



Generating Dutiful Members in Communities of ‘Rational Choice’¹

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The study ‘Youth Welfare as Prevention - The reconfiguration of support and control in advanced liberalism’ is part of the Graduate program ‘Youth Welfare in Transition’ funded by the ‘German Research Association’. In empirical terms it is based on both interviews with professionals, reconstructive discourse analysis based on documents and programs as well as a secondary analysis of a range of existing studies.

The purpose of this doctoral work is to reconstruct the shifting ‘ways of thinking’ and ‘the ways of acting’ in youth welfare interventions. It tries to promote ‘agency’ and create ‘normal subjects’ as stable ‘identities’ within a given societal order and forms of political normality framed through the regulatory modes of social policy.

The objectives of youth welfare are defined as actual and potential problems and risks referring to the life conduct of young persons – which is to be stabilized - within a field or a societal configuration which Deleuze called ‘the Social’ as an historically developed ‘space of rules’.

Thus youth welfare can be interpreted as one possible instrument of social regulation and therefore as an aspect of ‘government’ and a means of ‘social control’. However this does not mean that youth welfare is tantamount to ‘state power’ nor that it necessarily uses coercive power. The use of coercion is just one rather atypical part of social work alongside with education, care, empowerment and so on. Rather social work reflects a purpose of what Foucault calls ‘conduct of conduct’ or in the words of Bourdieu a creation of ‘habitus’ fitting to the positions of the respective ‘social fields’ clients are acting in.

In theoretical terms the PhD tries to develop a heuristic frame drawing on a combination of the work of Pierre Bourdieu and the Neo-Foucauldian tradition of ‘governmentality’ studies. This combination offers the possibility to combine questions of unequal structural social stratified conditions, power relations, agency, symbolic representations (‘subjectivations’) and political rationalities in an analytically coherent way.

In a first step this work suggests an outline of a relational ‘theory of practice’ to re-analyze the different concepts of crime and deviance in their relation to class and field specific patterns of practice and the question of state-coagulated and more civil forms of ‘symbolic power’. Thereby it deals with the question of how a quasi-universalistic ‘normality’ is implemented and enforced in the ‘concept of crime’ and how dominant field specific symbolic forms (‘sector-specific hegemonies’) are enforced with reference to a ‘concept of

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deviance'. In this context 'deviance' refers *not* to illegality but rather to 'habitus' and conducts of life ('dispositions') which are 'below' praxeological dominant standards, connected to a specific social (and political) position in a certain social field.

Especially with reference to the 'concept of deviance', a model of a deep level alliance between social policy and social work is developed.

This alliance serves to process identified risks and has its roots in the organization of 'the Social'. Both social policy and social work systematically widen the early liberal model of societal integration and order – as a culture of market-socialisation of individualized actors – through a welfarist form of political integration in society.

While administrative arrangements of social policy build up a system of insurance against more general 'social risks' – i.e. probabilities of 'social problems' - referring to socially and political stratified positions of social actors, social work on its part examines more specific risks as dispositional aspects of life conduct, which could not or should not be insured in a general way that is always insensitive to individual dispositions.

Thus the social work rationalities are concerned with something that may be called the positional-dispositional matrix of clients. A whole range of 'problematic' actions are represented as being a symptom of this matrix, rather than being simply an expression of genetics or individual choice.

Social work and social policy differ with respect to the resources, or as Bourdieu puts it, the 'capital' their interventions are based on.

Social policy refers to the redistribution of economic capital and the use of legal capital (law and rights), while social service interventions – being a part of social policy – processes dispositions of individual actors and their socio-ecological embeddings. The resources of social work are cultural and social capital. Both are (inter-) personal bounded and their value, transferability and effects are much more field specific than legal and economic capital that constitute the more generalized parts of the net of social security.

Following Bourdieu any resource has a value only in a symbolic form corresponding to the regularities of the respective field it is used in and in which it has to be recognized and accepted.

Thus capital can only be realized as symbolic capital and only to the degree it fits into the symbolic 'common sense' of a field. Social and cultural capital also have to be presented in a 'fitting' symbolic form to be of any value for the clients. This is the very core of the 'control dimension' of social work. *Because* social work interventions refer to 'symbolic capital' matching the constitution of 'the Social' they tend to reproduce its order. And *because* social and cultural capital are resources to be, as Bourdieu puts it, 'habitually internalised' by the actors who use them, interventions of youth welfare are connected with an attempt of 'changing people' that can be portrayed as 'disciplinarian'².

² Even though there cannot be any doubt that youth welfare interventions can have different degrees of *coerciveness*, - and that it is possible to think of interventions which are more or less only forms of control – analytically, support and control are rather different perspectives on than different features of the rationalities of social work interventions

Interventions to change people and/or the conduct of their life have one thing in common - regardless whether this happens in a direct or an indirect mode and regardless whether they are based on coercion, therapy, advice, education, influencing circumstances or notions of 'empowerment': they refer to future developments i.e. they are 'preventive'. Prevention is not a description of means but a specific legitimation of interventions referring to the task of influencing the probability of future incidents. In terms of society it is based on a rejection of the notion to destiny. It means that what happens in the social world has reasons that can be shaped, created, designed or at least managed with a set of appropriate technologies of which 'the Social' itself is *one*.

Thus analysing 'youth welfare' in transition is to analyse a changing mode of preventing social risks.

Considering the suggested theoretical taxonomy of youth welfare, it claims to explain only rationalities that are closely connected to the historically contingent frame of 'the Social'.

The societal configuration which could be portrayed as the 'golden age' of this space of rules as an administratively organised, 'welfarist' form of solidarity, was the Keynesian-Fordist period of capitalism.

In terms of its basic rationalities, as outlined above, youth welfare may be interpreted as a typical 'Fordist' profession.

In the Fordist mode of societal regulation the logic of 'the Social' penetrated the regularities of most social fields. The field of crime control shifted away from a focus on guilt and punishment and was transferred into what David Garland calls the 'penal-welfare complex'. Especially in terms of youth justice, punishment was legitimized as something like a punitive end (*ultima ratio*) of welfare, delivered 'for the needs as well as for the deeds'. Thus penal-welfarist interventions did not refer to 'just deserts' but rather to change dispositions of actors in a quite similar mode of prevention which youth welfare referred to. Like in youth welfare, deviant acts were not (only) represented as the problem itself but rather as an expressive symptom of the 'real', more deep-seated problem: the positional-dispositional matrix of the actor as the root of misbehavior. At least the purpose of penal-welfarism was neither retribution nor exclusion but rehabilitation and re-inclusion. Quite similar to youth welfare the general task was to secure a superordinate normality built around productive and reproductive roles reflecting the standard trajectory of Fordist employees as the basis of a civic narrative of inclusion.

The mode of control of youth welfare was normative normalization connecting (positional) integrative support with dispositional discipline according to this normality. This was underpinned by the creed that 'evil causes evil': social constraints as poor positions cause problematic dispositions leading to misconduct. Processing this complex was the province of superior expert knowledge. Experts claimed that their concepts were valid and their technologies effective: 'we know what the problem is, who does present it or have it, why this is the case and how to solve it'. Correspondingly, clients were basically represented as dependent, rather incapable and neither mature nor responsible recipient who need the conduct of welfare experts as both the ultimate and proximate guarantors of well-being and of orderly life conduct.

Although significant rests of this 'Fordist' rationality and mentality still exist in the German 'social state', a fundamental shift has taken place over the last two decades that may be reconstructed as the rise of an 'advanced liberal' formation of society. In terms of the processing of 'the Social' there is a move from an 'interventionist' to a 'regulatory state' whose governmental rationalities are about 'governance' attempting to steer 'at a distance' *through* building arrangements for the exercise of freedom by self-activating individuals and communities. This blurs the distinction between state and civil society on which the regulatory mode of 'government' was based.

While the Fordist intervention state and its institutions were criticized to be 'conservative' (i.e. reproducing given structural relations), colonialist, paternalistic, patronizing and stigmatising, this 'moral' and 'cultural' crisis was accompanied by a 'technological crisis' highlighting the poor quality effectiveness and efficiency of welfare interventions. Simultaneously a transformation in capitalist production and exchange influenced by 'neo-liberal' ideology dismissed Fordist normality patterns and challenged the dominance of 'the Social' as the most reasonable and profitable space of rule.

With the rise of 'neo-liberal' reasoning in social policy a 'subjectivization' becomes apparent embracing an ethos of individual autonomy which emphasises choice, self-promotion, self-government and personal responsibility.

Nevertheless the developments since the 1980's are not to be analyzed simply as an execution of the approach of the 'neo-classical economy' but rather a hard-fought alteration of hegemony.

Also because it is was recognized that market failures are not the exception and the system of accumulation needs social regulation to remain stable and effective there was no neo-liberal 'death of the Social' (Baudrillard) but rather a radical reconfiguration of this space of rule expressed by a new focus on a link between 'accountability' and 'responsibility'. This comes to denote the responsibilities of individuals and small scale primary groups to manage their own risks, problems and life conducts as well as the responsiveness of quasi-market economically re-organized social service providers to their 'customers'.

On the one hand there is a politically enforced 'individualization' of phenomena formerly represented as part of 'the Social' (and therefore also of the public realm) and an interrelated development of an 'economization' of youth welfare, social policy and crime control as expressed in managerial modes of administration.

Maybe most significant in youth welfare is not only that the agencies are held to save money and think in terms of budget disciplines but also the challenge of the belief of the superiority of professional knowledge (/power) which is to be made 'transparent' to scrutiny, as documented in the obsession with more abstract technologies like benchmarking, NPM, performance indicators, measurable objectives, audits, accountancy and evaluation and the requirement to translate professional knowledge into a language of costs and benefits that can be given an accounting value. All of this reflects a governmental emphasis upon accounting and managerial expertise and a subordination of professional criteria under the play of the market and effectiveness measured in terms of aggregates and probabilities.

On the other hand there is something like a disjointed return of 'the Social' as documented in a growing interest on spatial and communitarian forms of building cohesion, which however

also represents a 'privatisation' of state responsibility in favour of self-help and individual responsibility.

Instead of the promise of generalized social inclusion, the 'neo-social' 'inclusive spaces' of welfare are now rather fragmented and diverse zones and sectors comprised of links between specific persons, groups and spaces inducing a multitude of diverse forms of conduct. They frame a range of problems and risks which are also denoted to be more the province of small-scale, locally identifiable social entities than of a broader public realm.

As tools of a form of governance that advocates 'steering' rather than 'rowing' and emphasizes localism and diversity, social and 'human capital' as reconnected to both socio-ecological habitats and individuals have experienced a significant reevaluation. Especially within the concept of an 'activating state' social interventions based on economic and legal capital tend to be represented as 'expenditures' while interventions based on human and social capital are propagated as 'investments' promising a pay-off.

With reference to (local) social capital the main topics of 'new welfare' are about community, mutuality and self-help framed by a territorialization of social problems.

Thus may be not the 'classic' objectives but the modes of intervention of social work become much more relevant in processing 'the Social'. Social work itself seems to be the most appropriate institution in order to 'activate' human, and most of all social capital.

Within a re-description of what welfare state should be about and additionally to an enforced market integration of societal actors – as documented in current 'workfare' programs – a new attempt to generate a cultural-solidarity integration increasingly steps into the place of the attempt to ensure a welfarist societal integration. Thus 'civil society' is given a more constitutive role in the regulation of 'the Social' in which social cohesion is redeveloped and maintained through an 'activation' of 'social capital' in parochial networks. The representation of the 'passive client' as the 'product' of poor social conditions is replaced by that of a self-responsible, co-operative partner and active creator of his/hers (proximate) life world.

For those who can be 'accurately' activated, i.e. actors with sufficient and symbolically 'fitting' forms of economic, cultural and social capital, this form of governance may be a liberation from the social-technological attempt of the welfare state to govern them through bureaucratic and professional instruction in many spheres of their social existence. However there is probably a minor but nevertheless growing group of deprived actors resisting these techniques, because they are not willing or just incapable to use these 'potentials of autonomy' in a conforming way.

For those actors 'at the bottom' an application of rather coercive state power - as documented in the greater frequency and rigidity of administrative control interventions and sanctions - seems to be the current choice.

This form of 'liberal-paternalist' rationality seems to fit with a 'politicization' of crime control and expresses a symbolic shift in political processing of 'social risks' from guaranteeing 'social security' to ensuring 'personal safety' – of which of course different actors profit most. This is best documented in the fact that exactly at the same time were

‘social entitlements’ are being dismantled, the ‘right of citizens to safety’ and to be free from ‘fear of crime’ is propagated.

While there is a new kind of nexus between social policy and the politics of law and order, the developments that can be reconstructed in the field of control – in which youth welfare is increasingly involved - are quite similar to the new rationalities in the field of the Social.

Even if it would be an exaggeration to speak of the end of penal-welfarism and the inclusive rehabilitative ideal, both have lost their unchallenged dominance in favor of a more managerial ‘crime control’ model operating in terms of a more or less actuarial rationality that emphasizes a security-managerial ‘social defense’. There is still a treatment approach to be found but this treatment itself is rather a part of a framework of risk management than of a framework of welfare.

‘Crime Prevention’ is more and more concentrated outside the enforcement of criminal law and also beyond direct interventions of the state. The modified logic of the field of crime control - or better of a local creation of order – is essentially based on the rise of three new issues: inter- and multi-agency corporations, community safety as a ‘neo-social’ form of crime prevention, ‘situational crime prevention’ as its post-social counterpart.

Crucial for all three forms is a shift from the traditional concerns about causation of criminality to the inter-personal and socio-ecological contexts of deviance.

‘Situational crime prevention’ represents a form of risk management that sees crime distribution in terms of spatially aggregated prevalence rates rather than misdoings of individual actors. The anachronistic and ineffective concept of a person as an ‘in-dividual’ is dismissed in favour of a concept of actors as a cluster of identifiable protective and risk factors which ‘evidence based’ programmes are able to tackle. Thus a pedagogical view on ‘holistic subjects’ as well as the traditional social scientific question ‘why do what kinds of factors cluster’ could be regarded as what neo-liberals always thought social science to be: fancy stuff.

While personal social services are losing their importance to ‘situational’ forms of crime control, they play a crucial part in the programs of ‘community safety’ combining a notion of community based order *and* cohesion. While the boundaries of the fields of crime control and the social are blurred, there is a new emphasis on solving very different kinds of ‘social problems’, risks and hazards, whether they are ‘criminal’ or ‘social’ with the same magical bullet: the fostering of social bonds, the creation of ‘mechanical solidarity’ and so on - in short: the mobilisation of social capital.

Thus there is a new form of governance of social and personal security on the local level that keeps the promise of being a more democratic, a less paternalistic and a less intrusive alternative to professional and state based welfare and crime control. But there are good reasons to remain skeptical, because such appeals to community may have consequences that are less than democratic.

Both community orientation in youth work and community safety projects reflect a form of social capital that can be called ‘*bonding capital*’. This is a resource deriving from strong ties in dense parochial communities, close-knit neighbourhoods and networks in narrow territorial areas, and can be differentiated from bridging capital, referring to inter-group relations on a

horizontal level and linking social capital referring to connections between vertical classes and, more important to the support form institutions. (Linking capital may be interpreted as the 'classical' form of social capital provided by social work in an 'active' welfare state).

Fostering bonding forms of social capital may have a range of quite problematic effects especially for the most disadvantaged. Considering the distribution of the different forms of social capital there is empirically no doubt, that poor - and also ethnic - communities typically have some bridging capital, next to no linking capital but plenty of bonding social capital. This means that something should be fostered, something that is already there, and maybe this is rather a part of the problem than a solution. Of course, even within marginalized groups, bonding capital is a resource. But despite the fact that these strong bonding ties are often corrosive to the weak bridging and linking ties, bonding social capital usually 'bonds' to the parochial primary group from which it derives and to the fields in which this capital may realise its symbolic value best. In the worst case this may not only lead to 'neo-tribalism' but also to processes in which, especially the most vulnerable communities are 'included out' from broader society into 'their own' deprived fields and groups where they may have a lot of quite trustworthy and solidarity forming social ties with actors in the same positions, but still limited access to the resources most necessary.

Furthermore the most marginalized areas are to a considerable degree ethnically heterogeneous and stratified with regard to social positions. Different, even antagonistic 'subjective' and 'objective' interests emerge and with them priorities and concerns of different groups as well as different possibilities to realize these interests. Bonding social capital therefore cannot be inherently beneficial to all members of the community. Especially if in these areas the relatively best off groups are precariously included and the worst more or less disaffiliated, it is not hard to imagine that groups with considerable status anxiety are likely to draw rigid symbolic lines of respectability.

Some of the most obvious 'downsides' of social capital are an exclusion of outsiders and a concentration on the needs and the demands of the most powerful groups in the name of community spirit. This results in strong conformity within particular groups. It maybe exactly these consequences, that finally make strategies of activating social capital useful as effective mode of social control to be used in strategies of 'community safety' which are indeed not primarily concerned with crime: Activating bonding capital implies an orientation towards local-idiosyncratic norms of dense 'closed' communities. These norms reflect sectional morality standards rather than law and they therefore promote particularism. The inherent control dynamics connected with community activating strategies are likely to change the institutional focus from legal standards to the priorities and articulated needs of hegemonic groups in an area. These are the groups that profit most from a local 'common sense'. Not because they are extraordinary ethical or conform but because their habits and lifestyles are most clearly linked to particularistic standards they are able to define as generally binding as far as the respective neighborhood is concerned.

Combined with notions of crime prevention this implies a shift of order and a shift of a legal 'concept of crime' to a 'concept of deviance' not only concerned about actual acts but habits, performed lifestyles and a range of ascriptive features differing from the dominant symbolic forms in a particularistic field (as documented in the current concerns about 'incivilities', 'disorder' and 'quality of life').

Even if the communitarian shifts in crime and social policy and the rationalities of youth welfare interventions are not necessarily authoritarian in intention they are more often than not authoritarian in effect if regarded from the perspective of the most disadvantaged and least powerful actors.

Thus from a more ambitious social work perspective a representation of the clients would be helpful in which the model of persons subjected to its interventions are neither the sheep-like actor to be shepherded nor the dutiful member of a moral community or the rational calculation customer whose preferences are to be acted upon but a citizen with rights. Thus the purpose of social work would be to sustain these rights by processing the 'conditions of opportunities' for its clients to realize them.

This does not mean to reject the notion of individual freedom as promised in the neo-liberal agenda but to process the issues of agency and structure of social work clients enabling as van Parijs puts it 'real freedom for all'. In the terms of A.O. Hirschman this model would neither focus on 'choice' as the 'neo-liberal' perspective presupposes nor on 'loyalty' as implicit preferred in the moral prescriptive communitarian agenda but on 'voice' not to underpin through sympathy and clemency but through unconditional rights.

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