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In the name of motivation: the procurement of social work and its technologies of self and power

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, market reforms have paved the way for new forms to govern social work practice by means of procurement, cost efficiency, measurement, and freedom of choice. In this article, we draw attention to how clients are constructed in terms of motivation, in a context where social work is shaped by a procurement arrangement. Empirically, the article is based on interviews with social workers providing social services in a procurement setting, with a focus on how they describe their work in relation to presumptive clients, and specifically their work upon the motivation of clients. The analysis is informed by a constructionist approach to governing and the construction of clients. The results illustrate how the ideal client is constructed as motivated to choose a provider of social services matching their specific needs and interests as well as displaying a will to change and take part in the services offered. The social work appearing as desirable is based on a therapeutic rationality, with dialogue as the primary means of working upon the motivation of clients. The results further illustrate how different technologies (of the self and power) operate and intertwine in the work upon motivation of clients.

KEYWORDS

Social work; procurement; motivation; technologies

Introduction

Internationally, a trend of governing social work by means and ends of a market rationality has been noted, with a focus on cost efficiency, measurement and freedom of choice (Carey 2019; Harris 2014; Jones 2015; Malthe Bach-Mortensen and Barlow 2021). Such trend has also been noted in Sweden (Hjärpe 2020; Katzin 2020; Shanks, Lundström, and Wiklund 2015), through the implementation of systems based on freedom of choice in the provision of social work (regulated in the Act on System of Choice in the Public Sector), but also through a procurement apparatus (regulated by the Public Procurement Act), operating on both national (state) and municipal level. Procurement is based on a procedure of bidding and selling contracts concerning a range of social work practices. Thus, the procedure operates according to a market rationality, where a variety of providers compete to deliver social work services of different kinds (Härnbro, Dahlstedt, and Herz 2021), which is expected to result in both efficiency and productivity (Dahlstedt et al. 2019; Holmqvist, Fejes, and Nylander 2021).

A market rationality shapes how social work is understood, conducted and arranged (cf. Harris 2003; Gregory and Holloway 2005; Öjehag-Pettersson and Granberg 2019;Butler-Warke, Yuill and Bolger 2020). Within a procurement arrangement, social workers become providers of procured social work, expected to deliver a specific kind of social work, according to a contract, specifying the amount of time

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for conducting social work as well as the expertise of those conducting such work (Lundström, Sallnäs, and Shanks 2020; Hartman 2011; Sallnäs and Wiklund 2018; Forkby and Höjer 2008; SKL 2010). On the basis of competition, such an arrangement is set up to promote innovation and specialization of social work as a means of governing social work towards particular ends.

In this context, an important dimension of social work is to *motivate*, i.e. to work upon the motivation of the clients (Bergmark and Lundström 1998; Svensson 2009; Denvall, Nordesjö, and Ulmestig 2020). A focus on client motivation is a recurrent topic in a range of procured social work areas, attributed as the ideal client's main characteristic (Härnbro 2019). In social work, both in research and practice, a wide range of methods of how to conduct work upon client motivation have been suggested. In a variety of specialized social work settings, the notion of client motivation has become more or less normalized, where the desirable client is supposed to be(come) motivated (Billinger 2000; Forrester, Westlake, and Glynn 2012; Björk 2014; Härnbro 2019). According to such conception, clients are expected to be autonomous, responsible for their lives, in the present as well as for investing in their future, as an expression of being motivated for change (Lauri 2016, 2019; Brijnath & Antoniades 2016; Liebenberg 2015). However, in line with a constructionist approach, working upon the motivation of clients in the name of activity, autonomy, and responsibility is not seen as something unproblematic. Such an approach can instead be interpreted as a form of governing subjects as well as society at large (Rivest and Moreau 2015; Karlsen and Villadsen 2008).

In this article, we draw attention to how the client is constructed in terms of motivation, in a context where social work is shaped by a procurement arrangement. A specific focus is put on the technologies mobilized as a means of working upon client motivation. Analytically, the article draws upon literature focusing on how the clients are shaped from a constructionist approach (Järvinen and Mik-Meyer 2003; Herz and Lalander 2018). Such literature turns attention to how clients, in social work practices in the advanced liberal society, are worked upon to become active and responsible citizens, dealing with the problems they face in their lives by making the right choices (Lauri 2016, 2019; Eriksson 2018; Ferguson 2007). In a context where social work takes form within a procurement arrangement, clients appear as choosing subjects. Thus, clients are prompted to make informed choices, on their own, between a variety of providers, choosing the provider they see as responding to their specific wishes and needs (Villadsen 2008).

Following such an approach, the aim of this article is to further investigate social work within the context of a procurement arrangement. We specifically focus on how providers of social work in a procurement setting talk about and work upon the motivation of clients. The analysis is guided by the following questions: How is the client constructed in the context of a procurement arrangement in terms of motivation? What technologies are mobilized as a means to work upon client motivation, i.e. in terms of motivating, keeping the client motivated, and when the client is not considered to be motivated enough?

The article is structured as follows: First, the constructionist approach to subject formation and technologies guiding the analysis is presented. Next, the methodological and analytical considerations are discussed, including sampling and interpretation of the empirical material. Then the analysis is presented, divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the desirable work with clients in a procurement setting. The second discusses how technologies of self are used upon clients, while the third turns attention to how technologies of power are used. The final section summarizes and discusses the main findings and what they may tell us about ongoing changes of social work in times of procurement.

Theoretical approach

Theoretically, we place our analysis within a research tradition focusing on how a market rationality frames what becomes possible to think, do, and achieve within social work (Chambon, Irving, and Epstein 1999; Harris 2003; Ferrera 2008), based on a Foucaldian understanding of governing

(Foucault 1988). In this article, we are especially interested in the technologies used to create and manage a *responsibilisation of the individual*, as suggested by Nicholas Rose (1999). Rose (ibid.) argues that such technologies are used within the advanced liberal society, in the name of individual freedom, as a means to make the individual responsible for its life. Here, both individual success and failures are considered an effect of the will, ability, and effort of the individual. In such a society, the state's responsibility becomes to create spaces and possibilities for the individual to create their freedom by governing at a distance.

As such, the freedom of the individual is not only a possibility but an imperative. Rose (1996, 17) argues that" [s]ubjects are not merely' free to choose', but obliged to be free, to understand and enact their lives in terms of choice". *Freedom of choice* is considered the norm from where deviation and normality are measured, assessed, and maintained. Within this imperative, the individual has to strive towards shaping and improving its self in accordance with the market and its vocabulary.

Since the self becomes both the mean and the objective within such an imperative, a *therapeutic rationality* tends to be used to face a wide range of societal concerns (ibid.). Such rationality puts the answer to societal concerns within the individual, focusing on the individual's own strengths and motivation to create change, away from prerequisites and obstacles far from the individual's own control. As a result, we can see how a therapeutic vocabulary and a range of technologies used to manage the individual's self have become popularized and spread throughout society, and also in social work (cf. Villadsen 2008; Lauri 2019). Those engaged in conducting work in guiding and supporting individuals to work upon their selves appear as 'engineer[s] of the human soul' (Rose 1989, 3), or experts to guide people on a market (cf. Miller and Rose 2008; Ong 2006).

Although the freedom of choice is an imperative technology within a therapeutic rationality, people not able to or not considered motivated enough to make a choice become the subject of a range of technologies to develop the abilities, behaviours, and values that the norm strives for or requires (Rose 1989, 232). Such technologies can be focused on the self, which 'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and ways of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality', referred to by Foucault (1988) as *technologies of the self*. But there are also technologies which 'determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends of domination', referred to by Foucault (ibid.) as *technologies of power*. However, these different technologies are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they are often used together to shape and change the individual in accordance with the predominant norm in society.

A broad literature within social work has used a similar theoretical approach to examine how the client is constructed in a variety of contexts. This literature ranges from drug abuse treatment (Bjerge and Nielsen 2013; Petersson 2013) and family treatment (Johner and Durst 2017) to social support (Mik-Meyer 2004) and social services (Järvinen and Mik-Meyer 2003). In this research, the focus has primarily been directed at either technologies of the self or technologies of power as a means of constructing the clients. In line with the arguments developed above, we argue that different technologies are shaped together, rather than separately, and thus, they must be examined as such. The client is worked upon by means of a broad set of technologies to make the service users motivated to change their self and current life situation. The question is how such work is carried out and with what possible effects.

Methodological considerations

This article is based on a study conducted in a medium-sized Swedish municipality that since the 1990s has introduced and organized various types of market reforms such as customer choice models and the procurement of welfare services. This specific municipality can thus be seen as an illustrative case for a broader trend in introducing market-like reforms in the welfare area. Introducing market-like reforms is an ongoing trend, not least in social work. Within this

municipality, social work is organized in a way where clients may either contact the providers themselves or be transferred to the providers through a decision made by the social services or other authorities. The social workers, on the other hand, are contracted to deliver social work according to what is stipulated in the procured contracts between their employers and the municipality.

The study is based on interviews with sixteen providers of social work in this municipality, conducting their work within six different companies (private or municipal) specialized in the areas of family treatment, social psychiatry, drug and alcohol abuse-treatment, guidance and counselling. Ten women and six men participated in the study. Interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. They were all recorded digitally, and the interviews were then transcribed verbatim. Names were given pseudonyms, and the companies' names were replaced with a general term for the specialized areas that distinguish them, e.g. family treatment, social psychiatry, addiction treatment, guidance and support. The social workers all carried out their work within the front line of the organizational structure, as commissioners within the municipality's market of social services.

The interviews were semi-structured, with a number of open-ended questions with a focus on the organizational context, how to conduct social work in a quasi-market, working on commission, the significance of interacting with clients, and desired ways of working in the frontline with clients.

The analysis has been guided by the research questions, and informed by the theoretical approach presented. We approached the interview transcripts as a conversation between researcher and interviewee, where meaning is co-constructed. The interviews were analysed by identifying regularities of how social workers describe their work of providing services for clients in a context of a procurement structure. Here, attention has been directed to how social workers describe both the desirable ways of conducting social work with clients in a procurement context and how such work is carried out. Specific attention has been directed to the technologies used to form clients as motivated to actively choose a provider and to actively engage with the procured social work offered.

Motivation in procured social work practice

The analysis is presented in three sections. The first section directs attention to the social work with clients in a procurement setting seen as desirable by the social workers interviewed. The second section illustrates how technologies of self are used in work upon clients' motivation, while the third section highlights how also technologies of power are used.

Commissions by clients

Within the context of a municipal procurement structure, social workers are procured by the municipality to provide specialized social services to the frontline. At the same time, they are procured by individual clients within the market of services available. As such, the providers offer particular contracted expertise to delimited groups of clients, using specific methods and conducting work on the basis of specific values, distinguishing them as specialized actors on a social work market. Within this context, the clients are expected to be both able and motivated to make their choices. This is illustrated in the quote below, where Klas, a social worker working with guidance and support, talks about how to deliver specialized services in the frontline of procured social work:

> It's all about commissions. That is, you are commissioned by the client. It becomes, so to speak, an agreement between provider and client. [. . .] It's about taking on a commission from the client. This means that it is necessary for clients to seek help by themselves [. . .] I don't have my agenda about people, what their lives should be about, what they should seek help for. I can have an idea about what might be of help, but that is conditional upon, sort of, that the starting point is what the client herself experiences as worrying.

(Klas, guidance and support)

As illustrated in the quote above, the social worker Klas stresses the importance of commissions from clients, describing their work as dependent on clients actively seeking help and giving their assignment to the provider. The social worker and client are expected to find common ground by connecting the client's own worries to what help the social worker can provide. Such reasoning on the actions of providers and clients in this market setting directs attention to certain expectations of clients. Expectations are that clients must be able to contact a provider and present a problem, and then determine if the provider's expertise can be matched with the client's commission. In other words, the desired starting point of the contact is that the client is actively choosing a provider and is able to commission a problem. Such reasoning also reoccurs in ways of describing clients who commission social work as more motivated.

> If you seek help, you are more motivated. So then you know, I'm searching for help because I need it. But if you arrive here with assistance, it can sometimes be like this, "I came here because they said that I had to". Because you may not be there right . . . But then it is . . . Some do become [motivated], get there, and some have their guard up.
>
> (Berit, family treatment)

Berit argues that there can be a difference between clients seeking help on their own and clients commissioned by a third party. In this specific case, the third party referred to as assistance is a social work case manager who can refer clients to family treatment. The distinction and how clients are separated into two groups is related to their motivation, where the ones seeking help themselves are considered more motivated than the other clients. The clients that, on the other hand, are advised to the provider by a third party are described in terms of not initially being motivated, but that they may become motivated for the provider's offered expertise. As such, client motivation is described as a desired prerequisite for the social work interaction on the market, but also an attribute that can, and needs to be shaped, e.g. clients need to be and become motivated.

It is in this context that working with the motivation of clients to create the desired buyer of social services is brought to the fore. As previously mentioned, this is in line with how motivational work has become a central part of social work in general (Bergmark and Lundström 1998; Svensson 2009; Denvall, Nordesjö, and Ulmestig 2020), and in procured social work in particular (Härnbro 2019). The client's motivation, the freedom of choice, and the commissioning of a provider on a market are described as the norm and the desired end when producing social work within this setting. In the following sections, we will focus on the technologies identified as means to guide and direct social work in a landscape of providers and commissions where the client's freedom and motivation are described as desirable ends.

Dialogue and technologies of the self

If motivation appears as a desirable characteristic among the clients, the question is how such motivation is supposed to be shaped. So, let us now draw attention to how social workers conducting their work in different service providers describe their meeting with the clients approaching the specific provider, with a focus on how the clients may become motivated. We have interviewed social workers in a range of organizations, offering various services to different categories of clients. In all these organizations, we can see a *therapeutic rationality* reappearing, where the social worker emerges as carrying a specific kind of expertise in their respective area. On the basis of this expertise, the social worker offers clients a service provider with their specific services. The desirable way to motivate the client is to create, by various means, a willingness among the clients, to listen to and follow the expertise and advice of the social worker.

In the following description of a typical meeting with a client, a social worker engaged in providing advice and support illustrates how such work can be carried out. Such work is based on getting the client to turn their gaze inwards, into their selves, to evoke a will to change themselves, their way of thinking and behaving, i.e. to work upon themselves.

> I meet many parents that get furious about their children, that dare to come here and say: "Sometimes I get so angry that I feel like throwing out the kid, and what should I do when I feel like that?". And just the fact that you dare to come and talk about it, prevents a great deal [. . .] In those situations, we talk [with the clients] about shaking a baby. "What happens when you shake a child? What happens to you when you get these feelings?" As an example: "What could you do instead?" That you shouldn't have to go into that reaction. "What could you do to avoid becoming so angry?"
>
> (Ken, guidance and support)

According to Ken, the social worker does not have all the right answers. Instead, dialogue is the primary means to create change. The social worker seeks to develop motivation in the client by asking curious questions to investigate where the problematic behaviour (in this case, getting angry) comes from and how to prevent it. What happens within you? How does it feel? What is it that makes this happen? How could it be avoided, and can another behaviour be developed? However, in the quote, we can see that such work is based on the client having voluntarily approached the organization and daring to talk about his behaviour. In that sense, the client already has some kind of motivation that can be further worked upon. The client makes himself receptive to the support and advice provided by the social worker. At the same time, it is up to the client to make the suggested interventions and changes in his life situation. And on the basis of these interventions, the social worker then follows how the client is doing.

Confidence in the power of dialogue also reappears in the following quote, where Sofia, a social worker in social psychiatry, describes a scenario where a client talks about his personal financial worries.

> If someone says like this: "I have spent too much pocket money" [. . .] then you start by collecting all the receipts for one week and look at the like: "What have you purchased? Did you need all that, or was it just impulse buying?" [. . .] So that they become motivated and think: "What have I bought, for real?" And then, usually, you start with saving the receipts and count on them. And then they've got a chance to go to the store and return some products.
>
> (Sofia, social psychiatry)

Once again, dialogue is described as a means of evoking motivation in the client. In this case, the social worker Sofia initiates a dialogue by giving the client the task of collecting all the receipts from the previous week. These receipts then become both an illustration of the client's problem of managing his money and a starting point for a conversation about consumption and economy. Once more, the dialogue becomes a means of developing motivation in the client, not by the social worker talking about what is right and wrong, but by stimulating the client to reflect upon himself and his behaviour. What have I really bought? Is everything really necessary? The hope is that such self-examination, in turn, can lead to a change in behaviour.

Another example illustrating the dialogue as a means of creating motivation through self-reflection can be seen in the following quote by Tara, a social worker providing support for families. Tara uses the dialogue to get the client to think about the possible benefits of making specific changes with the backing from the social worker.

> We always try to . . . motivate to: "Could you imagine yourself taking part in this? What do you have to gain from it? What would you gain from not doing these things?" So, all the time you have this, in some way, with all the families, a mindset, that is: "We want to reach this point". And if you see that the progress is not heading that way, then it is time for us to signal this in some way [. . .] in those cases, when it doesn't work out, sort of, then I think that, really, it lies with every single employee to act.
>
> (Tara, family treatment)

Also, in this quote, dialogue is used as a technology of the self. This technology emerges as the desirable way of conducting social work, where the goal is to initiate a self-reflection among the clients through dialogue. The clients should be motivated to take part in the expertise provided and strive in the same direction as the social worker. In other words, regardless of the services offered, the ideal approach is roughly the same: The social worker asks questions, guides and locates the responsibility for bringing about change in the client. However, in the last quote, we can also note that sometimes it happens that the social work carried out does not run according to the norm. In these cases, other means are required.

Voluntary coercion, technologies of power

Although freedom of choice is the norm, and although a great deal of work is done to motivate the clients to change their self and current life situation, this is not always possible. When motivation does not occur, different kinds of pressure to comply are used. Such pressures can be explicit and implicit and can take various forms depending on the category of client and service provider. For some clients, it is the case of being pressured, while for others, it is the case of threats of losing support or having their kids taken into care. Regardless, it is a sliding scale of repressive power expressed through various forms of pressure.

Pressure is in some cases always present, as reflected upon by Cameron, a social worker within social psychiatry.

> Many clients feel a bit pressured to accept this assistance, in order to get home, to be discharged [. . .] But then also, the clients know that "If I say no, then I might not be up for getting discharged [from the hospital]" [. . .] So, it is a bit authoritarian that "The doctor thinks here and now that you need such and such assistance at home, and you will need assistance with cleaning, and you will need assistance with this and that and the other". It might really be the case that they'll need that assistance, but they have not got to that point themselves yet [to realise that they need the assistance]. They are not really motivated, and so.
>
> (Cameron, social psychiatry)

Cameron argues that many clients feel pressured to accept the assistance offered because they have something to lose by saying no to the offer. Saying no might keep them in the hospital rather than being able to return home. Here, the doctor and social worker are clearly positioned as experts, knowing what is best for the client, while the client ought to be 'really motivated' and accept the help offered. The social worker describes such an arrangement as a bit authoritarian but at the same time as a question of motivation. Rather than being a question of having freedom of choice, however, the motivation required is a matter of agreeing to what the experts suggest. Such conceptual confusion within motivational work is common among the social workers. Konny describes this as 'a voluntary coercion':

> Families with children are afraid that the children will be taken into care, and then it is sometimes a voluntary coercion. Where you agree to this to avoid the other. And there is something we work with, but I think we work, that I work, preventively because what I say to all families in principle is that 'we should do a common job here now to get rid of soc[ial services]'. [. . .] But this investigation and the part about the children that we are working on, to get rid of that pressure. And then it's about doing a job with hope.
>
> (Konny, family treatment)

One recurrent issue in social work with the aim of motivating clients to change their self and current life situation is how the work is imbued with statutory requirements that might act against the interest of the individual. In this case, a given condition within the field of family treatment in Sweden is an ever-present threat that the children could be taken into care of by the social services. As such, the families in family treatment are always in a position of not being able to make a free choice, if this free choice were to go against what the social services, family treaters, and the lawmakers prefer. Accordingly, the tension between freedom and coercion is dissolved. Rather than

being two separate positions possible to inhabit, the work centres around voluntary coercion, where freedom never excludes coercion. This voluntary coercion could be explicit and implicit, as expressed by Jannicke, working at addiction treatment.

> They are here because they have a decision to be here, and it can be more or less, voluntarily, so to speak. It can be a bit of a disguised threat, where 'we want you to go have some conversations, at the addiction clinic', based on the report when it comes to children or something like that. Or it could be, people who have been away at a treatment centre and get a flat provided by the social services when they get back home, then it is included in the package, that you should visit with us here. And that's the old way, the social services, to have control over people in some way. [. . .] I usually say threat, but you must not say that, without conditions. And then it is also about maintenance support to get their social assistance simply. And it's not a good starting point, as you understand [. . .] so, such things rarely work. Relatively rare in any case. It is better that people want to make a change than that they are forced to make one.
>
> (Jannicke, addiction treatment)

The norm continuously is the motivated client, a subject constructed as having a free will to make a change and to be the change themselves. However, there is often a disguised threat forcing the client to receive the help offered. The social workers use different concepts to describe the same thing, how the clients are being disciplined. The social workers are 'a bit authoritarian', using 'voluntary coercion', and making 'disguised threats'. The social work carried out includes different kinds of pressure to force the clients to make the 'right' choice, using different technologies to achieve this (Rose 1989). The client is thus left with two choices, either becoming motivated enough to accept the help offered or to be coerced into accepting such help. Should the client not accept this logic at all, it can create enormous consequences such as having children put into care, losing their home, or getting sanctioned financially (cf. Järvinen and Mik-Meyer 2003). To conclude, freedom of choice is imperative, but not enough. Therefore, clients who are not considered motivated are subjected to different technologies to coerce them into developing a motivation where they 'want' to receive the help offered (cf. Rose 1989). They are disciplined in the name of freedom.

Concluding reflections

In this article, we have drawn attention to how the client is constructed in a context where social work is formed by a procurement arrangement in terms of motivation. Empirically, the analysis is based on interviews with social workers providing procured services, with a focus on their way of describing their work of providing social services and their relation to presumptive clients. The analysis presented is informed by a constructionist approach to governing and the construction of clients in the advanced liberal society of today, utilizing various technologies of the self and of power.

In line with such an approach, the analysis illustrates how social work takes form in a context where social services are sold, bought, offered and delivered by means of procurement. According to the logic of procurement, firstly, a range of providers competes in order to be contracted and thus be able to deliver social services to a certain amount of time and with specific means (cf. Härnbro, Dahlstedt, and Herz 2021; Öjehag-Pettersson and Granberg 2019). Secondly, clients are expected to choose among the variety of providers offering their social services in the market of social work (cf. Katzin 2020). Here, social work is shaped in terms of specific expectations on the products of the providers as well as on the needs of the clients. Such results are in line with the results of previous studies on procurement arrangements and their implementation in different parts of the welfare state, where competition is expected to result in both efficiency and productivity (cf. Dahlstedt et al. 2019; Holmqvist, Fejes, and Nylander 2021). Further, we have illustrated how the ideal client in this arrangement is constructed as being motivated to choose the provider of social services matching their specific needs and interests and displaying a will to change and to take part in the services offered.

The issue of client motivation and working upon clients' motivation is a predominant discourse in social work practice and research (Bergmark and Lundström 1998; Svensson 2009; Denvall, Nordesjö, and Ulmestig 2020). A recurrent topic in this discourse has been how to deal with clients' resistance to change, and how to evoke such change by means of motivational work and specific methods, such as motivational interviewing (Revstedt 2014; Forrester, Westlake, and Glynn 2012; Wahab 2005). In this article, we have further investigated motivational work of the construction of the motivated client within a procurement setting. If the motivated client is the norm in the setting of procured social work, the question is how the providers of social work in this setting describe their work in relation to clients seen as motivated – or not. As illustrated in the analysis, there is a range of different means used by social work providers to work upon the clients in the name of motivation. The means of conducting social work that appears desirable in interviews with the providers is based on a therapeutic rationality, primarily in the form of dialogue used as a means of working upon the motivation of the clients. Among the different ways of mobilizing dialogue in relation to the clients, the providers use techniques such as posing curious questions, displaying the clients' problems, and inviting the clients to engage in self-reflection. Another way of mobilizing dialogue is by evaluating the possible gains of participating in the social services offered. The aim of such dialogue is to make the clients motivated enough to work upon their selves, as part of a larger project of changing their lives. When using such technologies of the self, the providers become 'engineer[s] of the human soul' (Rose 1989, 3), an expert on working upon the client's motivation and guiding them into the future.

Although such technology is seen as desirable in the providers' way of conducting social work in relation to the clients, it is not always that such technology is seen as suitable or possible to mobilize to work upon the clients' motivation. In the cases where technologies of the self do not seem applicable, other means are at hand in the form of sanctions. These sanctions can be more or less disguised threats like the withdrawal of socio-economic benefits or the placement of children into residential care. However, such technologies of power are not solely used in the last instance. Technologies of power are rather ever-present, used as an option alongside the technologies of the self. The interrelation between technologies of the self and power is also explicitly captured when the providers describe their motivational work as 'a bit authoritarian', where there is a possibility of using 'voluntary coercion' as well as 'disguised threats'.

Accordingly, the various technologies (of the self and power) are not opposed to each other. Still, they may instead be used in relation to each other as a means of working upon the motivation of the clients. These technologies are used in two aspects. First, by motivating the client to choose a provider matching the specific needs and interests of the client. Second, by motivating the client to make a change, by taking part in the services offered and by following the guidance and expertise of the provider to make a change in their lives.

Such an argument relates to a well-known discussion in social work as a profession as well as a field of research concerning the relation between support and control in social work practice (cf. Lipsky 2010; Merete Solvang 2020; Nybom 2012; Pettersson 2011). This relation between support and control has historically reappeared in a variety of shapes, where social work practice, in different times and different places, seems to take the form not of either support or control but rather in the form of support as well as control (cf. Järvinen and Mik-Meyer 2003; Fassin 2015; Rivest and Moreau 2015). What we have been able to illustrate in this article empirically is how this relationship reappears and is shaped by the procurement apparatus in today's advanced liberal society. This apparatus operates by means of organizing and providing a wide range of welfare services, such as social work, in the name of freedom of choice. For the apparatus to operate, the clients need to be fostered into choosing subjects in the name of motivation (cf. Katzin 2020). However, no one can be motivated enough, as we all constantly require motivational work. We are all expected to work on ourselves to become drivers of change, investing in ourselves and our future, in our life, and in society at large. Relating to Rose (1996, 17), as part of the advanced liberal society,

we are all 'obliged to be free' and make use of our powers of freedom in order to realize our potential in the future. However, in social work within the procurement apparatus, the freedom of the client seems to be intimately related to the constant possibility of both sanctions and more or less disguised threats of sanctions. Once more, in the advanced liberal society of today, social work contains elements of both support and control, or, as characterized in this article, technologies of the self as well as power.

This, in turn, addresses questions relating to what social work has become, what it could be, as well as what it ought to be. Social work practice is guided by ambitious goals and even emancipatory ambitions, such as social justice, equal rights, inclusion, and recognition. Accordingly, social work is expected to serve the clients' need for support to become equal participants in society (cf. Ferguson 2008; Butler-Warke, Yuill, and Bolger 2020). Social work practitioners meet not one particular target group but a diverse range of clients with different needs. The promise made according to a market logic is that everyone has the possibility to choose whatever they want and become whoever they wish to be, as long as they are motivated to and able to choose the right path (cf. Rose 1996; Ong 2006). The question is what implications such a promise has for social work. What happens when social work is turned into a continuous work upon the clients' motivation, with the aim of changing the client's powers of the self, as a means of changing their lives? When everybody may become motivated, yet no one seems to be fully motivated? Who are the ones deemed not motivated enough and thus made the target of specific interventions? And who seems impossible to become motivated? If social work in advanced liberal times becomes a matter of freedom of choice and motivation, what happens to those who choose not to make active choices, who for various reasons are unable to make active choices, and who are thus excluded from the market of social work? These questions are of great importance to address empirically with a focus on how social work is conducted in advanced liberal times, in the relation between emancipatory expectations and current preconditions.

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