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Social Work and its Discontents Under Neoliberal Conditions: The Rhetorics and Realities of the Concept „Inclusion“

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A spectre is haunting European social policies and European social work – the spectre of „inclusion“. During recent years, the terms „exclusion“ and „inclusion“ have become central concepts in politics, the social sciences and last not least social work. Social exclusion has been declared to be one of the core problems of social work (cf. e.g. Sheppard 207, 5ff.). Despite a formidable career which the concept has made in politics and academia, turning up in each and every context and corner of the social work discourse, from the very beginning its lack of clarity and analytical lucidity has been criticized (cf. e.g. Anhorn 2008). Thus, the term exclusion – and the demand for inclusion - is used for completely different empirical phenomena such as long-term unemployment, migrants, homosexuals, lesbians, transsexuals, ethnic groups and people with impairments or disabilities – groups and individuals that presumably are not exposed to the same mechanisms of exclusion and whose „exclusion“ takes very different forms.

Inclusion is a contested term (cf. e.g. Gidley et al. 2010) and an analytical understanding of exclusion and inclusion is vital: Exclusions are not phenomena that are immediately observable“ out there“ in real life. Exclusions do not jump into our face or in the words of Levitas: The question is not: What is exclusion? The question is: Which phenomena do we understand as exclusionary and for what reasons? (Levitas 1998). To make the point clear with a simple example: Fifty years ago we would not have called the fact that women’s labour market participation is lower than that of men „exclusion“ – it was rather part of a natural order of things. Twenty years ago, no one would have thought of disabled people as

„excluded“ if they did not have access to certain social realms it was a perhaps regrettable, but ultimately a „natural“ consequence of an „objective“ condition. Thus, obviously the term „exclusion“ is not only highly theoretical, but also highly political in nature.

It seems pertinent to have a closer look at what point in time the concept „inclusion“ has been gaining ground rapidly in political discourses (e.g. the discourses of the European Union) and the discourses in social science.

When talking about discourses on exclusion and inclusion it should be noted that its emergence in the academic and the political world are not quite congruent. While the academic exclusion discourse starts in the 70ies in France, in political discourses the demand for inclusion emerges with full force in the 90ies of the last century and in a certain socio-political context which we generally call the neoliberal turn. Thus, it is not surprising that it first turns up in the politics of Great Britain which is considered one of the first European countries that have jumped on the neoliberal bandwagon. Before coming back to the inclusion discourse, some short consideration will be given to what the neoliberal turn has meant for society in general and for social work in particular.

When using the term „neoliberalism“ it is understood that it is a contested and debated term (cf. e.g. Anhorn 2008, 37f.). However, without going into the details of that debate, there seems to be some consensus that we want to understand „neoliberalism“ to be a transformative power and an ideology that has transformed the Western welfare states but also threshold countries as well as what we generally refer to as development countries according to a market model. The basic assumptions are that human well-being can best be advanced by largely unlimited entrepreneurial freedom „within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free markets and free trade“ (cf. Harvey 2005, 2). Market rules are supposed to govern all social fields, liberal (economic) initiative is to be stimulated and „liberated“ and the state and the government's primary purpose is now to create the conditions for profitable market activities and reduce welfare as far as politically and

culturally possible in a given context (cf. *ibid*; cf. Abramovitz 2012, 33).¹ This framework cannot just be imposed upon populations without major social and cultural changes as in many countries, particularly those which Esping-Anderson called „conservative“ and „social-democratic“ welfare regimes (cf. Esping-Anderson 1990), this contrasts sharply with the kinds of values that had been put forward and pursued before the global neoliberal onslaught and the kinds of societies that were shaped by these values including provisions for unemployment, health, education and social welfare as a right, not a charity for citizens (cf. Abramovitz *ibid.*). For such a new order to gain ground, all spheres of society have to undergo changes including people’s thought, emotions, values and desires, in short, including *subjectivities*. The neoliberal turn in economic and social policies needs a certain kind of human subjectivity that differs from the one the old social welfare systems shaped. In the neoliberal world, men and women have to accept and develop skills to cope with the new conditions. The catch-word to describe the most essential ingredient of this new subjectivity is „responsibilisation“, that is „self-responsibility“ in any sphere of life, autonomy, free choice and no or hardly any responsibility of the community for its members (as we will see later, neoliberalist policies, on the other hand, do negotiate the question whether there is a responsibility of the members of the community for the general whole, but they do it in a very special way reorganizing who is responsible for what).

In an attempt to explain how „responsibilisation“ is instilled in everyday life and people’s self-understanding and how it has come to be accepted without much resistance, social scientists have focussed their interest on what – following Foucault - is generally called the „forms of governance“ that come in the wake of major economic and social

¹ When talking about „government“ and „state“ it is understood that we are not talking about a clearly defined and identifiable entity. As Foucault stated: „The state, no more probably today than at any other time in history, does not have this unity, this individuality, this rigorous functionality, nor, to speak quite frankly, this importance; maybe, after all, the state is no more than a composite reality and a mythicized abstraction, whose importance is a lot more limited than may of us think“ (Foucault 1991, 103). Instead, of course, Foucault directs our attention to what he calls micro-powers – the different interest and power groups that change nature and composition and influence what we call state and government.

transformations and that are a vital part of the neoliberal project. While it seems that economics in governance studies is considered „the last instance“ (reminiscent of Althusser) of social developments and thus constant recourse to economics is taken in all analyses of neoliberalism, the term „governance“ refers to the changes in the social organization and the make-up of individuals, i.e. among others the changes in subjectivity that come in the wake of these economic transformation (cf. Lemke 2000).

Governance refers to a historically new form of power dynamics taking hold of the subject. While in the past, power was exerted by physical force, by making people abide by certain rules, what we may call the neoliberal regime is not aimed at direct control or sheer manipulation of individual behaviour. It is based on the management and regulation of economic, political and – and this is touches upon genuine social policy and social work areas – social and individual processes. Notions of governmentality focus on the political rationalities and strategies which try to shape the conduct of individuals and populations in order to supplement political-economic transformation with market-mediated forms of subjectivities (cf. Barnett et al. 2008, 3).

In other words: In neoliberal governance, people are no longer ordered what to do – they are supposed to do it willingly and out of their own accord and conviction. They are free to act and are not overtly coerced into certain action - but that makes it all the more important for the neoliberal project to survive to develop and implement mechanisms that make sure that this freedom is used in a certain way and that the choices desired by the new forms of governance are made out of free decision. Thus, governance works with encouragements, stimuli and by making economic truth the „lead truth“. Neoliberal politics needs governance and a positive bottom-up response more than any regime because it draws on the *self*-exploitation of individuals.

As far as subjectivity and social life are concerned, in the centre of that new rule are expectations as to self-responsibility, self-care, autonomy. Other major ingredients of the neoliberal subjectivity are a) the acceptance that income and the capacity to buy goods determine the worth of an individual; b) the acceptance that survival is an individual

responsibility and the failure to participate in consumption is due to personal deficiencies that have to be mended; c) a „self cut adrift from values“ (Davies 2005, 35) and the denial of responsibility for the community and d) the acceptance of practices of surveillance such as reporting mechanisms for work loads, monitoring and evaluation practices which, Davies suggests, amounts to each person becoming „one of the multiple eyes spying on each other“ (cf. Davies 2005, 35) while believing they are contributing to quality management, increase in efficiency and improvement of services – reporting and monitoring that often enough is done in the social sector at the expense of work with the clients.

The individual is also expected to be self-responsible where this makes only limited sense, e.g. regarding being employed or unemployed, sick or healthy, ugly or attractive, economically successful or unsuccessful. Also, „governance“ is a strategy of institutions that develop new models of management and cooperation between state actors and private actors – and this, too, is particularly relevant in social work. Governance means that the state increasingly retreats from fields that so far had been state-controlled – and this refers to all social policy fields. Finally „governance“ means that institutions – including social institutions – are increasingly forced to work on the basis of a so-called „new public management“ . Managerial procedures and the implementation of competition between social service organizations are to improve quality and at the same time lower costs. Success has to be measured and proven – not in itself altogether a bad thing, but: The question is what the benchmarks are and with what instruments success is measured. The instruments used for doing this in the social service field have been amply criticized. Success in „new public management“ in the social field does not mean first and foremost that clients (sometimes ironically referred to as „customers“) are appropriately cared for, given time and attention; success is measured by means of evaluation that make sure that „cost effectiveness“ is guaranteed, that no working time is lost with „unnecessary“ care such as human empathy with the clients and that the professionals in the field internalize these standards as much as possible (cf. e.g. Weber/Maurer 2006).

From the beginning of this new public management, social work has been instrumentalized for changes enforced by new social policies (cf. Kessl 2007; Seithe 2013). These processes have indeed, been double-faced and social work was lured with seductive promises. Offers of „autonomous budgeting“ (i.e. giving a certain budget to institutions they could work with at their own discretion) promised more freedom in determining one’s work; they promised more self-determination in the work process; they promised more flexibility and the chance to change structures that, indeed, had long been petrified and restrictive and presumably in some cases ineffective. This „special cocktail of promises“ as Maurer called it (Maurer 2006, 242) or in Davies’ words „illusions of autonomy“ (Davies *ibid.*, 35) have, however, been very unevenly distributed. Particularly in social institutions it soon became evident that in view of constant reductions in social expenditures there was not much freedom left in the work process. Instead, the daily fight with too little means is apt to contribute to a change in the nature of social workers themselves: This new organisation and neoliberal embeddedness of social work no longer needs the empathic, caring person. It requires high efficiency performers and „doers“. In this new social work world there is no place for questioning social conditions, for personal weakness, neediness or burn-out – neither for social workers nor for their clientele (cf. also Maurer 2006, *ibid.*).

For social work that means that considerations are entering the field that are basically alien to social services; more than that, social work values as e.g. put forward in the documents of the major international organizations of social work such as the IFSW or the IASSW, are antagonistic to neoliberal thought. Nevertheless, the pressures on social work and social workers to conform to neoliberal ways of thought are mounting (cf. e.g. Staub-Bernasconi ; Seithe 2013, 26). New management models imply that economic considerations take precedence. If that kind of thinking, feeling and perceiving the world becomes hegemonic, it encourages social workers to develop what Foucault (and others) called „technologies of the self“ enabling them to live up to the new demands on subjectivity. The homo oeconomicus, whose life revolves around exchanging goods and pursuing a personal economic advantage, who has

internalized that humans are only valuable if they are economically useful and that this usefulness can be measured in business terms, is thus carried into the social service sector, the subjectivity of social workers themselves and they nolens volens and voluntarily and with a subjective sense of „doing good“ carry it into the clientele of social work .

In this process social work becomes itself an object of a disciplinary regime: Social workers are subject not to a logic emanating from social work values, but to the logic of economics, business administration and management. By introducing policies of new public management – allegedly for the best of services and clients - the logic of the market takes hold of the social service field or in the words of Abramoviz: „Social workers increasingly employed in such settings, often find themselves, knowingly or unknowingly, helping to carry out the neoliberal agenda“ (Abramoviz, *ibid.*, 42).

How does this relate to the inclusion discourse we started out with? I will argue that the concept of „inclusion“ that is so forcefully advanced by politics is a highly scintillating concept that is not at all incompatible with the production of „neoliberal subjectivities“ and that an unreflected and uncritical adoption of the inclusion agenda by social workers may, in fact, be at least partially contribute to the production of neoliberal subjectivities thus exasperating the problems social work started out to solve and alleviate.

For one, while the concepts of exclusion and inclusion spring up in different contexts with different voices speaking, it cannot be ignored that the concept is strongly supported by agencies of neo-liberalism. Indeed, these voices seem to be particularly strong in the inclusion discourse. While being highly dependent on bottom-up responses, inclusion is first and foremost a top-down concept. In short, the birth of the inclusion concept as a concept of *political* relevance is generally said to have been the Salamanca Declaration in 1994 and the development of an inclusion discourse in a European Union context. This again was fed by several sources, a prominent one being the „Social Exclusion Units“ – working groups created in Great Britain under Blair’s „New Labour“ and prominently placed on the level of the prime minister. Here, „exclusion“

referred first and foremost to poverty and youth unemployment. The crucial definition of exclusion offered under „New Labour“ and at least partly adopted by European Union definition concentrates on the individual. A Joint Report on Social Inclusion of the European Commission in 2004 stated:

„Social exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competences and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination.“ (European Commission 2004)

What we can observe here is an individualization and de-politization of social exclusion. The focus is not on social groups that are *structurally disadvantaged*, but on „individuals“ that suffer from a lack of education, training and basic competencies which – for whatever reason – they have missed out on. Even though „poverty“ is mentioned it is characteristic for EU papers that phenomena such as economic disadvantage are not systematically theorized but rather dealt with in terms of a social technology. Again: The main reasons for poverty are to be found in individual deficiencies for which the individual is responsible to differing degrees. Social work can be used in this context as a social technology that „fixes“ groups and individuals and – as far as possible – adapts them to the exigencies of an increasingly more aggressive market economy.²

² Needless to say that this does not work as social work has neither the means nor the power to change the conditions that produce exclusions. Thus, according to data produced by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Institute of Economic Research in Great Britain, the living standard of British households with low and medium incomes (which have experienced a constant lowering of their incomes during the past decades anyhow) will be reduced by up to 15% by 2020. The incomes of the rich, on the other hand, will rise even more. Regarding the German case, the so-called Poverty and Richness Reports of the German Ministry of Labour, which is published every four years, show that since 1998, the share of the richest 10% of the population in overall wealth increased from 45% to 53 in 2008. Presently, 16% of the population are threatened by poverty meaning that they are in immediate danger of falling below 60% of the median income and that their income will no longer guarantee a living.

Turning the attention again to the issue of inclusion of people with impairments, how are demands of inclusion translated into the social service sector? As mentioned before, while basically inclusion refers to any disadvantaged group that cannot wholly participate in activities and decision-making in the social realm – e.g. those below the poverty line, migrants, homosexual men and women, transsexuals - at the moment, the publications that are flooding the public in Europe (particularly in the German speaking countries and England) clearly privilege one area of inclusion at the expense of others. They deal almost exclusively with impairments and disabilities while issues of social inequality, ethnicity or gender are largely erased from the discourse in the political realm (which is a phenomenon that would deserve to be discussed separately).

Taking a closer look at the privileged inclusion discourse – the one focussing on impairment or disability - one can see how the inclusion discourse as it is developed in the political realm, goes along with a neoliberal restructuring of the social world. The suggestion in the inclusion discourses is, put shortly, that disadvantage is a product of the handling of impairment in social life. It is suggested that the disabled person is capable of participation, but prevented to do so by society. But what is meant by „society“? When „society“ is referred to, the focus is on *civil society*, that is, non-governmental organisations, schools, public institutions and the workforce etc. Here, too, what is *not* addressed are economic structures, economic exigencies and discourses or the ever growing commercialization of social life which obviously makes it increasingly difficult for those who do not correspond to an ever more rigid definition of „normality“ that derives its validity primarily from the employability of individuals. The more employable people are in the new labour market, the more „normal“ they are; the better can they be included. In this process, social work is implicitly encouraged to „treat“ their clients' behaviour with social technologies, i.e. to disregard the causes of why their clients are the people they are, how they have been socialized into becoming a certain kind of personality, how they have ended up in the situation they are in and instead to play the card of „responsibilization“ in full.

The trick here is a blurring of concepts and responsibilities. When we look at the policies that are enacted, responsibility for the non-participation is shifted away from politics and from the economic organization of people's lives and the social consequences of that organization. Instead the focus is on civil society, social organizations and – particularly in the case of care organizations – on to the personnel working there. As has been noted before, „civil society“ is a resource that has been discovered by neoliberal policies as a means to jettison social expenditures (e.g. pensioners have been detected as a cheap resource and are told that in view of a rising life expectancy they have a moral duty to at least use their remaining labour power for social purposes). As Wagner noted, social problems (and their costs) are shifted onto local politics and municipalities as well as civil society organisations (cf. Wagner 2012, 29ff.). To put it more poignantly: It is suggested that those who prevent the inclusion of the impaired or disabled are schools, organizations and architects who do not take into consideration access-free building, school teachers, care workers, social workers or the general public that does not assume the responsibility of compensating disadvantage.

When „community care“ is offered as a new instrument of dealing with impairment and disability, responsibility is shifted from the state to the communities and the individual members of that community. Important in that process is: More often than not, costs of compensating for impairments are shifted from the level of politics to the level of civil society and their individual members, burdening particularly those in the care sector with more work and responsibility. Needless to say, the additional burden that is created that way is not made up for by increasing personnel and providing the means to appropriately do what is expected. Instead of giving more funding and improving working conditions, more control is exerted over the care givers, be it in terms of control visits, check-lists or accountability reports that devour additional time and take away even more time and energy from the actual tasks (cf. Forneck/Franz, 224f.). Deficiencies in the care system that are deplored all over Europe are thus not attributed to policies that systematically undermine inclusionary strategies, but to personal deficiencies of those working in the

field.³ The situation can be described as follows: While new liberties and autonomy had been promised, the social field is now economically controlled by seemingly anonymous forces; institutions are subject to the demands of an – also anonymous – market. The problem is that this anonymous market only allows a narrow range of „autonomous decision-making“ and that these new structures control everyday working procedures partly more than the old ones did.

If the result of this is bad conditions in the care sector, as has been discovered in Germany by „quality controls“ in old people’s homes or homes for the disabled, which were partly scandalous and outrageous, the responsibility for that is not attributed to conditions that no longer allow high-quality care work, it is not attributed to structures that impair and worsen working conditions. Instead it is often enough attributed to the bad performance, the bad time management or the lack of adaptability of care-takers and service deliverers.

On the other hand, the disabled or impaired themselves are increasingly constructed as self-responsible persons that have to contribute to their employability and thus inclusiveness. Thus, the latest working paper of the working group on the participation of the disabled of the German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs issued in November 2014 states that

for the disabled at working age participation in the labour market is an essential element of social participation. Any disabled person should work in a job that fits „his“ (!) individual potentials.

³ Thus, in Germany it has been deplored for years that the social services have to cope with a constantly rising workload and constantly decreasing financial means. Particularly employees in the care sector can hardly cope with the workload anymore leading to more and more people leaving that area. Care workers, social workers and educators, so a study by the „Institut fuer Sozialforschung und Sozialwirtschaft“ in Saarbruecken are suffering from lack of time, scarcity of financial means and an ever increasing density of work clearly hinting to elements of scarcity and commercialization characterizing social services (cf. Hans-Boeckler-Stiftung Pressemitteilung 2013 online; cf. also Hielscher 2013). In another study on the situation of the municipal department for children and youths in the social service sector of the city of Hamburg it was stated that in some areas the protection of children in the city clearly could no longer be guaranteed due to lack of funds and personnel (cf. <http://www.taz.de/!97679>).

The capabilities of the disabled should be fully integrated into the economic process.

A working paper of the European Commission of 2013 states that by 2020, 75% of the impaired and disabled should be integrated into the labour force (a number many experts consider grossly exaggerated) (cf. European Commission 2013, online).

This means: Inclusion refers primarily to the integration of disabled people that are capable of working their way somehow into the labour market. It is inclusion into the labour market that is of primary interest and this thought probably has already been internalized by members of a neoliberal society to such an extent that it seems perfectly natural and that the question is no longer asked if this by necessity relates to social and cultural inclusion. In a neoliberal society, the question if the ability to sell one's labour power is a necessary prerequisite for being allowed and able to participate in social life seems superfluous – it is taken as a matter of course and part of a natural order of things. The maximization of the potentials of the individual in an economic sense is in the centre of attention.

The focus is on the excluded individual that should be – presumably with benevolent intentions – adapted to labour market requirements and thus be able to enjoy „freedom“, freedom, of course, referring to the special kind of freedom of a neoliberal market economy. In other words: In order for the disabled to be included, they have to be made fit for the market – again what has to be changed are subjectivities, what has to be mobilized are the („cost-neutral“) potentials of civil society - not economic or political structures. The activation strategies that are so characteristic for neoliberal social policies are thus also introduced into the field of the impaired and disabled not only appellating the group in question but also civil society to activate itself.

Kessl has pointed out that „activation“ is always happening in social work as well as in pedagogics, the crucial question, however, being *who is activating whom for what* (cf. Kessl 2006, 222). Thus, while there is *basically* nothing wrong with activating people to be able to help

themselves, the question is how help is provided and constructed and what is considered to be a successful outcome. This, however, are answers that nowadays are not coming from within social work or the social services: they are given by policy makers that follow the exigencies of a market economy. If we look at the policy answers cited above as two examples the answer seems clear: Inclusion means fitness for the labour market which again is the legitimation for full participation in social life.

Other than that, civil society is called upon to take responsibility for non-discrimination and everyday „inclusion“ by taking efforts individually and by forming civil society initiatives that unburden governments. Here, it should be noted that in public rhetorics we often hear that financial means will be invested in inclusion. At the same time it is emphasized that money is not the only solution but that we also have to deal with people's and organization's attitudes, with cultural factors such as the pedagogy of inclusion in schools or other institutions or the appropriate training of teachers. In other words, it is also emphasized that inclusion can happen without having to spend too much money if only people and organizations change their inner attitude and behaviour.

The experiences of those concerned, i.e. persons with impairments as well as their families and care-takers, are not quite in accord with that. Thus, it has been reported that financial support for what parents considered a necessary and helpful school for a certain impairment of their child was declined arguing that inclusion meant that the child had to attend the normal school at the place of residence without additional support (cf. Intakt, internet source). In other words: Inclusion is constructed not primarily as a help for those in need of support, but instead as a money-saving strategy unburdening the state and those profiting from the reduction of taxes and social contributions.

If social work subscribes to „inclusion“ uncritically and without political reflection it might participate in a project that goes against its core values and adapts their clientele to hegemonic conditions

streamlining their subjectivities so that they meet the demands of a market whose dynamics and exigencies have excluded them to start out with.⁴

Thus, with the best of intentions, unreflected and uncritical social work becomes a serf of an increasingly commercialized world in which the worth of a human being is measured by his or her employability, by his or her worth in an increasingly cut-throat labour market that offers „inclusion“ to those whose labour power promises economic profit.

Staub-Bernasconi (2005) has pointed out that this is not only against the interests of the social work clientele making a mockery of traditional social work values, but that it also amounts to the self-abolishment of social work as a profession itself (cf. Staub-Bernasconi 2005). How can this happen? First, the ideas of „new public management“ obliterate the difference between who is being directed in a certain direction (e.g. by social workers) and who is directed by anonymous forces (e.g. social workers). To put it clearly: It is no longer social workers who decide their work practice on the basis of professional considerations; instead, they follow the ways of thinking and the values of business management and even try to transform themselves into persons that live up to the demands of business considerations. Ultimately, this results in new social and cultural subjectivities to which social work (among other institutions) is contributing – by adopting these subjectivities themselves and by enforcing them on their clientele. These new forms of subjectivities produce new exclusions – the exclusion of those who cannot or will not fulfill these demands. In these processes, social workers are not only kindly asked to comply. They are subject to pressures that make it difficult to resist and that may, indeed, endanger their own economic existence in the worst case scenario creating fear in the work places of social work. What is suggested to social workers to make things more palatable is the implementation of new management procedures which will increase

⁴ To make this point more concrete: By now it can almost be considered a iron law that neoliberal policies vastly increase social inequality and in the long run erase the middle classes. A study undertaken in 2009 examining more than 20 rich nations found a clear relationship between inequality and social as well as health problems. The nations where inequality was biggest had lower life expectancies, higher infant mortality, more mental illness and obesity, higher rates of teen births, school dropouts, murder and less upward mobility (cf. Abramovitz *ibid.*, 43; cf. Wilkinson/Pickett 2009).

quality, decrease costs and improve social services (cf. Wolf 2007, 1166). Making clients fit for the labour market is put forward as the noblest task of the social service field because what will guarantee their survival is to make them market-oriented, employable and flexible, i.e. useful individuals that are successful entrepreneurs of themselves accepting that responsibility for their economic well-being lies with them. Thus, the logic of the market is extended beyond economy and creeps into every corner of individual lives. According to Davies these processes require the construction of workers „as disposable and an acceptance that there is no longer an obligation on the ‚social fabric‘ to take care of the ‚disposed self‘“ (Davies *ibid.*, 9). Again, the question is: Do social workers realize they might be in that situation in a given context and how do they reconcile this with what have been historically grown social work values?

An example, from a context other than impairment which shows the effects of an apolitical and a-theoretical understanding of „inclusion“ and, which presents itself as „pragmatic“ and „adapting to the realities of life“ are prostitution laws enacted in Germany in 2002. Social work activists at the time were very active in supporting and enforcing the new prostitution laws which they considered „liberal“ and „inclusive“ of prostitutes. These new laws described prostitution as a „service like any other“ on the basis of a contract between a prostitute and a „customer“ as long as no exploitation was involved (no mention of how this could be ascertained). This was assumed to improve the legal and social situation of prostitutes, enabling them to participate in social security such as health insurance, unemployment insurance and old age insurance (which an infinitesimal number of prostitutes made use of as it turned out). This was assumed by many social workers to „empower“ and to „include“ prostitutes in the normal labour market. To start out with, the concept of „empowerment“ is controversial and ambivalent (cf. e.g. Wright 2012). Moreover, the uncritical understanding of prostitution as a „job like any other“ shows a remarkable lack of reflection what such a construction of the prostitute actually means for the individual in question but also for society at large. Those who supported the new laws did not waste a thought on how the demand for sexual services came about socially, culturally and economically and who might have an interest in generating

that demand (cf. Grenz 2009; Gerheim 2012). The sale of the body is considered the sale of a commodity like any other. Ironically, a short glance at basic Marxist writings might have enlightened some of those of supported these policies. Worse than that, all this was quite in line with the neoliberal construction of everything – including the body – as a commodity and accepted the premise that selling one's body was better than not earning any money at all. Sexual demand was taken as a given not to be questioned and the position of prostitutes was ascribed to some everyday belief about „free will“ and „free decision“ that justified the „free sale of the commodity ‚body““. This seems to have been quite acceptable to the actors in that field (many of them social workers) because they were deeply immersed in neoliberal beliefs about everything in this world being a commodity. Presumably without a consciousness of what they were doing they turned out to be perfect agents in the creation of the boundless world of neoliberal commodity creation.

Having said all this: Does this mean that the fate of social work in a neoliberal society is settled and that Staub-Bernasconi's and Seithe's worst fears will unfold? Michel Foucault made the important statement that where there is power, there is resistance. Resistance can grow in the fissures of the hegemonic discourses, fissures where different ideas about what a human subjectivity, social justice, moral behaviour and a society that not only works in the economic interest of a minority are still alive. Indeed, the inclusion discourse is janus-faced and may give rise to unexpected dynamics.

Thus, when civil society is appellated (in the Althusserian sense) and when the individuals on a civil society level are constructed as self-responsible for themselves, but also for the social whole including care tasks that so far were more or less solidarily shared by a society and organized by governments through taxes or social insurance contributions, two things might happen: A civil society that is held responsible for maintaining a social fabric and care (which apparently even a neoliberal society needs and tries to organize, but now by increasingly re-shifting burdens from the top to the bottom), may develop a sense of solidarity that may encourage new forms of *collective* solidarity and responses that are actually alien to a neoliberal setting; and an individual that is held

responsible for everything may extend that sense of responsibility in a way that translates into a criticism of neoliberal governance. Thus, it might be that a governance that apparently cannot do without a cohesive society and cannot afford to let society drift apart altogether, initiates a dynamics that reaches beyond neoliberal thinking.

So far, however, as many commentators have noted, the hope that resistance to the creation of social conditions that systematically harm the clientele of social work might come from social workers have been in vain (cf. e.g. Staub-Bernasconi 2005; Maurer 2006; Seithe 2012 & 2013, 23ff.; Abramovic 2012;). Nevertheless, social work is an area where there would be classical „fissures“ in the Foucauldian sense: Social work has a set of values it could mobilize and use to create solidarity within social work and within the clientele of social work.

However, given the fact that at the moment there is no social movement to be detected that would advance the historical and traditional values of social work as well as those advanced by the big international organisations of the profession, at the present time critical social workers probably have no other possibility but to engage in a flexible and peaceful „guerilla tactics“: See where there is a chance to strengthen human rights values and go ahead where it is possible and acquiesce in situations where action seems without chances. In any case, there will be no simple recipees, methods or social technologies that will bring about inclusion. Social work moves in a realm of theoretical and political contradictions, dilemmata and paradoxies. To take inclusion seriously will mean to constantly observe societal conditions from a critical perspective, to represent the interest of the clientele also on a political level and to take seriously that one cannot be a professional social worker without being a politically minded and alert citizen.

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