=interviewer; S=staff member).

Original	Translated
I: Onks jotain semmosia asioita joissa on erityisen vaikea tehdä päätöksiä yhdessä, koko joukolla? S1, S3: (Hymähtelyä). S1: Kahvi. S2: Kahvi (naurua yhdessä). S3: Kahvi on semmonen mistä me voidaan keskustella joka talokokous, oikeesti vuodesta toiseen ja siit meil riittäis tuntitolkulla juttua, jokasella olis mielipidettä, mut sit jos mennään näihin ihan tämmösiin niinku (naurua) asioihin niin emmä tiedä. Onhan niihin sit joku selkee, että tiedetään että ollaan menossa ja ketkä haluaa lähteä mukaan, niin jos ilmottautuu niin	I: Are there any topics that are particularly difficult to decide together, as a whole group? S1, S3: (Sneering). S1: Coffee. S2: Coffee (laughing together). S3: Coffee is the kind of thing we can discuss at every Clubhouse meeting, for real, year after year, and we could talk about it for hours and hours. Everyone would like to express their opinion but if we get into these (laughter) things, I don't know. Sometimes it's clear, like if we know we are going to go somewhere and we know who wants to come, then if they sign up they most likely can come, there's nothing to it.

todennäköisesti hän voi lähteä mukaan, et eihän se sit.

The interviewees laugh together when coffee is mentioned as a difficult decision-making topic. S3 compares coffee and other decision-making topics with the expression: “but if we get into these things.” By doing so, she constructs a category of trivial decision-making topics, while, for example, discussions about trips are appropriate. In addition, the discourse uses sarcastic extreme-case formulations “for real,” “year after year,” and “hours and hours,” which justify the argument by implying that discussing coffee is not worth such investment of time (Pomerantz, 1986). In this way, the staff members express the idea that decision-making should be efficient, not lasting for “hours and hours.”

Between these two interpretative repertoires arises an ideological dilemma: *Everyone should be allowed to participate in decision-making, but the decision-making should be efficient.* This dilemma is further demonstrated with a third data extract, which is taken from a single turn of a staff member in one of the interviews.

Table 4.

Extract 3. Interview 3, Clubhouse members (M=member).

Original	Translated
M1: Mun mielestä, oon ollut hämmästynyt siitä, että miten pikkuasioista ollaan kauheen ehdottomia siitä omasta kannasta. Hyvänä esimerkkinä toi tapetti, toi kuvatapetti tossa eteisessä niin sen kuvan valinta oli hirveen aikeeta. Se on, ihmiset haluaa olla osallisia ja se on hirveen hyvä asia, että täällä ollaan osallisia ja jäsenet saa päättää asioista ja on, musta se on sinänsä voimaannuttavaa. Mutta sitten se on	M1: To me, it has been surprising how people can be so unconditional about their own views. A good example is that wallpaper, that photo wallpaper in the hallway, it was terribly hard to choose that image. It is like, people want to be involved and that’s a really good thing, that here we can all participate and members can decide things and be, I think it is empowering as such.

välillä, tuntuu että tarviiko näin pienestä asiasta vääntää.	But then again sometimes it feels like, do we have to argue over such a small thing.
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In this example, the interpretative repertoires of efficiency and inclusiveness clearly compete against each other. M1 first argues on behalf of more effective decision-making when the given matter is small enough (such as the selection of wallpaper). Next, however, she argues on behalf of inclusive decision-making, claiming that having all involved in decision-making is “a really good thing” and “empowering as such.” But then, she returns to the ideal of efficiency with the particle “but,” arguing that they (at the Clubhouse) should not overly discuss and argue about “small things” (such as wallpaper). Thus, the extract demonstrates how the Clubhouse member hovers between two interpretative repertoires in her talk, demonstrating the dilemma between them.

Activeness and passiveness in decision-making

The second pair of interpretative repertoires identified in our data postulate that 1) *decision-makers should be allowed to be themselves*, and 2) *participation in decision-making requires activity*. These repertoires were demonstrated by both Clubhouse members and staff in their talk in the interviews. Again, we will first show one example of each repertoire, and then discuss the dilemma between them: should members of Clubhouse be allowed to be passive and exclude themselves from decision-making if they wish to do so, or should everyone be guided toward activeness?

In the next example from the data, one of the staff members demonstrates the interpretative repertoire according to which *decision-makers should be allowed to be themselves* in the Clubhouse community.

Table 5.

Extract 4. Interview 4, staff (S=staff member).

Original	Translated
<p>S1: Se vaatii uskomatonta rohkeutta olla eri mieltä. Ja sit kun moni on justiinsa silleen, et niin kun harjottelee sitä sosiaalista, et se on ollu heikkous sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus tai niin kun ei sanominen tai joku. Yleensäkin voi olla vähän silleen hajalla, et toipilasvaiheessa, niin oikeesti ei voi kauheesti odottaa tai edellyttääkään, et jossain virallisen tyypisessä kokouksessa, se on ihan virallinen, pystyis sanomaan ja nousemaan esim. montaa vastaan. Tavallaan sen mä koen sellaseks, vaikka sanotaan, et se on demokraattinen, niin kuitenkin se ei ole demokraattinen, koska jäsenet saattaa just oikeesti, ettei uskalla sanoakaan mielipiteitään tai ei pysty tai yleensäkin voi olla hirvee paniikki ryhmätilanteessa.</p>	<p>S1: It takes incredible courage to disagree. And because many people are just like, practicing social skills, social interaction has been difficult for them, saying "no" or something like that. In general, they can be a little bit shattered, in the recovery phase, so you really can't be expecting or demanding a lot in some official meeting, for example, that they would be able to say and argue against others. In a way, I feel it's like, even if we say that it is democratic, it is still not democratic, because the members may just be like that, that they do not dare to express their opinions or cannot, or in general there can be a terrible panic in a group situation.</p>

S1 describes how disagreeing with others in meetings requires "incredible courage." She explains why Clubhouse members might be silent or passive in meetings and decision-making situations, arguing that this may be due to their recovery phase and limited social skills. According to S1, "many people are just like, practicing social skills." She further argues that the challenges of the Clubhouse members are understandable. With the expressions "really," "can't," and "a terrible panic," S1 emphasizes the authenticity of the challenges faced by the Clubhouse members, which calls for others to accept that ("so you really can't be expecting or demanding a lot ... that they would be able to say and argue against many people"). In this way, S1 argues that Clubhouse members should be allowed to be themselves in decision-making, as passive and incapable as they happen to be in their path toward recovery, and not demanding more than they can take.

The staff also used the interpretative repertoire according to which *participation in decision-making requires activity*. This is exemplified in Extract 5, in which the staff members talk about participation in meetings at the Clubhouse.

Table 6.

Extract 5. Interview 1, staff (S=staff member).

Original	Translated
S2: Kun kysytään niin kun yleistä mielipidettä, niin enhän mäkään meinannu puhua edes mitään, mut sitten, että "mitäs henkilökunta." Ja sit sieltä ei kauheesti oo mitään mieltä, yritä olla sellasella neutraalilla maaperällä, ettet sä vaikuta, "aa toi sano, joo mä vaihdankin."	S2: When the general opinion was asked, I didn't plan to say anything, but then, "what about the staff?" And when (the members) do not express their opinions, you try to be on neutral ground, so that you won't influence (their opinions), "ah you said (that), yeah I'll change (my opinion) too."
S3: Vaikuttaa tietysti se, et ei kaikilla oo itseluottamusta (epäselvää, puhuu hiljaa) on semmosta, että tuuppiskin sitä tavallaan "nyt on vaan mietittävä ja pohdittava ja tehtävä se päätös, mitä mieltä minä olen."	S3: Of course, the fact that not everyone has self-confidence (unclear, speaks quietly) has an effect like, you have to push it, like "now you need to think and ponder and just make the decision that what's my opinion."

Staff members S2 and S3 state that in the meetings, they try to stay on "neutral ground," i.e., to avoid influencing the opinions of the Clubhouse members when they ask about the staff's opinion. As the members are not very active in the meetings in terms of expressing their own opinions, the staff members feel the responsibility to "push" the members toward being active. The ideal of activity is wrapped up in the sentence that S3 imaginarily says to members, "now you need to think and ponder and just make the decision that what's my opinion."

Again, the two interpretative repertoires are in contradiction: *Decision-makers should be allowed to be themselves, but participation in decision-making requires activity.* This dilemma is demonstrated in the next data extract, in which the staff members talk about participation in “house meetings.”

Table 7.

Extract 6. Interview 3, staff (S=staff member; I=interviewer).

Original	Translated
<p>S1: Meillä on tosi harvoin semmosia tilanteita, että käydään kierrosta, voisko jokainen tai kysytään “hei Pekka, mitä mieltä sä oot tästä.” Se ehkä koetaan, et se on liian tunkeilevaa pyytää joltain siinä kaikkien kuullen nimeltä sanomaan joku mielipide, että yrittää sanoo, et “hei jäsenet, onks teillä, sanokaa ihmeessä nyt mielipide.” Paljon sais jäsenet olla äänessä ja monet jäsenetkin sanoo sitä, että esim. talokokouksessa, niin siellä on työntekijät äänessä.</p>	<p>S1: It is really rare that we have situations in which we take a round of opinions and ask each, like “hey Pekka, what do you think about this?” It is perhaps seen as too intrusive to ask someone in front of everyone to tell their opinion, or say that “hey members, if you have an opinion, by all means share your opinions now.” It would be welcome if the members would use their voice, and many members say too that in the house meetings, to give an example, it is the staff members who talk.</p>
<p>I: Miten kokouksen asiat, tuoks jäsenet sinne keskusteltavaksi jotain?</p>	<p>I: How about the agenda of the meeting, do members bring some topics to be discussed?</p>
<p>S1: Ne vois tuoda ja kannustetaan, et jos on jotain, et on joku epäkohta, niin ehdotetaan kyllä, että otetaan se talokokoukseen, vie se sinne. No jotkut jäsenet on siinä aktiivisia, se ei nyt ihan mallikkaasti toimi, että siinä ois paljon parannettavaa. Mä ainakin ite toivosin, että jäsenet ois enemmän kokouksissa äänessä.</p>	<p>S1: They could bring some and we encourage them to do so, if there is something, like a defect, we do propose to take it to the house meeting, take it there. Well some members are active like that, but it does not function optimally here; there is certainly room for improvement. I myself would hope that members would use their voice in the meetings more.</p>

Staff member S1 casts the idea of asking every member's opinion as potentially "intrusive." Instead, everyone should be allowed to be themselves, even when they are passive. Immediately thereafter, however, S1 tells points out that the Clubhouse members should "use their voice" more during the meetings. He supports his argument by saying that some Clubhouse members agree on the matter and complain about staff talking all the time in the house meetings. As a response to the interviewer's question about meeting agendas, S1 highlights the active role of the staff, who encourage and support the members to voice their concerns. Still, however, the members should participate more actively in the meetings. In expressing a wish for the members to be more active, the staff members construct an ideal Clubhouse member—one who is active. In this way, a dilemmatic situation arises in the staff member's talk at the intersection of the two different interpretative repertoires.

Power structures in decision-making

Lastly, the third pair of interpretative repertoires concerned power structures in decision-making: 1) *Joint decision-making requires active resistance against power structures*, and 2) *power structures are both inexorable and partially necessary*. These repertoires were found only in the talk of the Clubhouse staff. The dilemma between these repertoires is that while everyone should actively resist power structures to enhance joint decision-making, these structures are still needed.

Extract 7 from an interview with Clubhouse staff exemplifies the interpretative repertoire according to which *joint decision-making requires active resistance against power structures*.

Table 8.

Extract 7. Interview 1, staff (S=staff member).

Original	Translated
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<p>S3: Sit mennään enemmistön ja sit jäsenten mielipiteitä, et eihän mejän, ei mejän, me vaan mennään sit siinä mukana. Sehän se onkin, ettei hirveesti omilla mielipiteillään yritä edes vaikuttaa niitten jäsenten päätöksiin.</p> <p>S3: Niin, siihen ei tois niin kun omaa mielipidettä oikeastaan esille ollenkaan. Joissain tietyissä asioissa, ettei se vaikuta, että se ei niin kun johdattele tavallaan mihinkään.</p> <p>S2: Esim. johtajan valinnat oli sellasia, kun meiltäkin kysyttiin mielipide, niin yritettiin silleen, minäkin vähän niin kun neutraalisti ne kaks ehdokasta. Vaikka tiesin sen oman suosikkini, mutta en tuonut sitä.</p> <p>S1: Munkin olis pitäny olla neutraalimpi, mut en osannu olla.</p> <p>S3: No, osaat ens kerralla.</p> <p>S1: Osaan ens kerralla (naurua).</p>	<p>S3: Then we go along with the majority, and the members' opinions, like it's not ours, not ours, we just go along. And that's it really, to try not to influence the members' decisions with our own opinions.</p> <p>S3: Yeah, actually we (the staff members) should not express our own opinion at all. In some particular things, to avoid influencing, to avoid leading the decisions in any direction.</p> <p>S2: For example, choosing the director (of the Clubhouse) was like that, when we were asked for our opinion, we tried, I tried to give a neutral impression about the two candidates. Even though I knew who my favorite was, I did not express it.</p> <p>S1: I, too, should have been more neutral, but I didn't know how to do that.</p> <p>S3: Well, next time you will know.</p> <p>S1: I will know next time (joint laughter).</p>
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S3 describes how the staff members “just go along” in decision-making situations, because they try not to influence the decisions of the Clubhouse members with their own opinions. She continues by describing how the staff members should not express their own opinions at all. She uses the words “leading” and “influencing,” which describe the power relations of the staff members over the Clubhouse members. S2 tells about a situation where the staff members were asked for their opinion (the selection of a Clubhouse director). Although the opinion was clear – the staff member had a favorite candidate – she claims to have strived for neutrality. S1, on the other hand, reveals her non-neutrality in the same situation: She “did not know how to do that.” S3 responds by humorously advising S1 “to know next time.” In this way, the participants demonstrate the ideal of the staff

members actively needing to resist the power structures between the members and themselves. As they have more decision-making power, they need to step back and support the members in voicing their opinions.

In the contrary repertoire, power structures at Clubhouse communities were considered inexorable and necessary for the community. Extract 8 shows a case in point. In the extract, the staff members are choosing picture cards to describe joint decision-making at the Clubhouse.

Table 9.

Extract 8. Interview 4, staff (S=staff member; I=interviewer).

Original	Translated
S2: Me vähän johdatellaan niitä siihen, et vähän keskustellaan asioista.	S2: We lead them (the members) into the discussion on the matter (that needs to be decided).
S1: Aika paljonkin.	S1: Actually, quite a lot.
S4: Oisko se sit tuo tai.	S4: Would it be that or (pointing to a picture card)?
S1: Mun mielestä joku semmonen, et se on enemmän semmonen ohjailuomaa. Toi on enemmän ohjaava.	S1: I think it is something like, it is more about guiding and supervising. That one (pointing to a picture card) better depicts the guidance.
S4: Toi vois olla just ohjailuja. Henkilökunta keskustelee ja ohjaa sen jäsenille ja jäsenet nyökyttelee päätä ja hyväksyy asian.	S4: That (picture card) could describe the guidance. The staff discusses the matter and guides it to the members, and the members nod their heads and accept it.

S2 says that they, the staff members, lead the Clubhouse members to discuss the topics about which they are making decisions. S1 strongly agrees and says that they lead the members “quite a lot.” When choosing the picture cards, S1 suggests choosing a card that is “more about guiding and supervising” and “better depicts the guidance.” The card has an image of a character speaking and

presenting something in front of a board. Compared to the word choice of S2 (“leading”), the guidance could be considered more gentle and less persuasive. S4 agrees with S1’s suggestion and presents a view of what the guidance can be about: “The staff discusses the matter and guides it to the members, and members nod their heads and accept it.” Thus, the members are given a passive role in decision-making; they merely agree with the decisions the staff has already made.

The dilemma between the two interpretative repertoires can be characterized as *joint decision-making requiring active resistance against power structures, yet these structures are both inexorable and partially needed in making decisions*. The final data extract demonstrates this dilemma.

Table 10.

Extract 9. Interview 5, staff (S=staff member; I=interviewer).

Original	Translated
I: Mitä te teette sillon, jos ihmiset ei osallistu?	I: What do you do if the members do not participate?
S2: Ehkä se täytyy vaan kysyä, että “mitä mieltä vaikka sinä olet,” että saa niin kun suoran vastauksen. Ja rohkasta sit siinä, että se vastaus voi olla oikeesti ihan mikä vaan.	S2: Maybe we just have to ask “what do you think?” in order to get a straight answer. And to encourage them by highlighting that the answer can really be anything at all.
S3: Ei sillai, että jokaiselta (päällekkäin puhumista). Ei siitä sit tule enää mitään, jos me ruvetaan jokaista haastatteleen.	S3: But we do not ask everyone (overlapping talk). It does not work at all, if we start interviewing everyone.
S2: Ja sit vähän semmonen niin kun haju, että keneltä nyt vois kysyä, että tietää jo vähän, että kuka rohkastuu jos kysyy. Mut sit tietää jo, et ei joltakin ihmiseltä välttämättä voi edes kysäistä.	S2: And we need to have that kind of vibe, that who (referring to members) we can ask about it. We learn to know who is encouraged by asking. But then again, we just know that some people (referring to members) cannot be addressed at all.

The interviewer asks what the staff members do in meetings when the Clubhouse members do not participate in the decision-making process. S2 responds by saying that they, as the staff members, must ask the members to get an opinion about the subject matter. She adds that the staff members should encourage Clubhouse members to speak their minds. At this point, S3 continues by correcting S2's view: They cannot ask for everyone's opinion. She justifies this by saying that "it does not work at all, if we start interviewing everyone." This expression fits with the *power structures are both inexorable and partially necessary* repertoire, as it conveys the view that it is impossible to please everyone. S2 specifies her view, and states that they can ask for an opinion from those members who are "encouraged by asking." Thus, according to her view, invitations for participation are – at least partially – selective. Moreover, she reinforces this view by stating that some members should not be addressed at all when making decisions. The staff needs to learn which members are worth inviting into the decision-making. In contrast, S2's first turn (concerning encouraging the members' participation) fits the *joint decision-making requires active resistance against power structures* repertoire. However, in the second turn she claims that only selected members should be included. The responsibility for decision-making thus ultimately rests with the active members, and the opposition to power structures is directed to certain members who are known to be encouraged when directly asked for their opinion.

Discussion

In this article, we explored the interpretative repertoires on decision-making in the talk of members and staff in Clubhouse communities. We found six interpretative repertoires and three ideological dilemmas between these repertoires. We will now discuss each of these dilemmas in relation to prior research on the Clubhouse model.

The first analyzed dilemma regarded the dilemma of participation vs. efficiency of decision-making. Interestingly, the different groups of informants showed different preferences. Whereas the

Clubhouse members introduced the interpretative repertoire indicating that everyone should be allowed to participate in decision-making, the staff members proposed that decision-making should be efficient and that the time allocated to discuss a particular matter should be adjusted according to its importance. The repertoire of efficiency was not used by the Clubhouse members. It seems the repertoire of efficiency contradicts the Clubhouse standards that highlight inclusive decision-making (e.g., Hänninen 2012). However, when raising the topic of efficiency, the staff members justified their viewpoint in terms of the benefit to the Clubhouse members: Efficiency ensured members avoided long and exhausting meetings involving complex decision-making, and in fact, the aim for consensus undermined the Clubhouse members' participation.

Our data indicates that the ideal of equal participation at the Clubhouse can sometimes be considered as ostensible – the staff members tend to view participation as subordinated to efficiency in decision-making, whereas the Clubhouse members are not aware of the tendency toward efficiency. Previous research on the Clubhouse model has shown that its ideals of participation and equality are difficult to put into practice (e.g., Karlsson, 2005; Mowbray et al., 2006; Valkeapää et al., 2020). The reason for this lies both in the paradox that the practices used to engage Clubhouse members can be seen as an exercise of power (Stevanovic et al., 2020) and in that some of the members are more active than others and therefore have a more important role in the decision-making (Mowbray et al., 2006; Valkeapää et al., 2019). This study supports the previous results and demonstrates that the conflicting ideals of decision-making make it difficult to meet the ideals of participation presented in the Clubhouse model.

The second analyzed dilemma refers to the different ideals of active participation, with one interpretative repertoire claiming that decision-makers should be allowed to be themselves while the other repertoire insists on the active role of members in participating in decision-making. Whereas some of the staff members pointed out members' activity as a desirable form of participation, others

mentioned that everybody should have the right to participate on their own terms, especially because some Clubhouse members are still in the phase of practicing their social skills and are unable to reach the ideal of active participation. The ideal of members' active participation reflects the wider societal and cultural view of the role of the client in healthcare and rehabilitation services. In line with Clubhouse principles (Hänninen, 2012), clients are seen as active, responsible agents who contribute equally to the collaborative partnership with professionals (e.g., Epstein et al., 2005; Roter, 2000; Thompson, 2007). Healthcare clients and professionals are noted to orient toward this ideal of activeness both when demonstrating clients' activeness and when justifying clients' lack of it, ending up reinforcing the ideal even when resisting it (Weiste et al., 2022). A similar orientation was observable in our data from the Clubhouse communities. As the expectations of activeness may be unreasonable and an extra burden to clients in a vulnerable position (Weiste et al., 2022), the staff members' orientation toward the interpretative repertoire *decision-makers should be allowed to be themselves* provides a strategy to minimize the burden that the "activeness" expectations may sometimes place on members. Thus, we suggest the staff members reinforce this repertoire when making decisions together with members.

The third analyzed dilemma deals with power structures between the participants involved in the decision-making, with one repertoire indicating that *joint decision-making requires active resistance against power structures* and the other repertoire claiming that these *structures are both inexorable and partially needed in decision-making*. Both repertoires were only used by staff members. The dilemma on power structures is associated with differing views and ideals regarding the role of the staff members in the decision-making process. Our data demonstrated how the staff members balanced between different repertoires in discussing their role. In some of the discussions, the staff members stressed the need to even out differences in power structures and avoid ostensible participation. The staff foregrounded the members' right to have a say in decisions that also concern the administration of houses, such as the selection of a Clubhouse director (cf. Karlsson, 2005; Mowbray et al., 2006). They

also withdrew themselves from such decisions, being aware that their opinions have a strong influence on members' views. We want to encourage this as a professional practice to make the ideal of equal participation easier to achieve.

In some discussions, the staff oriented toward unequal power structures as inexorable and partially needed for efficient decision-making. Here, the staff also highlighted their power to influence the members' views, but they considered it as part of their institutional role to guide the members toward decisions that they thought to be best for the community. We find this orientation alarming, although consistent with prior studies as reviewed above (e.g., Stevanovic et al., 2020; Paananen et al. 2021a; Karlsson, 2005; Valkeapää et al., 2019). We therefore suggest that staff members' perceptions of decision-making be considered as targets of interventions that aim to improve joint decision-making at the Clubhouse.

The study has some limitations. The data were collected from five Finnish Clubhouses, and there are 23 Clubhouses in Finland altogether. As is typical for qualitative research, findings collected from a few cases cannot be generalized to a larger population, but they can still be transferable to other settings. In addition, some of the results that were found in this study may be reflective of the lack of Clubhouse accreditation. Results may be different in Clubhouses that strongly adhere to the model and have obtained Clubhouse Accreditation. Consequently, the findings in this study may not be able to be generalized to accredited Clubhouse programs more broadly.

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