

**Mixed Welfare Systems and Hybrid Organisations –
Changes in the Governance and Provision of Social
Services.**

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Introduction

In this contribution the focus will be on social services with the hypothesis that their development raises major questions for the future of welfare societies. Where the term „social services“ is used below, it is meant to describe those services to which a political community attributes not only an individual value but at the same time a considerable value for groups, settings and finally society at large. Such a definition exceeds the core area of welfare services such as health and social care and it includes as well services in the field of culture and education. Many of them are personal services and there are tight limits for substituting direct personal interaction by technical tools and media – machines do not care. The limits to increasing the productivity of these services and at the same time rising needs have created a crucial problem concerning their future status. To what degree will welfare states be able to fund and/or provide such services in the future as guaranteed offers for their citizens? What should be the role of markets and individual consumers, and what finally should be the contribution of civil society and the third sector?

Facing this debate it will be shown why the notions of hybrid organisations and of social enterprises may be useful in order to overcome stereotypical answers which think of the future of such services either on a bipolar axis of state and market funding/provision or as something that at least in parts could be handed over to the citizens, the civil society and the third sector. A viewpoint that differs clearly from these positions will be developed in three steps.

First of all it will be argued that in the field of social services one can find „shifts in the welfare mix“ (Evers 1990) where the outcome is not yet clear. There are however indications, that the traditional clear cut separation and the either/or of market based, state-based and civil society bound/third sector-based service-units has become increasingly insufficient; instead, one faces service systems and institutions that are shaped simultaneously by all three possible „sectors“, their values and steering mechanisms.

Secondly it will be argued that this mix is concerning the inner structure of services and their respective providing institutions. While one has in the last decades become already accustomed to state-market mixes, all too often a third element has been overlooked: the

presence of civil society with its associations and various forms of community in what has been termed as the *hybrid* structure of many social service organisations.

This hybrid character can be seen as a strength, and the respective organisations then as *social enterprises*. But obviously, since the developments that lead to processes of hybridisation are ambiguous, they constitute a challenge for what are seen as core values of welfare like equality, welfare guarantees and democratic transparency.

Against this background, the concluding remarks take up some issues at the intersection of debates on governance and of debates on the role of the third sector (for the European debate see: Evers / Laville 2004). On the one hand hybridisation points at the fact that there are reasons to doubt the distinctiveness of a clear cut third sector. On the other hand a focus on third sector organisations may be helpful in developing the debate on new forms of governance.

1. Changes in the historical configuration of markets, welfare states and civil society – the driving force behind the emergence of hybrid organisations

Looking at the patterns of mutual linkages between the welfare state, market elements and civil society, three traditional key characteristics will be presented as a first step. In a second step it will be shown that these characteristics have changed in a way that gives room to what is called here hybrid and entrepreneurial forms of services provision, located in the public space that encompasses both state-public and third sector based initiatives and organisations.

Three hallmarks of traditional European welfare systems

The first classical hallmark can be described as *the primacy of the state and of hierarchical steering mechanisms* in the process of development of professional social service systems. The major part of welfare services has run through numbers of stages of uniformisation and centralisation – such as the move from mutual help organizations to a state run service in health. All in all, in most countries the more stable, costly and central welfare services like social insurance, the system of health and education and labour market services were finally by the late 1960s highly professionalised, standardised and centralised services. Furthermore, for a long time the developments and patterns of governance in the latter areas have set the

standards of orientations for welfare reformers who hoped to develop more decentralized services (such as in care of the elderly and child care) in a way that would allow them to reach the same level of a centrally steered and guaranteed universalism as in the health and education services (see for the German historical example: Evers and Sachße 2003).

One can be much shorter with regard to the second hallmark of the classical welfare state. Up until recently this is concerning the *clear separation of structuring principles and spheres of influence* between the state public and the private market sector. This is mirrored as well in the difference of the dominant steering mechanisms for both sectors. Public administration and private management techniques, the ethos of civil *servants* (sic) working “in the public interest” and the ethos of skilled industrial work and competition were fairly different. There was not only a dividing line between public administration and private business - they represented nearly two different worlds and visions, where either hierarchies or markets set the tone.

A third hallmark is concerning *the role and impact of civil society* in the development of institutions of the welfare state and social services. In order to develop this argument it is important first to explain the term “civil society”. It is used to differentiate between two dimensions- even if they are intertwined - of a society that is to some degrees a “civic” On the one hand one constitutional dimension for a civil society is its ability to create a “public sphere” made up by citizens with the rights to speak out and associate freely (Cohen & Arato 1995): a society is then civil to the degree that the rivalry between organized interests and associations representing them can be “civilised”. Hence civil society is about the presence of politics in the social life of a (republican and democratic) political community.

On the other hand a second dimension can be found which has been brought to the foreground by communitarian thinkers, (Etzioni 1995, Putnam 2000), and by the debates on voluntary action, user involvement, self help, the third sector and welfare pluralism (Evers 1990; Johnson 1998) Here the participation of citizens is characterised foremost in terms of their active social participation, their role in service associations, school boards, voluntary work, community life and similar activities.

Against this background one could say that the development of welfare states up to the 1970s have both strengthened and weakened civil society and the impact of its actors and networks

on the governance of welfare services. Their impact has been strengthened with regard to the first dimension- the building up of systems of collective interest representation (see e.g. the German example: Zimmer 1999). In this context however, the degree and character of the “social embeddedness” (Granovetter 1992) of service structures, their economy and governance has changed. Their future has become a matter of votes, big politics, struggles of interests on central levels of vertical corporatist systems but not anymore of the local action and social participation or material contributions of local citizens and groups. Civil societies citizens became, as Putnam puts it (2000, 46), “...reasonably well-informed spectators of public affairs, but many fewer of us actually partake in the game” – a statement that was and is partly still true in matters of the governance and provision of social services.

A reversal of trends - The changing faces of welfare in the last decades

What has become visible latterly however, is a reversal of trends. First of all this can be shown as far as the primacy of the state and of hierarchical structures and steering mechanisms is concerned. This is shown not only by attempts to preserve or upgrade the role of federal and municipal political and administrative levels in general, but as well by the part of the present trend towards decentralisation and “devolution” in social welfare in Europe. Even if the concern with central standards is strong, the general attempt is still to give more responsibility and autonomy to the single local organisations and service providers. Local service managers, while acting in a framework of general standards, have to find their own strategies in order to respond to local needs. Hospitals, and even schools, are seen as organisations that should work with their own budgets - and with the introduction of social markets and a variety of providers there is an additional incentive to create a new balance of universal standards and a diversity of service providers.

This leads to the observation that the second characteristic of the classical welfare state, the separation of different steering mechanisms has been considerably weakened as well. What is to be observed over recent decades is the trend towards an increasing mixing of market- and state-based organisational features and steering mechanisms (for an overview see Pierre 2000). Welfare states increasingly define themselves as purchasers and regulators of services provided by private and non-profit businesses. At the same time the *new public management* phenomenon has resulted in a restructuring of public administration according to the routines as developed in private enterprises - concerning financing and investment, personnel management, and performance management, (Pollitt 2000). While for a long time

bureaucratic rules had a strong impact on markets, nowadays market logic invades the public and third sector, (Dees 1998). In various sub-sectors of the social services, the steering mechanisms of hierarchy, networks and markets overlap and intertwine. Traditional forms of corporatist “private interest government” (Streeck / Schmitter 1985) have given way to new forms of policy networks, wherein social actors and organisations meet (Scharpf 1997). This leads to the central point of this contribution: to see organisations that are geared by such a plurality of steering mechanisms as hybrid organizations.

Finally there are many signs that the third hallmark of the classical welfare state – an institutionalisation of the impact of civil society in terms of rather centralized forms of corporate governance, accompanied by a weakening of the more dispersed forms of the active social participation of citizens – has as well lost its significance. The last decade has seen hundreds of publications that dealt with user involvement, local initiatives, self help, local public private partnerships, alliances and the contributions of various third sector actors - not only in terms of concept-building but as well in terms of describing the empirical realities of services located in the “proximity” (Laville /Sainsaulieu 1998) of people and their every day life. While the bulk of such processes of getting people and social networks involved may be found among third sector organisations, they can be found also in local state-based and municipal organisations. *All the three reversals of trends sketched here support the development towards **hybrid organisations** of social service provision, in both the state/municipal and the third sector.*

2. Social service organisations as hybrids – suggesting an analytical concept

Before sketching the concept of “hybrids” as it has been developed in the course of recent research of the author it may be useful to begin with some illustrative examples of what it may mean in practice. They have been taken from a study (op cit.) that has tried both to develop the concept theoretically and to link this with empirical evidence in the field of schools, culture and care for the elderly (Evers/Rauch/Stitz 2002; for the concept of hybridisation see as well Laville and Sainsaulieu 1998), Readers are invited to check whether such or similar developments and examples can be drawn from observations in the same or other social service areas in their countries. Obviously in each country then the balance of state- and market-elements and of an active impact of the local civil society will be different.

Maybe in France it will hardly be conceivable to look for schools, when it comes to collect hints for a stronger role of the local context on services; then again however, in child care services such developments are much more present in France than e.g. in Sweden.

Getting towards a hybrid service provider – some examples from Germany

In the sector of schools the shock of the European wide “PISA evaluation” of educational systems (OECD 2001) that showed that in many aspects the performance of the German school system is rather poor when compared with other countries, has strengthened those reformers who think that the school needs besides pedagogical reforms above all more market elements like autonomy and competition in order to take new decisions and risks. One calls today for budgets at the disposal of the single schools and their directors, the right to choose their teachers and personnel themselves (e.g. for additional services like day care, time limited courses and projects etc.); schools – in the framework of national rules for standards and quality management – develop their own profiles. This should give a basis of experiences for being able to redefine constantly what is meant by “quality”. There is however another strand of the debate to be observed. Often it is labelled as the challenge to “open schools internally and externally” (see: Holzapfel 2000; Hurrelmann 2001). Opening up to the internal side means to give a real saying and a more responsible role to all that take part in the daily running of the school, especially to the pupils. Opening up to the outside means such things as upgrading the role of parent support associations, which contribute collectively to a symbolic identification with the schools’ mission but as well in material and financial terms to the resources of the school (e.g. by supporting the schools’ day care function which is underdeveloped in Germany, where schools are seen as institutions that have only a pedagogical and training task with courses that only run in the morning). Furthermore this opening up to the outside can mean to develop various partnerships – with the business sector representing a. o. the later employers, third sector organisations that operate in the city quarter and where civic education can take other and perhaps more effective forms than black desk learning. The school thereby mutates from the lowest level of a hierarchy to an institution that is more localized and embedded (see for illustrative examples Evers u .a. 2002, 72f.). All in all: in the German school system, while staying clearly public and state based, market elements and the “social capital” of contributions from the local society and community life get more importance, with some of them being even envisaged as official components. That is an example for what could be meant by “hybridisation”.

Other illustrative examples can come from the sector of culture and leisure facilities, where in Germany possibly one has become most suited to deal with such services as hybrids (see: Wagner 2000; Röbbke and Wagner 2001); here the respective trends are concerning state- and municipal based as well as third sector organisations, with some of them shifting from one “sector” to another:

- A theatre simultaneously modernizes its management, upgrades the role of the support association that accompanies it by tradition, intensifies public relation work, the search for sponsorships and transforms its legal status from a municipal owned organisation to a company with limited liability for purposes of the public good (GemGmbH); yet it stays a public and not for profit organisation.
- A museum builds up a museum shop and café, run professionally and with a clear commercial target; but a large part of the personnel are volunteers and the whole operation serves the aim to get additional resources for its global cultural mission as a public service.
- A municipal swimming hall that would, due to financial difficulties of the municipality otherwise have been closed, changes its legal status; it is now carried by a multi-stakeholder association; the municipality as one of the stakeholders underwrites its commitment to a fixed financial contribution, the key factor for the possibility to uphold and develop such a construction is the ability of the association to take entrepreneurial activities for bettering management and services, address new user groups etc.; once again market and civil society elements match with the purpose of a public social service (for this and other examples see again Evers a. o. 113f.)

The analytical concept of hybrid organisations - four dimensions

In the context of analysing such and similar experiences the concept of “hybrids“ has been further developed and differentiated. The impact of the respective components of state, market and of the social capital of civil society may vary much. But the value of thinking service organisations under the aspect of their possible hybrid character lies in the fact that this can sensitise for the role of the less visible components (like e.g. the civil society/social capital - components that help a public school to persist). The perspective is on the tensions and as well on the side-effects of an intertwining of the different components and rationales, but as well concerning the question, how to bring out best the potential of such a hybrid character and how to restrain its risks. Organisations that manage this to some degree have been labelled as “social enterprises” (Borzaga and Defourny 2001; Evers 2001). Four

different dimensions of hybridisation have been distinguished by Evers / Rauch / Stitz (2002).

The first dimension of hybridisation concerns *resources*. Taking up again the school example, it becomes clear that market components can take shape by a differentiation to be observed within state-financing – that is, when additional financing can be acquired in the course of a public subscription to take part in a model project. The supportive elements from the civil society that have material effect vary very much and they have been assembled by this author under the label of “social capital”. Usually in the debate on the third sector, only two of these elements are mentioned, volunteering and donations, but there are many more resources to be taken into account - like the links with foundations, various kinds of (public-private) partnerships, and the impact of special support- associations

Two other dimensions that are constitutive for a hybrid character of an organisation are *goals* and *steering mechanisms*. In the school system for example, steering takes place by *market* mechanisms, as far as parent can choose between different public schools that compete for pupils; there is a *hierarchical* steering mechanism at work simultaneously in the setting of curricula and quality standards; finally the local *civil society* has a saying, such as through the school board, or the influence exerted by a parent support association. These steering mechanisms that operate simultaneously have to be seen in conjunction with organizational goals. The fact that neither a state-public nor third sector service provider is directed by the one overarching goal of being ‘for profit’ constitutes at the same time a chance and challenge; there is the chance to constitute a complex agenda made up by the various goals, but the challenge as well to balance and to keep the diversity of goals compatible. Taking once again the example of a school, one can see that state-based quality criteria should be fulfilled, while it might be tried to put the accent on a special offer and service that helps in the market rivalry with other local schools. Finally the linkages with partners in the neighbourhood may influence the agenda as well.

The processes of hybridisation with regard to resources, goals and steering mechanisms can finally lead to search a new and different *corporate identity* that reflects the multiple roles and purposes of an organisation. In the interviews with leaders of organisations (Evers/Rauch/Stitz 2002, 72f.) there were recurrent remarks like: “We aren't anymore a public institution but rather a social enterprise” (a school director);”we want to be a well managed

enterprise and simultaneously an institution, that expresses the core values of Diakonie – giving extra time for social and personal care (the leader of a home care service run by the Diakonie, a protestant welfare agency); ”We have to learn to respect the commercial dimension of what we are doing, cope with state regulations and at the same time get better rooted locally by more 'fund and friend raising' “ (the director of a museum). These quotations have been taken here to illustrate an unfinished and perhaps to a degree open process of search for an identity - beyond the traditional ones of being a clear cut public service, private enterprise or third sector organisation.

3. The costs and advantages of the present processes of hybridisation

Organisations that are undergoing shifts as described above give visibility to both problems and potentials. Some challenges have a more basic character, while others may be transitional. It has to be taken into account that the hybridisation processes can be mostly not seen as a part of an overarching strategy but must rather be understood as kind of ‘coping strategies’.

Risks and potentials of hybridisation

Services and organisations that have several dimensions, and cultivate them, may have the advantage to answer to different expectations at a time – expectations and goals that otherwise seem only to be realized on each others’ cost. In practice this could mean that an opening up of the public sector might give new possibilities. Again, taking schools, their transformation into more autonomous social enterprises could make them more autonomous, while the framework of state regulations could help for keeping uniform standards.

However one may imagine at the same time the costs of such heterogeneity. To what degree will it be possible to maintain the integrative tasks of a public school system, for example, once competition begins to force them towards selecting as early as possible those pupils that are “bad risks” and “bad investments” (pupils whose successful education needs more input while their misbehaving may spoil the school image)? Furthermore, the budgeting logic of public financing and the logic of making risky investments, the logic of making quick management decisions and the logic of participation will always be in a state of tension with each other.

Besides such structural questions, there are others that have more to do with the concrete face of the processes of hybridisation, given the present policy context. In practice one can find both processes of *deprivation* and *enrichment*. What enrichment of services may mean can be easily established, if one thinks of the examples of schools and cultural institutions already mentioned. However at the same time such advantages have to be set against processes of deprivation that are effected by the retreat of political authorities, the downgrading of public services and a narrowing of their ambitions. A very telling example here is the creeping commercialising of local public cultural institutions in the context of shrinking public support and the need to operate in a more business-like manner.

Another challenge can be expressed by the terms *diversity* and *inequality*. Perhaps the best example for this ambiguity can be found in the coexisting two child care systems in German - the patchy system that has grown with municipal support and responsibility in Western Germany and the all-covering system as it was inherited in the New Länder from the former GDR. The charm of more cultural diversity in the West is however an integral part of its patchy character. In the present debate about schools, a recurrent argument against more autonomy of the single school unit is that more dependence upon local resources and support will then lead to a stronger mirroring of the social and cultural inequalities in a community or city region.

A final pair of intertwined chances and risks is represented by *participation* and *clientilism*. All too easily it is supposed that by giving a greater role to networks of local groups within a public service, then the “civic” side of society will be privileged. However, it is easily forgotten that there is as well the dark side of corporatism, organisational egotism and of networks of traditional elites defending power and privileges. Therefore it is a difficult question as to what degree participative networks should take over part of the room held so far by representative politics and professional autonomy.

From processes to concepts of hybridisation. Making use of hybrids as social enterprises.

The opportunities and difficulties that have been sketched above point to the key role of politics and, more precisely, to the need for concepts of social services and of forms of governance and regulation that strengthen the potentials while limiting the costs of such processes of hybridisation. However, before raising questions of the “good governance” of a mixed welfare system (see, with regard to the recent English experience: Newman 2001) one

should look at the real state of the debate in welfare politics in Europe. The time of ‘pure’ market orientation seems to be in retreat and a kind of new consensual politics has been established on the fact that governance should matter and therefore needs to be modernized. But there are only a few signs that changing forms of governance will imply as well the readiness to include those inputs from the civil society that stem from networks and actors that either manage services themselves or take part in their public provision.

Given such a background, the operational working title of *social enterprises* as it has been suggested in the UK debate, and taken up subsequently by cooperatives or networks of scientists like the EMES group (see the contributions in Borzaga / Defourny 2001) and as it has been defined by the author, represents two things at a time. It describes a present reality and it points at a future, wherein hopefully the crucial element of social enterprises (the presence of civil society and its social capital) can gain more impact and acceptance in the provision of public services. The definition of a social enterprise as a special form of social service provision that takes shape by hybridisation would then be as follows:

- It has a considerable degree of autonomy.
- It is taking up in practice the chance to develop an *entrepreneurial* style of action.
- It is ready to balance *social* goals and steering inputs as they come simultaneously from state-based and local civil society-based stakeholders against its market relations.
- It is safeguarding positive *social* effects not only for the individual users but also for the larger community.

4. Conclusions

It has been argued that changes in the development of welfare states (such as trends towards more autonomy of single service organisations, and an increasing intertwining between state and market spheres), linked with a stronger impact of new forms of participation in civil society, have led to a hybridisation process in many organisations that provide social services. Public services may take characteristics that were traditionally a hallmark of third sector organisations only, such as the strong impact of social capital resources, links to local or groups-specific settings, while vice versa many service providing third sector organisations have been increasingly influenced by state-public funding, purposes and regulations; at the same time managerialism and a competitive environment have grown in importance

throughout. The chances and risks of such processes, such as an increase in diversity inside state-public social services and more competition in the third sector, do share a basic character; but they mirror as well the fact that *the present shifts in welfare mixes and hybridisation processes are not the outcome of strategic choices but rather of coping strategies of actors and organisations concerned under conditions of uncertainty*. By three conclusive remarks it will be attempted to show the implications that arise at those points where the debates on governance and on the third sector meet.

First, there are good reasons to doubt those strands of view in the third sector debate that build on a strong differentiating distinctiveness between third and public sector organizations in the realm of social service delivery. Many third sector organizations build strongly on public rules, programs and money and, vice versa, state public organizations often allow for a considerable degree of direct local and group-related participation. Public services are not only about representative democracy and hierarchical administration but also about local autonomy and various forms of social and civic participation. It is often hard to say where the third sector ends and the public sector begins. Drawing a line between the state-public and the third sector is thus an essentially political task.

Second, once the notion of a sector is seen as secondary to the need for analyzing the impact of different “principles” in a given field of welfare, one comes to the point where in a mixed welfare system it will not be ‘sector’ that matters but rather the balance of the competing principles that structure a policy field and the organizations to be found therein. A similar argument has been made already by Perri 6 and Diana Leat (1997), when they argued that in England the “voluntary *sector*” was in a way a strange and late invention that may detract the attention from what the principle of “voluntary *action*” (the label that had been used earlier) can do throughout the public field. It would be sheer sophistry, therefore, simply to identify the benign effects of building a more civic society with the growth of a third sector.

Finally the third and last conclusive remark is about the use of the civil society metaphor in the debate about new forms of governance. Here the contribution of the third sector debate, given the argument developed above, might consist in its sensibility for the links between the issues of governance and provision, and between political and socioeconomic aspects of public services. A lot of the debate on civil society and governance restricts itself to the impact of peoples’ association upon participation in matters of politics – as through voicing

concerns and negotiating agreement. In contrast to that, the debate on the third sector has always been more focused on social and economic participation – on peoples’ roles in voluntary work, material self help and mutual support, for example. It should be underlined that these forms of a seemingly ‘apolitical social participation’, are in reality an important complement of political participation. Putnam argues that in the face of professionalized services and “politics at a distance” (2000, 341), the interest in and competences for a qualified public reasoning might get lost. Participation and an active civil society in terms of critical reasoning does presuppose *real experiences of the delivery of public services* by the citizenry. These can come about by their involvement in civil society as co-operators or stakeholders of service-organizations, and by everyday forms of commitment and material participation.

With an eye on the debate about governance, the third sector and civil society, the contribution to be made by “networks” is thus critical. First of all they should be understood in a large sense, including both political participation and voluntary action. Second, when it comes to evaluate the latter, such things as voluntary commitment and day by day participation should not be seen as just exceptional features, in service niches or as parts of a separate “third sector”. The argument should be that governance for a more civic society needs to encompass a degree of active citizen involvement by being part of the design of the everyday “mainstream”-services of a welfare society - in health, social care, education and culture, for example. Only by taking up such challenges, will civil society truly flourish and will civil society rhetoric get a more precise meaning for the future both of governance and of forms of provision of social services. It is hoped that the concept of *hybrid organizations* and *hybridization* will contribute to this process.

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