The embarrased organization

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Dear all

As I have noticed it, your critic of my originally article "Voluntary social care: personal and policy constructions of "care"", had two main points, firstly: That the originally article had two different main points namely the critic of the political construction of voluntary social help, and the critic of the voluntary organizations as embarrassed, and that the relation between these two point wasn't clear enough, why you recommended that I was concentrating on one of them. I think this critic is right, therefore I now have divided the article in two, concentrating on only one of the two main points. The two articles title is now "Voluntary social care: personal and policy constructions of "care"" and "The embarrassed organization". The articles are therefore now structured around only one of the two main points. The first article is still aspiring to "Social Critic" and "Journal of Social Policy". The last article is now aspiring to the German Journal "Soziale systeme" and it is also this article I have enclosed to you. This is also the article that tries to comply to especially Urs critic (the second main critic), that the point about the embarrassed organizations needed a stronger theoretically base, that's why the article now have a theoretical part about the two concepts interaction and organization. Hope you will enjoy your reading!!?

Best wishes

Anders

The embarrased organization

Over the past few years, there has been a growing interest in the voluntary organisations that play an important and innovative part in the development of the welfare societies in America (se Salamon 1995;1997; Alexander, Nank and Stivers C. 1999; Reisch and Sommerfeld 2003), England (se Plowden 2003) and Scandinavian (se….) . The states, in particular, has realised that a number of welfare tasks cannot be solved without establishing a close working relationship with the existing voluntary social sector. The added political interest has led to greater awareness of the structuralisation of voluntary organisations and their supply of services. At the same time, we know very little today about the practical functions of volunteers – what is it they do and know, and how may this possibly differ from what others do and know. We are also in need of studies to highlight the relationship between the practices of volunteers and the voluntary organisations which initially facilitated the development of such practices. The need for such information is growing in step with the ever-increasing demands placed on the practices of volunteers by society in general and politicians in particular. Using Niklas Luhmann's

theory of social systems as a springboard, this article will look at the state's expectations for new and more integrated forms of cooperation with the voluntary organisations. These expectations are interesting precisely because the bodies that are seeking to cooperate have very different ways of organising the provision of social services.

Using a specially selected area of user-cantered voluntary social services, the article will examine the unique aspects of voluntary work, as well as the unique way in which the voluntary organisations organise and manage this work. The article will argue that the voluntary work represent a interaction system, and that the organisation which instigates the voluntary social work neither has access to it, nor control over it. The article will therefore show that there is another, far more controversial side to voluntary social services than the state's attempts to formulate a joint voluntary service policy. Voluntary organisations risk becoming embaressed. On the basis of this argument, the article will pinpoint a number of risks associated with the attempt to formalise cooperation between public and voluntary social services. What are the risks for the people towards whom these services are directed? What are the risks for the voluntary organisations? And what are the risks for the social policies of the welfare state, based as they are on the principle of universalism?

Before I will examine how to answer these questions I will first make a short introduction to Luhmanns concepts of interaction and organizations.

Interaction versus organization

In Luhmann's well-known diagram of different systems theoretical analysis levels (Luhmann 2000:37) he identifies three significantly differentiated types of system formations on the third level[1]. What they all have in common is that they are based on the basic Double Contingency Problem, of which they each represent very different solutions. Luhmann borrows the formulation of the Double Contingency Problem from Talcott Parsons. The problem of double contingency arises when two systems[2] each make their own selections dependent on those of the other system. This raises the problem as to which of the two systems, in other words, is to make

[1]**) Luhmann does not, however, imply that these system typologies exhaustively cover all communication. In his work on society theory, "Die Gesellchaft der Gesellchaft", he for example deals with protest movements (Protestbewegungen) as a fourth system typology. Theoretically, this particular system formation way of dealing with complexity is currently not particularly well developed, therefore it is not discussed in this article.**

[2]**) Luhmann leaves open the extent to which two mental or two social systems are involved (Luhmann 2000:146).**

the first choice which can form the basis of how the other is to react. As both systems have made their choice dependent on that of the other, the situation becomes overloaded with indetermination and complexity and risks becoming "locked up" if the complexity is not reduced (Parsons 1951:16, 1977:169). The uncertainty represented by double contingency is universalised by Luhmann as a common starting point, to which the different system typologies each represent their own solution (Luhmann 2000:148, 1997:813), i.e. society by its type of differentiation, organisations via decisions on membership, roles and programmes, and interaction via discrimination in communication between those who are proximate in and absent from the communication.

At the same time, it is important to note that the systems in the diagram are presented horizontally and not vertically. This is not coincidental. According to systems theory understanding, it is meaningless to understand a society as the sum of organisations and interactions, just as it is meaningless to read organisations as the sum of interactions. Luhmann does not use such metaphors of size, so a spatial metaphor such as interaction *within* an organisation is also unfortunate, because it promotes an image of an organisation as a container into which something is poured[3]. Organisations can thus not be understood as large units built of smaller units which we can label interactions. On the contrary, Luhmann's theory-based distinction between system and surroundings replaces the part/unity understanding of system structures. Another vertically-based misunderstanding would be to interpret the different system typologies as each representing its own level of analysis, whereby interactional studies should be understood as analyses at the micro level, organisational studies as analyses on the meso level and society studies as analyses at the macro level. The basic point of Luhmann's horizontal typologisation of systems is, on the other hand, that each represents three different types of social systems which are defined based on their particular way of dealing with the Double Contingency Problem and therefore does not allow their qualities to be reduced to each other.

Luhmann sets some clear criteria for when communication can be designated as either interaction or organisation. Interaction emerges when a communication identifies itself as a system with surroundings by distinguishing between who is proximate and who is absent in the communication. A zone of possibility for communication is marked out by this distinction, within which the communication can proceed in a closed loop, self-referential and autopoietic, evolving its own history, structured by itself. What themes are relevant for the communication to adopt, who can participate in the communication and how long it can meaningfully continue are

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[3]**) A number of concepts in systems theory lend themselves to spatial understanding. This applies even to the basic preception leading system/surroundings, but also to other concepts such as boundaries and re-entry which all seem to draw on the idea that things belong to each in their own place. It is an important point for Luhmann that communication is not bound by a physical environment, but only by which structures of expectation make some communications more probable than others.**

selections which in a communication rely on the individuals concerned. Dealing with complexity in interactions therefore imposes high demands on the proximate individuals, as it is solely up to them to structure the communication thanks to their mutual expectations of each other (Luhmann 1975, Luhmann 1997).

The boundary of interactions is everything that is not proximate. In the simplest type of interaction formation we can conceive of, i.e. the proximity of two persons who mutually perceive each other, the code within which communication takes place will be us two vs. the rest of world. With this distinction, the communication can relate to that which concerns the system and what exists in its surroundings. Based on this distinction, the communication establishes what is appropriate and what is not, what can occur and be communicated about and what cannot. Interaction is thus basically oriented towards contingency, i.e. the possibilities of the situation for further selections, what it is respectively meaningful or non-meaningful to expect of the communication. An interactional limit exists, at which the communication no longer orients itself according to the proximate/absence form, but makes something else into its point of orientation, for example rules, procedures, programmes and other types of generalised expectations, which do not refer to the participating persons but to something else, for example the decisions of an organisation.

Organisations represent a basic different way of dealing with double contingency. The open situation in which anything can be expected and in which it can be particularly difficult to set expectations of expectations, does not apply to members of an organisation. When joining an organisation, one becomes the addressee of communication, and organisational decisions on membership, roles and programmes bind particular expectations to this participation. Inclusion in an organisation is basically an offer to participate in a communication which has been stabilised in advance via mutual expectations. An organisation thus offers expectations which can be expected. As an extension of this, individuals who are included in an organisation will be met with expectations as to their participation, regardless of whether these expectations are met or let down (Baecker 1999). In this manner, organisations can be understood as reducing uncertainty, an uncertainty absorption, while imposing a large number of social, factual and time constraints on personal participation in the communication (Luhmann 2000:183). The limits of an organisation can therefore be found at the point at which communication no longer orients itself towards the organisation's programmes, roles and decisions, but towards something else such as another organisation's programmes, roles and decisions, or towards the dynamics of the proximity of the participants. Organisations must therefore ultimately be understood as a system of commitments (Thyssen 2000:40).

Luhmann's clarification of the concepts is based on their different ways of dealing with the Double Contingency Problem. Luhmann thus defines precisely when something may be said to be one or the other. If the proximity of at least two individuals is what structures a communication, it is interaction. If programmes, roles and decisions are part of the picture, it is organisation. While interaction is oriented towards contingency, i.e. the possibilities of the situation for further selection, organisations are oriented towards complexity and the reduction of complexity with the aid of decisions as to membership, roles and programmes.

Proximate communication means that persons can perceive each other, i.e. that they can see and hear each other, but also to a greater or lesser extent that they can smell, taste and feel each other. Perceptions have thereby become body-dependent. This is, however, not coterminous with saying that such conscious perceptions will always produce an interactional system. Even if we are physically present at a meeting, a communication can emerge which is only focused on one theme, and is maybe linked to a previous communication, which did not have the form of proximity, and therefore excludes everything human that is not related to this. If so, a sharply reduced type of interaction is involved, whose point of orientation is no longer based on proximity/absence as its structuring premise. In such cases, it would be more meaningful to regard the communication as a social system which is assuming the form of an organisation, with all that that implies in the way of roles, programmes and decisions. The verbal and dialogue-based communication is thus not quasi-automatically coterminous with the communication taking place in accordance with the proximity/absence model, so the question of interaction cannot just be turned into a question of how the proximate individuals perceive each other, which therefore distinguishes itself from other communication channels such as writing and telecommunication[4]. The extent to which the communication is based on interactional logic must, on the other hand, be precisely determined. Interaction can thus be understood as a narrower concept, associated with a particular type of communication which orients and structures itself by the proximity/absence model. *It is thus not sufficient for the participants in the communication to be physically present, but the communication must also be shaped by the proximity/absence model, and thereby be based on the conditions of the proximity, to be an interaction.*

As can be seen from the above, interaction and organisations each represent their own processing handling of double contingency. They may thus be understood as independent system formations which cannot be reduced to each other, but which, on the other hand, according to systems theory logic, may exist in each other's surroundings.

In the following sections I will examine what kind of communication the voluntary home visitors represent. What is it they do, and what is the relationships between this work and the voluntary organization which initially facilitated the development of such practices. Before I examine these questions, I will make a short introduction to the political context, in which the new expectations to the voluntary home visitors

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[4]**) Just as proximate communication is possible as organised communication, decisions are possible at the level of interaction. But while decisions are a triviality within organisations, interaction will be particularly observant when a decision suddenly becomes current (Kieserling 1999). A large number of of decisions may thus be made in an interaction, but what is crucial is that it is not constituent for this. In other words, this means that there are decisions in the surroundings of an organisation that do not take the form of an organisation.**

emerge.

Elderly care

As a starting point for this discussion, I am going to look at elderly care since it is one of the areas of care in which both public and voluntary services are most prevalent. Within the last 20 years, the nature of elderly care has gradually changed. In the 1970s, the public home help service endeavoured to meet the overall care needs of the housebound elderly, ranging from personal hygiene and personal care, to practical assistance both inside and outside the home, reassurance visits and social care 1)). Efforts were made to ensure that the different categories were weighted equally (Korremann 1987, Nørrung & Ravn 1989). Today, however, higher priority is given to personal hygiene and personal care in favour of practical assistance in the home, shopping and social care (Danish Ministry of Social Affairs 1995). Within this strict division of tasks, lower priority seems to have been given to social care in particular. Nowadays, the elderly person's need for personal contact is met concomitantly with the provision of other services, and the care functions that were previously designed to provide personal contact, such as taking a walk or drinking a cup of coffee with the elderly person, have been taken over to varying degrees within the municipalities by the voluntary organisations (Danish Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:97).

These developments within the field of elderly care exemplify the new socio-political strategies that were formulated in the 1990s. Under headings such as 'welfare pluralism' and 'welfare mix', a number of political figures formulated alternatives to the dominant belief of the 1970s that only the public sector was capable of providing social services 2)). As far as these political figures were concerned, private companies and voluntary organisations were equally capable of solving certain socio-political tasks. During her time as Minister of Social Affairs (1993–1994, 1994–2000), Karen Jespersen argued strongly that certain aspects of social services were best left to those outside the public sector. The Minister argued with increasing conviction for the potential of voluntary organisations to solve social problems, a notion which, for the time being, has culminated in the publication of her book, entitled *Opgør med den ny fattigdom* (Jespersen 1999) ('Confronting the New Poverty').

With Karen Jespersen as an important instigator, the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs attempted to strengthen the provision of voluntary social services by creating opportunities for a clear division of labour between the voluntary and public organisations, allowing each to concentrate on what they do best. Today, the state sees its most important task as being able to establish opportunities that allow voluntary work to form part of a 'coherent welfare system', something it is endeavouring to ensure partly through greater formalisation of the collaboration between the public and voluntary sectors. In the mid-1990s, the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs began to lay the groundwork for a new welfare policy designed partly to create a financial incentive for this kind of collaboration, and partly to improve the

required legislative framework.

During the preparatory work to revise the Act on Social Services, the Ministry stated that "...it is essential for the future development of voluntary social work that a better framework for collaboration be established along with a stronger commitment from the municipalities" (Danish Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:27). The committee further emphasised that if the voluntary organisations are to execute a public welfare policy, then they must be able to establish an effective framework for their activities in order to achieve a clear division of labour between the tasks to be performed by the public bodies on the one hand, and the voluntary bodies on the other.

The ideal, as formulated in the recommendation of the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs, is that a formalisation of the collaboration between the municipalities and the voluntary organisations shall ensure that the different care services supplement each other and create a coherent welfare system.

Section 115 of the Act on Social Services is the tangible result of the preparatory work carried out by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs. The Act, which was passed on 1 July 1998, obliges the municipalities and the counties to collaborate with voluntary social organisations and associations and to set aside an annual sum to support voluntary social work. Experience of Section 115 shows that it is the large national organisations and their local branches that receive the bulk of Section 115 funding, and that – in the case of activities directed at one particular target group – the elderly have received the lion's share of funding 3)).

Home visit programmes

In the following, I will focus on the home visit programmes within elderly care. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, this service is often highlighted as a perfect example of voluntary social work since it is seen by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs as an 'extension of welfare' which cannot be provided by the state (Danish Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:96). Secondly, the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs feels that the home visit programmes live up to the Ministry's own ideals for user-cantered voluntary social services, being characterised by reciprocity, solidarity and flexibility (Danish Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:90–91). Thirdly, and finally, the home visit programmes have expanded in the past decade, and most municipalities have now established a liaison with a voluntary organisation in this particular area.

The home visit programmes are designed to seek out elderly, sick or lonely individuals in need of social contact. The aim is to give these people a chance to forge new social bonds and thereby to overcome their sense of isolation. In Denmark, home visit programmes are mainly run by the large national organisations such as Danish Red Cross, De Samvirkende Menighedsplejer (Union of Parish Charities) and Ældre Sagen (DaneAge Association) 4)). A study of the way in which the municipalities and the voluntary organisations collaborate in terms of home visit

programmes for the elderly shows that 43% collaborate formally, 47% collaborate informally, while only 10% of the municipalities say that they do not collaborate with voluntary organisations in this area 5)).

The Danish Ministry of Social Affairs believes that the particular strength of home visit programmes lies in the fact that they complement existing public services. A home visit programme is something which may be offered to elderly individuals who often benefit from the home help service provided by the state. The home visit programmes, however, fulfil a need which, according to the recommendation of the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs, cannot be met by the home help service (Danish Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:96). In order to ensure that the socio-political strategy on welfare pluralism does not bring about inappropriate overlaps (e.g. volunteer visitors taking over tasks that would be better solved by others, such as cleaning and personal care), the recommendation emphasises that the municipalities must ensure that the home help, the hospitals and the volunteer visitors work together. "Cooperation is essential if the different activities are to constitute a *coherent* programme of welfare services each with their own *specific content and aim*" (Danish Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:97, my italics). The committee further emphasises the need for the municipalities and voluntary organisations to specify the tasks to be undertaken jointly, the intended beneficiary of the service, and not least what constitutes the responsibility of the state and the responsibility of the voluntary body (Danish Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:195). In the case of the home help and the volunteer visitors, there is an obvious division of labour between the home help who needs to attend to the matters of personal hygiene, personal care, practical assistance and reassurance visits, while the volunteers should restrict themselves to the social aspects of care (i.e. personal dialogue and human contact), which were previously attended to by the home help (Danish Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:97).

The issue, however, is to establish which opportunities exist for this kind of formalised collaboration that can ensure that both the state and voluntary organisations are allowed to do what they do best. What is interesting about any attempt to create this kind of formalised collaboration between public and voluntary organisations in the area of care, is that the two sectors that are seeking to cooperate have very different ways of organising the provision of social services.

Public versus voluntary organisation of social services

Within the last 20 years, public home help services have been subject to ever greater standardisation and bureaucratisation. Previously, it was largely up to the home help and the elderly person themselves to determine the nature of the help to be provided from one visit to the next. Today, however, an attempt is made to define the help in advance by means of a 'common language' and 'appointment forms' (la Cour & Højlund 2001a; 2001b; 2002). Public home help services thus try to organise the help by making formal decisions in advance: who needs help? what type of help can be provided? how much help can be provided? The work is subject to a series of formal rules and programmes which determine who does what, how and when. These decisions are made on the basis of what is known as the principle of universalism concerning "equality before the law and equal political status for all citizens" (la Cour & Højlund 2001a; 2001b; 2002). This bureaucratic logic, the success of which is questionable, contrasts starkly with the way in which the voluntary organisations try to organise their social services.

The voluntary organisations endeavour to ensure that individual visits represent a meeting between two equals. Unlike the public home help service, which endeavours to be precise and to describe by whom and how the work is to be carried out in advance, voluntary organisations work on the basis that help cannot be defined in advance. As a result, there is a large degree of freedom in the way in which individual visits develop. It is precisely this distinction from public social services which reflects the special nature of voluntary work, and endows it with a unique potential to solve certain specific social tasks.

Nevertheless, voluntary organisations are attempting to establish a formal framework for their voluntary social work 6)). This is accomplished partly by means of a thorough employment interview with the new volunteer designed to ensure that the individual possesses the necessary resources and the required motivation for the work in question, and partly by ensuring that the volunteer visitor is informed that he or she may not perform work for which others are paid, accept money or gifts, and that he or she is subject to professional secrecy 7)). In addition, a control call is made after 1–3 months during which the visit organiser ensures that the visiting relationship remains intact 8)).

It is up to individual visit organisers to decide whether applicants can be approved as volunteer visitors and recipients of care respectively, and to bring the volunteer visitor and

the recipient of care together. In every case, the visit organiser is faced with a stranger and with having to assess the individual's motives for volunteering as either volunteer visitor or recipient of care. Applicants are often aware of this, and will try to present themselves in the best possible light. The people employed by the visit organiser as volunteer visitors will be those who succeed in presenting themselves in such a way that the visit organiser believes they can handle the task at hand. Trust means a belief that the volunteer visitor will use his freedom in a way that does not overstep the framework established by the organisation.

Within the home help services, meanwhile, the need for personal trust has almost been rendered superfluous. The risks involved in granting such trust, at least, are minimal since the legal system means that there is every probability that the given expectations will be met. It is more than likely, in other words, that the home help will turn up on time and perform the allocated tasks. If these expectations are not met, however, the public system has at its disposal a number of different sanctions which, in extreme cases, may result in the dismissal of the individual. Needless to say, individual home helps are perfectly aware of this, something which in itself will ensure that they meet the expectations which the public organisations have of their work. These sanctions are not available to the voluntary organisations. Naturally, they can exclude a member of the organisation if the individual fails to live up to the organisations' expectations, but this exclusion is no guarantee that the visiting relationship will cease. There are examples of volunteer visitors who have been excluded but have chosen to continue the visiting relationship as a result of their own wishes and the wishes of the recipient of care.

The visiting relationship

As explained above, voluntary organisations have formulated a small but very precise series of criteria for the work undertaken by those involved in visitor programmes. These are intended to serve as a guide to the permitted extent of the voluntary service provided in connection with individual visiting relationships. Some organisations have supplemented these precise criteria with information about the visions and framework which are designed to provide general information to volunteers, with the autonomy to deviate from such in connection with actual visiting relationships. The Danish Red Cross has published a handbook for volunteer visitors (*Håndbog for besøgsvenner*, Danish Red Cross 1994), and the DaneAge Association runs courses in how to become a good volunteer visitor, etc.

There are very few empirical studies of the way in which visiting relationships develop once established. A qualitative survey of 15 different visiting relationships managed by the DaneAge Association, however, illustrates how very differently individual visiting relationships develop. Some relationships involve nothing more than a conversation and the no-strings-attached social interaction, while others develop into close friendships which involve far more than social care. In this relatively limited sample, we thus find examples of visiting relationships that involve excursions, shopping, cleaning, hair washing, laundry,

presents and monetary gifts.

A recipient of care says:

> "I don't know if she's allowed (to accept the money *ed.*), but surely I'm entitled to pay her a little for her efforts now and then. Nobody can tell me not to. She's not a maid, she's my friend. If she asks me 'is there something I can get for you', then of course I say yes please." (Olsen & Mølholm 1994:148).

A volunteer visitor states:

> "She's been unlucky a couple of times (when the home help failed to turn up *ed.*). She asked me if I could help her with her laundry, because she could never be sure if anybody was going to turn up or not. Doing her washing has become a habit now." (Olsen & Mølholm 1994:92).

Another volunteer visitor says;

> "I also wash her hair. I don't know if you're supposed to do that as a volunteer visitor, but I don't give a hoot! She can't get to the hairdressers and she only sees her daughter every three months." (Olsen & Mølholm 1994:87).

What we see when we try to gain an insight into what happens within individual visitor programmes bears absolutely no relation to structured assistance based on a formal basis for decisions. The visiting relationships involve a wealth of decisions, but these are made on an individual and personal level which is not delimited by the decisions formally made by the organisation. The interviews, however, show clearly that the individual visiting relationships often develop according to their own dynamics, determined solely by the individual volunteer visitor and recipient of care. How far they wish to go, what they want to do together, for how long and how often, is not something that can be decided outside the relationship but only by those present. As a result, no two visiting relationships are alike. This plurality would seem to indicate that it is impossible to make any binding decisions as to the content of the various visitor programmes at the organisational level. The admittedly limited empirical data available in this area thus show that the visiting relationships often cannot be contained by the framework and the rules established by the organisation for this kind of work.

An interview with the visit organiser for the Copenhagen branch of the DaneAge Association, Gurli Godvin, confirms that it is not just difficult but impossible to enforce the rules:

> "I remember someone once said 'But then that means I'm not allowed to change a nappy', well, I'd never dream of changing a nappy if I visited someone, but she feels it's a natural thing to do, and she can't just sit and watch someone who's uncomfortable just because they need their happy changing… I can only tell them to use their common sense and to set their own limits. I mean, once people have known each other for a while, what would you do as a good neighbour, what would you do as a family member? If you were visiting an old relative, well then you'd help, wouldn't you." (la Cour 2002:175-176).

she continues;

> "Many of the volunteer visitors are good housewives, and they think nothing of it. They can't bear to see what happens when things (public services *ed.*) don't work." (la Cour 2002:176).

Asked whether this undermines the sought-after balance between the public and voluntary social services, the visit organiser replies:

> "You can't expect a volunteer visitor to think about long-term local government policies every time she visits someone, and basically that's what you have to do, because if you do so and so, then the consequences will be such and such, and that wasn't really the point, was it?" (la Cour 2002:177).

As can be seen from the above, the voluntary organisations are failing to standardise and structure the framework for the volunteer visitor programmes. The way in which individual visiting relationships develop once established is determined by the participants themselves and not by the voluntary organisation. The content of the visiting relationships cannot be determined at a formal level, but individually within the various visiting relationships.

While the voluntary organisations may not be able to determine the content of individual visiting relationships in advance, the question remains what opportunities the voluntary organisations have for acquiring information about the nature of the visiting relationships.

Checks and records

Even if home help is organised differently from local authority to local authority, there are a number of common features. By law, the local authorities must supervise the provision of welfare services to persons in care homes and the like. Within the home help area, the various local authorities have generally institutionalised control via recording of sick leave, periodic time recording, regulations for re-inspections, day-to-day meetings between the

home help manager and individual home helpers, customer surveys etc. Finally, The National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark (Kommunernes Landsforening) is working on a "common language", with the aim of developing a tool which can further clarify the content of home help. "That is to say, which services the local authorities offer, what they cover, and how time is spent on these services (The National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark 1998:17). Checks on home help are aimed in part at ensuring that the individual local authorities know what is happening as home help and can react if the work is not being carried out as planned.

The voluntary organisations have, as shown above, developed a number of similar criteria for what may and may not be done within the attendance scheme. These criteria could also function as thresholds for when trust in the visitor can turn into mistrust. This simplifies decision situations, as the question as to what extent trust can be maintained becomes easier to determine. The numerous details and peculiarities represented by every visiting relationship can thus be eliminated, as not all types of disappointments ruin the trust that is felt. Once the clearly formulated criteria are breached, they can function as thresholds for trust and mark a change from trust to mistrust. In this way, the criteria can function as the limits of trust, and thereby have the nature of thresholds for trust, and a breach would lead to the trust being reviewed, or in repeated cases being converted to mistrust.

Ældre Sagen (DaneAge Association) is an example of an organisation which has only to a very limited extent developed checks on whether the trust relationship is misused. Compared with public home help, where mistrust has been institutionalised by a large number of inspection bodies and appeal committees, DaneAge Association has only set up a routine whereby the visits manager rings the customer about a month after the visiting relationship has been set up to check that the relationship is still intact. This check in reality aims to show whether the visiting relationship still exists, or whether it has ceased, and is in itself not directed at recording any breaches of the framework of the visiting relationships.

Should the visits manager finally become aware of any such breach, it is remarkable that this does not give rise to efforts to change the situation. In the above example of a visiting friend who changes a nappy, which clearly breaches the prescribed formal framework of the visiting relationship, this does lead to the rules being tightened up for the visiting friend concerned. There are therefore also no follow-up checks on whether the rules are being complied with. Signs of misuse of trust are on the other hand implicitly accepted, as the organisation has not developed procedures or rules for how any breaches of trust are dealt with. Or, put more precisely: breaches do not lead to any reaction internally within the organisation.

Trust which is not supported by any form of checks is blind trust, and it is generally considered a bad idea not to check whether the trust is being misused (Luhmann 1984:169). It is therefore remarkable that national and professionally managed organisations such as the Danish Red Cross, De Samvirkende Menighedsplejer (Union of

Parish Charities) and DaneAge Association have not developed ways of checking the voluntary work that is performed, let alone procedures for how breaches of the organisations' formal decisions concerning the framework of this work are dealt with.

What cannot be decided

The voluntary organisations have not developed a reflective technology, in the form of evaluation cycles, quality control, customer surveys etc. for what is carried out under the specific attendance schemes. When the question of the extent to which members live up to the trust placed in them or not is ever considered, there is therefore also no way to communicate or form an opinion about this. The lack of internal review within the voluntary organisation of social work is defended in terms that such checks would destroy this special way of working. It is thus feared that attempts to check up would have a disturbing and destructive effect on the visiting relationship which is being inspected (Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:195;211).

The consequence is in the meantime that the organisation has no idea what goes on within the activities they themselves set in motion. The State has therefore tried to develop special methods of evaluation to suit the voluntary organisations. This includes the development of a special form of evaluation, in which the voluntary organisations are expected to evaluate the activities they initiate (Gruber & Villadsen 1997). The question in the meantime is what the voluntary organisations might do with the information any evaluation of the work might produce.

Using Niklas Luhmanns concepts of interaction and organization as I have introduces earlier, we now know that the limit of an organisation is the point at which its decisions no longer apply. Organisations understood in this way are not physical systems consisting of buildings or persons, but a system consisting of commitments. It is notable how the individual visiting relationships evade these commitments, which are based on the formal decisions of the voluntary organisation about the content and purpose of the work. If this definition of what is an organisation is valid, the individual visiting relationships quite simply fall outside the scope of the organisation. Instead they one by one represent a system of interaction, which represent their unique construction of what help means. This does not necessarily mean that they no longer bear any relation to the mother organisation, but that the organisation's decisions are not binding for what occurs, which is this decided solely by the participants in the visiting relationship.

Luhmann uses the concept of influence to denote the situation in which a system succeeds in affecting the behaviour of another system, such that the system acts in a manner other than that in which it would otherwise have done. This can happen through sanctions or by the prospect of sanctions. Luhmann differentiates between positive and negative types of sanctions. Positive sanctions are often applied through the medium of

money. Paying to have work carried out is a typical example. Negative sanctions functions through threats of sanctions, for example excluding a member of the organisation who does not exercise his freedom within a clear framework (Luhmann 2000).

When applied to voluntary organisations and their relationships with the individual visit, it is a common for them to have neither positive sanctions available, as the work is voluntary and unpaid, nor negative sanctions such as exclusion. The voluntary organisation can be pressurised to exclude a member if the organisation becomes aware of inexcusable breaches, but if the visits function satisfactorily by their own measure, then the decision to exclude would not influence the continuance of the relationship. Therefore, an exclusion would be no guarantee of influence on the individual visiting relationship. In the few cases where DaneAge Association has been alerted from outside that a visiting relationship has developed in an unwanted direction (for example by the family of the person concerned), the organisation has in certain cases expelled the visitor from the organisation, but this not prevented the continuation of the visiting relationship.

The voluntary organisations have thus no means of compelling their members to abide by their decisions, and therefore wisely refrain from formulating too many criteria and principles for this work, such that it remains open how the various visitors and hosts choose to develop their visiting relationship.

Information about repeated breaches would put the organisation in an embarrassing situation, as it would not know how to react, because ultimately it is the people involved who decide what they will do together.

Conclusions

I have shown above how the individual visiting relationships represents a autonomous interaction system. This means that the parties themselves decide what activities they are to include. In other words, they condition themselves. Autonomy in the individual visiting relationships are they key to their quality. Elderly persons may not experience much autonomy in other areas of their lives. They may not have much influence on their finances, their housing, or their allocation of home help, but in an individual visiting relationship they can decide with their visitor what they want to do together. Autonomy is therefore itself the aim of this work. Autonomy exists on the level of the individual visiting relationship, not at the level of the voluntary organisation, which can control how the relationship is established but not how it develops in practice. The individual visiting relationships are thus autonomous in the sense that they are set up "from above" but conditioned "from below". The limits of what tasks are taken on and which rules will be followed are therefore not capable of being decided formally by the voluntary organisation itself, but must be decided individually within each visiting relationship. Now we can ask for whom this is a problem. It has not so far been a problem for the voluntary organisations.

This extended degree of autonomy in the individual visiting relationships has been an important success criterion for this work.

The point is that the problem first and foremost affects the public sector when the Ministry of Social Affairs formulates an ideal of a "seamless welfare provision". With increased public financing of voluntary services, as provided for in article 115, the requirements for checks and records of the quality of the services are increased. Or, as can be read in the Ministry of Social Affairs report:

"Even if the local authority decentralises tasks to e.g. independent institutions, associations and organisations, it will still have the responsibility for social needs being met based on local conditions, and for the citizens to be have trust in the finances and the content and quality of the solution" (Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:238).

It thus becomes crucial for the tasks to be delineated and for the quality of the work carries out to be documented. This documentation can be generated by various means, for example by user surveys or self assessments (Ministry of Social Affairs 1997:103, 106). The question is then how the voluntary organisations can react to it. Should it thus turn out that a number of visiting relationships are not limited to social care alone, the voluntary organisations would not be able to react t6o this. The embarrassed organisation is therefore an organisation that does not know what to do with the knowledge it obtains about the interactions it has set up.

The Ministry of Social Affairs' attempts at formalising co-operation between the public sector and voluntary organisations contains a risk that *the problem* will move over into the voluntary organisations, as their management assumes the Ministry of Social Affairs' semantics about the needs for delineation of tasks and quality assurance. This would give rise to a risk that the voluntary organisations would be internally split between the professional administration's modern management ideas about delineation of tasks and quality control and the local voluntary work, which in reality does not have the ability to live up to these ideas about inspection and control.

The risk in transferring social tasks from the public sector to the voluntary sector, illustrated by the above example of social care, is that the ability to know and check what goes on in this work will also be lost. Home help is an example of an area where it has proved possible to formalise care based on the law to a depressing degree. There are thus regulations for everything, and a large number of inspections and sanctions available for what is on offer in the way of home help. As set out above, this is not possible with voluntary work.

The voluntary effort is informed by a friendship model, emphasising qualities such as mutuality, trust and equal status. The attempt to create friendship means that this work also contains enmity, strife, splits and conflict. It is not possible to be friends with

everyone, and everyone does not always remain friends. With voluntary work, there is also no legal guarantee which can ensure continuing and equal treatment. There is a lack of research into visiting relationships, what they consist of and why they sometimes break down. In cases where welfare services are transferred from the public to the voluntary sector, there is thus a loss of oversight of what actually occurs within this work. It becomes impossible to say to whom, how and for how long the various services are provided. This involves a risk that there will be no reaction or far too late when rules for this work are breached, or when the visiting relationship ends due to conflict or lack of effort. A kind of *privatisation of exclusion* occurs, which is hidden from the organisation, but also from the public authorities who wish to achieve "seamless welfare provision". It thus becomes impossible for the public sector to live up to normative ideals of equality.

This is not just a legitimation problem for the politicians, but also a real danger to the group of people whose welfare services were provided by the public sector. What is crucial in this context is that, when the public sector slowly withdraws from the care area and increasingly relies on voluntary social organisations, it also means that the criteria for who is helped, how and how much which applied previously (i.e. the professionally based services based on a professional assessment and the principle of universality) will be replaced by other criteria, which will probably be less transparent, but will nevertheless become the criteria which determine whether someone is helped, how it is given and for how long. When tasks are transferred from the public to the voluntary sector, this in other words means that new patterns of social regulation become established within the area of social policy. Unlike visits through the home care process, the political system also has a very limited influence on which persons are respectively included and excluded within this autonomous care area.

I have demonstrated above how the autonomous nature of voluntary work exists not just at the level of the organisation, but also at the level of the individual visiting relationship. This also gives the help a random nature, because it cannot be dictated or decided in advance by the organisation which sets up the relationship. When social tasks are transferred as above from the public sector to the voluntary sector, the group of elderly people becomes subject to random help. There is thus no legal guarantee of who can be helped and how, as was the case when social care was an integrated part of home help. With general cuts in home help (Ministry of Social Affairs 1995)9)) not only the social side of care but also practical help, shopping and attendance arrangements are deprioritised. This leads to a risk that volunteers are pushed into carrying out tasks that were not intended at the start. This is unfortunate for the volunteers, because in reality they are not competent to carry out these tasks, but also worse for the elderly, who depend on these welfare services, and who become subject to the randomness that characterises voluntary social work, both in regard to being allocated a visitor and as to how the individual visiting relationship develops.

With the adoption of article 115, local authorities and counties become obliged to establish collaboration with existing voluntary organisations. The question is then whether this commitment also applies to the voluntary organisations. The voluntary organisations are today faced with an important strategic choice. If they decide to formalise the already

existing collaboration with the public sector, they will also be choosing to subject their work to quality assessment and inspection. This would be a risky move, as the voluntary organisations would assume a responsibility for a care practice which they cannot influence. Such a decision would expose the voluntary organisations as embarrassed organisations, unable to control and check the activities they have set up. Another question that arises is what would the individual activity (for example an individual visiting relationship) gain from such collaboration? Why would it be better, or even advisable, for an individual visiting relationship to subject itself to quality assessment and checks? What would an individual activity gain by making itself visible, with the sole aim of creating the ability to make decisions on its content and form, when the individual activity can be directed instead by its own internal logic?

Visiting services represent one particular form of voluntary social work which has a number of special problems. What stands out as peculiar to visiting schemes and as characteristics of voluntary social work is the ideal of this work as flexible and personal treatment, based on trust, unlike the public sector ideal of equal and just treatment, based on inspection. The conclusion of this article is therefore that voluntary work is not simply an extension of the public sector welfare work, as it deals with social needs under other conditions. The instant there is an attempt to integrate voluntary work within "seamless welfare provision", a number of aspects of voluntary work become problematical. This applies to individuality, spontaneity, intimacy, chance - ironically, the aspects of voluntary work that comprise its special quality. This quality also represents a closedness which is not open to idealised concepts of clarity in the purpose and content of the work, as promoted by the idea of "seamless welfare provision".

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Noter:

1) Kommunerne har forskellige hjemmehjælpsordninger og benytter derfor forskellige semantikker for deres kategoriseringer, hvilket gør direkte sammenligninger imellem de enkelte kommuners hjemmehjælp besværlige. På trods af forskelle i semantik, kan man alligevel meningsfuldt opsplitte hjemmehjælpen som bestående af følgende kerneydelser; **Personlig hygiejne**; morgenhygiejne, bad, toiletbesøg, proteser, tandbørstning, særlig hud- og mundpleje, sengebad. **Personlig pleje**; Komme ud/i seng, middagssøvn, påklædning, hjælp til indtagelse af mad/væske, sondemadning, hjælp til indtagelse af medicin. **Praktisk service i hjemmet**; rengøring, tilberedelse af mad, anretning af udbragt mad, tøj- og linnedvask. **Praktisk service uden for hjemmet**; indkøb, ledsagelse til læge/indkøb, **tryghedsbesøg**; ydes typisk ved pludselig opstået sygdom o.lign. **Social omsorg**; indebærer at "...yde et arbejde af opmuntrende og mentalhygiejnisk art" (Socialministeriet 1980), det vil ofte sige den personlige samtale.

2) Begrebet velfærdspluralisme stammer fra Norman Johsons kritik af udviklingen i det britiske velfærdssamfund under Margaret Thatchers regeringsperiode i 1980'erne (Johnson 1987). Johnson kritiserede her det politiske system for at demontere velfærdsstaten, i dens forsøg på at lægge ansvaret for løsningen af en række sociale problemer over på det private marked og de frivillige organisationer (Abrahamson 1998). To centrale forskelle gør sig imidlertid gældende mellem Danmark på den ene side og England og USA på den anden. For det første er frivillige organisationer i Danmark domineret af en demokratisk organisationsstruktur som er medlems baseret. For det andet er den frivillige sociale indsats langt mindre omfattende end tilfældet er det i både England og USA. Disse forskelle fra England og USA har Danmark blandt andet tilfælles med Sverige og Norge (Wollebæk, Selle og Lorentzen 2000). I disse lande står de frivillige organisationer ligeledes overfor at skulle tage stilling til om de skal indgå i et mere forpligtende samarbejde med det offentlige om leveringen af specifikke ydelser (Se blandt andet Eikås 2001).

3) Se blandt andet Socialministeriets redegørelse "Kommuners og amtskommuners samarbejde med frivillige sociale organisationer", 1999.

4) Idet følgende vil det være de tre nævnte organisationers besøgstjenester, der vil ligge til grund for artiklen. Dansk Røde Kors har ca. 7000 besøgsvenner, Ældre Sagen ca. 2500 besøgsvenner og De Samvirkende Menighedsplejer har skønsmæssigt 2000.

5) Tallene er hentet fra publikationen; "Ældre og det frie liv", Bennekou, Helle m.fl. s.30.

6) Påtrods af at de tre forskellige organisationer har etableret deres besøgsordninger uafhængigt af hinanden, er den grundlæggende organisering af arbejdet påfaldende ens.

7) I De Samvirkende Menighedsplejer, sker dette alene gennem en mundtligt indskærpelse af reglerne, det samme er tilfældet i Dansk Røde Kors, der imidlertidigt i større udstrækning end De samvirkende Menighedsplejer har formuleret et formelt regelsæt, mens besøgsvennen i Ældre Sagen underskriver en kontrakt hvormed den frivillige erklærer at denne vil overholde reglerne for besøgstjenesten.

8) Denne opfølgning foretages imidlertid ikke i alle besøgstjenester, idet nogle finder at en sådan opringning udgør en form for kontrol, der vil virke som et forsøg på at overvåge besøgsforholdet, hvilket ikke harmonerer med idealet om et ligeværdigt samværd. Indenfor

enkelte af Dansk Røde Kors besøgstjenester, sker der rutinemæssigt en kontrol af besøgsforholdets beståen hvert halve år.

9) Udviklingen indenfor hjemmehjælpen er omdiskuteret. Udfra et ensidigt økonomisk perspektiv, kan man plædere for, at den er blevet styrket, mens et perspektiv, der tager et andet udgangspunkt, nemlig i prioriteringen indenfor hjemmehjælpen, kan argumentere for at hjemmehjælpen udfra en helhedsvurdering er blevet udhulet, idet hjemmehjælpen ikke magter en række opgaver, som den førhen tog sig af. I tørre tal steg hjemmehjælpsudgiften fra 4,6 milliarder i 1980 til 7,6 milliarder i 1998 (udgiftstallet for 1998 er min egen beregning, baseret på tal fra Danmarks Statistik), samtidig steg antallet af modtagere af hjemmehjælp fra 135.000 i 1980 til 201.488 i 1998. Stigningen i antallet af modtagere har således været mindre end væksten i de samlede udgifter. Udgiften pr. modtager er således steget lidt. (udgiftstallene skal imidlertid tages med forbehold, idet de er produceret udfra samme beregningsmetode som socialministeriet m.fl. har lagt tilgrund for deres beregninger for udgifterne til hjemmehjælpen i årerne 1980 og frem til 1994. Det vil sige, at tallene for perioden efter 1992 er beregnet skønsmæssigt, "idet oplysningerne fra det kommunale budget- og regnskabssystem ikke er anvendelige. Det skyldes en meget stor andel af udgifterne til hjemmehjælp efter 1992 ikke længere fremgår særskilt, men opføres under integrerede ordninger mellem plejehjem, hjemmehjælp og hjemmesygepleje" (socialministeriet m.fl. 1995:40), socialministeriets tal for 1993 og 1994 er derfor beregnet "under forudsætning af, at hjemmehjælp udgør samme andel af ældreudgifter som 1992 (29pct.)" (socialministeriet m.fl. 1995:40). Udgiftstallet for 1998, er derfor fremkommet efter følgende beregning; 29% af de samlede nettodriftsudgifter til ældreservice (26.084.000.000), beregnet udfra de samme udgiftsområder som socialministeriet ligger til grund for sine tal for perioden 1980 - 1994). Udvikling i nettodriftsudgifterne skal imidlertidig sammenholdes med udviklingen indenfor ældreområdet generelt, hvor politikken om "længst mulig i eget hjem", og nedlæggelsen af plejehjemspladser, har medført, at det øgede antal modtagere, ikke alene skyldes, at der generelt er kommet flere ældre, men også, at et større antal ældre der førhen var kommet på plejehjem, er forblevet i eget hjem. Det vil sige, at hjemmehjælpen i dag står overfor et klientiel, der kræver mere i pleje end tidligere, hvormed de "tunge" plejeopgaver som den personlige hygiejne og pleje er vokset i omfang, og dermed taget ressourcer fra hjemmehjælpens andre plejeopgaver. Dette kan aflæses af kommunernes generelle opprioritering af den personlige pleje til fordel for den praktiske service (socialministeriet m.fl. 1995:89). Hjemmehjælpen har således de sidste par årtier overtaget opgaver, der tidligere blev varetaget på plejehjemmene (Hansen E.B. & Jordal-Jørgensen, A. Koch: Fra plejehjem til hjemmepleje, københavn, AKF Forlaget).

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