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The Third Sector In A Service Process Of Disabled People

Introduction

The role of the third sector has come more prominent in the 1990s than earlier in social service practices. To concrete this current situation we can focus our observation on a spectrum of social services for disabled people. This spectrum is evident, because there are several institutional organs and civil society associations in the field of disability services. In spite of the separate organs and associations their attempt is to work together at first sight, but at the same time there is a question of power relations between them. The aim of this paper is to locate the position of third sector in a service process of disabled people when the relations between welfare actors have changed during the 1990s. The main character of changes has been an opportunity for a versatile collaboration and interaction. The empirical material consists of interviews (N~60) of public service providers and activists of local level disability organizations in Finland. To analyse the Finnish current situation of the third sector in a service process of disabled people, first I take a look at possibilities of the network-analysis and second how the power relations are analysed. Thirdly I will consider the concept of empowerment as a practical example of power relations.

Network-Analysis

The network-analysis can be very helpful when we study power and reciprocal dependence between the third sector and public sector. The important elements of the network analysis are national and international factors that have an influence to principles in this sphere of activities. Macro social changes are appearing when justifications for diminishing social services for disabled people are global economical competitiveness and unemployment. The Finnish welfare state project that was structured during the 1960s and 1970s has met a big change nowadays. Possibilities of the controlled national economic policy are weakened in a globalised environment. This kind of societal change means new conditions on the welfare state and its uphold. All the agents, like public organisations, business, and the third sector ones, have to adapt to an economical, political and cultural globalisation (Kosonen 1998, 250-253).

The Keynesian economic policy is not carried out any more, since the national negotiation institution does not have a significant role any more in a globalisation (Kosonen 1999, 187-192). Due to changes of a welfare state the negotiation for a new social agreement is current in social policy. The key factors in a new social agreement are risks that threaten the modern rationality, such risks are for example an economical instability and its consequences (Julkunen 1992, 15-20). In this situation very easily disabled people are left out the new social agreement, because they only represent a little risk in society. Thus the new social agreement means the mutual view of policy-makers and employers and unions what the social risks are. Such phenomena are risks that are threatening an economical growth and competitiveness. Considerably these are depending on changes of global macro economics. When disability issues are not seen as a threat in a new social agreement even, so social policy for disabled people is not so an important and preserving thing

Ideologically it is a question of the construction of the new grand narrative i.e. globalisation (see Bourdieu 1998). In Finland criteria of welfare services for disabled people have been tighten. At the same time disability organisations are forced to elaborate new strategies of collaborations with a public sector to get services that are needed. If we follow Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) idea, this new situation is also a battle field(s) of different interest groups. Among disability services I have recognised at least three or four interest groups: state, municipal sector, economical sector and disabled people's organisations.

Other elements of this network-analysis are local communities and a local "negotiated order"¹. A local disability organization activism is depending on the policy of the central organization, but also on the local level political connections. At the local level the activity of disability organisation is changeable because of the central organisation policy. Local organisations are

¹ This Meadian concept is based on Anselm Strauss' developments. Strauss (Strauss et al. 1985) summarises the main points:

- (i) Social order is negotiated order. There could be no organisational relationships without accompanying negotiations.
- (ii) Negotiations are patterned; they are contingent on specific structural conditions and they have different consequences for agents and organizations.
- (iii) The products of negotiation like contracts, understandings, rules, and so on, have temporal limits, and are eventually reviewed, reevaluated, revised, revoked or renewed.
- (iv) Negotiated order and the bases of concerted action need to be continually reconstituted.
- (v) The negotiated order at any particular time could be conceived as the sum total of the organization's rules and policies, together with whatever agreements, understandings, pacts, contracts and other working arrangements currently obtained. These are including formal and informal agreements at every level of the organization.
- (vi) Any changes impinging on the negotiated order, including any new event, and disruption or any new agent, is called for renegotiation and reappraisal.
- (vii) The reconstitution of order could be conceived as a complex relationship between a daily negotiation process and a periodic appraisal process, and between the more stable elements of organizational order and more fleeting working arrangements.

depending on central organisations' financial support and line. Their activity can be independent or centrally planned. The financial support usually guidelines activities at the local level, because this support mostly is predetermined. However, this financial dependence is not an unambiguous power and interaction relation in organisations' hierarchy, since in the last analysis local level social networks verify the range and form of activities.

Also one important level locally is the formulations of disability associations and how they define their own political frontiers. The local public relations are very important between organisations and key persons in power relations. Disability associations have to have relations to local government and politics too. These various links also are representing overlapping and parallel interest groups in power relations. Then "the sense of boundaries" is an essential character in the exercise of power (Bourdieu 1998; Siisiäinen 1999). To study power relations at different levels the local level examination and its detailed features are complementary with national and international factors.

The "negotiated order" means the settled course of action and order that are constructing collective identities in the chaotic world. The "negotiated order" has been criticised as inflexible by representatives of Neo-Liberalism. Above all this alleged inflexibility is appearing so that there is not readiness to new strategies to act efficiently as social conditions have been changed. However, the "negotiated order" is needed, because the ethos of Neo-Liberalism means a harden society, where a minimum of services is a norm. In the 1990s the laws of social policy and their applications have been changed a lot to this direction. All the organs was forced to eliminate their costs. (Karjalainen 1998).

The practical features of that ethos have been a responsibility changes, where social service providers emphasize clients' own sense of responsibility and confession. According to Nikolas Rose (1995. 48-54) the "social viewpoint" is broken. Earlier asocial people were taken care of by policies of service patterns. Also disabled people are in a new situation, because welfare services are not so accessible to them, when their neurological and physical handicap is a concrete barrier. Another feature is a modern (service) organisations' self-referency² that is a part of organisations' communication system. The functional differentiation as a course of action in modern organisations categorizes all issues, but these organisations have to balance whether they are communicative or uncommunicative. In that situation the main question is the stage of self-referency. In other words if these organisations are communicative, how communicative they

really are able to be, so that their existence is not threatened. Usually their communication to the world outside is active when there is some disturbance. Thus disturbances of society seem to be possibilities to change a course of action of modern organisations.

Power Analysis

When we are thinking about the points of network-analysis, the critical social study can be focused on a power analysis. My attempt is to address a power analysis to the situation, where disability organisations are representing the third sector and consequently they have a (political) relation to a public sector. There is a good reason to perceive service processes of disabled people as a reciprocal dependence and a power relation between authorities and clients. These two parties are searching some kind of balance as macro social changes are happening. Transitory balances can be named as figurations³ that are processes of bio-politics⁴ in governing practices especially when our focus is disability services. To put it simply in service practices people's biological and mental characters defining their social conditions.

Disability organisations work together with public organisations, but disability organizations' work has contingent tendencies, because those unofficial social networks that they are involved are flexible to different situations or should be at least. Thus the flexible social network is an opposite to organisations of public welfare services. Flexible social networks can easily complement public services right now after the recession of the 1990s. Social networks are side by side or even alternative with a public sector. This tendency has changed a character of a welfare state from a state-run principle to an emphasizing of clients' initiative potentiality and basically alternative services have increased. The relation between a public sector and surrounding social network is defined and re-defined all the time. That is why this relation is contingent and flexible. These features are including Elias' (1978) view of processes that are based on people's interdependence (power relations) and that's why processes are more intentional than rational. In these processes some economical, political and military player always has a dominance, but it is only one figuration that is not a static situation. The power relation should be understood as a interdependence of macro and micro social processes that are changing the world (cf. The Giddensian structuration theory [Giddens 1984]).

² According to Niklas Luhmann (1989; 1990; 1994) the modern society is a communicational society and it has a self-referential character. This kind of system uses the functional differentiation to categorize complex societies. Like this the modern society is formed of self-referential communication systems.

³ In this Norbert Elias' concept social relations are searching for constantly new balances in power relations (van Krieken 1997).

⁴ This Foucaultian term is a principle, where people's biological characters are governmental categories in modern society. (Foucault 1988).

The contemporary dominance of service processes for disabled people is compressed in governmentality. This Foucaultian (Foucault 1988; 1991) term represents the techniques of power and its practical form is above mentioned bio-politics in a truth production that is focused on subjectivity. In a case where the system's outside disturbances are notified, the new bio-political techniques of power are developed in modern society. That means e.g. new or renewed medical diagnoses and new definitions of possibilities in social life with disabled people. The whole governmental system (public social services) in Finland seems to be very predestined for disabled people. However the system as a whole is not so repressive as we are thinking about subjectivity. Foucault (1988) emphasized the meaning of self-techniques as one possibility of subjects to gain their goals in modern societies' power techniques. I would say that these self-techniques consist of system-oriented services practices, but also interdependence of different service organisations and people (clients and servants). All in all the final practices of services are the outcomes of complicated non-predictable processes. In the next chapter I would take some examples of this practice in Finnish society.

Empowerment - Truth Or Fiction?

In Finland the collaboration in social networks (disability organisations in particular) is based on the ethos that all problems can be solved by negotiations and the main goal is to make some kind of compromise. However, it is a question of power, since these compromises or figurations channel power into an acceptable form.⁵ Power relations are important to study, because the target is a relation between clients and authorities, but also inner relations of hierarchical service organisations. Both dimensions are able to recognize in governmentality, which consists of a "truth production" and governing rationalities and techniques. One theoretical and practical concept of governmentality is an empowerment, where the attempt is a communicative process to change conditions at individual and environmental levels to fulfil clients' and organizations' targets.

The links between servants and clients are described as processes of interaction, where the central point is a wide empowerment⁶ and interpretations of its practical forms. The process of empowerment emphasizes individual features, but it includes works of servants as a social control and order. That is why the wide empowerment is a sort of utopia for individuals because of the

⁵ As a social movement the Finnish disability organisations usually are not very radical ones, but their attempt is to make agreements with organisations of public sector. Their activity is depend on regional positions too. (Teittinen 2000).

⁶ There is both an inner and outer empowerment. The first one means that one absorbs new information and skills, which are helping to get on well in life. The second one means that social environments are able to change in order to individuals and group easier could be as members of society. (Emener 1991).

long-term interaction processes. A civil society activity is needed in welfare service circumstances and it has increased during the 1990s in Finland.

According to my empirical material, experiences of empowerment practices seem to be pessimistic, because more or less an empowerment is a concept that scholars are using to put a positive frame over practical measures. The conceptualising of empowerment is problematic too, since practices are not very rational. This character is obvious, because that empowerment discussion and practices emphasize more individual changes than environmental ones. These conclusions are very similar to the British sociology of disability (Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare 1999), where empowerment processes have seen the clients' forms of addictions. A case management is social workers' practical application of empowerment in disability services, where all the features of disabled people are surveyed. The starting point at these surveys is ones medical diagnosis that rules ones future possibilities. A case management as a perspective of empowerment represents more or less addictions, but at the same time it represents the new active client's possibilities (Hahn 1991).

The problems of empowerment processes are obvious. Power relations in these processes are able to interpret as a Foucaultian power analysis, when it is a question of restrictions and control techniques in modern society. But also the Eliasian perspective is important to notify, where empowerment processes are coming into certain figuration that is transitory however. There is an interdependence between clients (individuals), servants (public sector) and disability organisations (third sector). However the contemporary dominance of these kind of figurations is owned by officeholders. (cf. Luhmann 1989, 106-114; Bourdieu 1998, 114-116).

Some concluding remarks

In this paper I have tried to point out one field of sociology of disability that is crystallized in a courses of action between servants, disabled people and their organisations in a societal change. Societal relations in particular that are upholding the welfare state are in a change, therefore the meaning of social networks as a safety net is increasing. In this situation the interaction between servants and clients practically is changing, but not only practically. The new way of actions needs a new orientation and justification too. In short the welfare system is an apparatus of the disability truth production that is based on general arguments of a contemporary societal situation.

The misunderstanding of this client-servant situation claims that it is just an insignificant matter in macro societal changes, but at the micro level the change is very illustrative. As an example

criteria of welfare services are tightened simultaneously with the recession. The welfare system as an apparatus of the disability truth production is a control regime that provides services based on the social structured alternatives.

The societal activism of civil society actors is taking place in social networks nowadays. Social networks are playing an important role in empowerment processes, because they provide human, physical and economical resources in interaction processes. A Finnish character in particular in these processes is that public and the third sectors' negotiations usually are gaining the acceptable form, i.e. some kind of compromise. The general explanation of compromises is the end of the ideologised sector formulations in welfare practices in the 1990s. After that the new figurations are coming among all the welfare agents.

Principles like functional disciplines, categorised needs and medical diagnoses are not necessary the most important criteria of service evaluations. Public service providers need a reflective attitude to guide clients, although the truth production arguments (e.g. medical diagnoses) are the starting points in interaction processes. On the other hand the empirical results in Finland are telling us that these street-level bureaucraties are representing semi-professional characters, when their possibilities to reflective interaction with clients is quite restricted. That is why they lean on bureaucratic forms. In that situation the role of the third sector is obvious. But at the same time the disability business has increased too. As matter of fact the expertise services providers' spectrum is so wide that the end of welfare sectors is a real thing. Also the politicians are supporting this tendency.

Also a client of today needs a new activity to get the services that one needs in a welfare system. We can call this new activity as a "reflective project of self" or "self-empowerment". Both concepts are meaning a consciousness about service alternatives. In social networks several organisations and movements are helping individuals to fulfil their "reflective projects of selves". Among special groups (e.g. disability organisations) the union activism is founded necessary, since the substance of a welfare system and focusing could include the most essential services. To maintain the negotiated order disability organisations have to be an active partner in a contemporary welfare system.

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