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ABSTRACT

The relationship between life history, gender, and the discourse of modernization was examined from the perspective of a researcher with extensive experience performing evaluations about modernization within human services in Denmark. Three stories about site-based management in two human service institutions—a youth center and a boarding school for autistic children—were presented to illuminate fragments of the complex condition that modernization represents. One story, which was told by a female superintendent, reflects feelings of skepticism and professional pride and discusses modernization in terms of development. A second story, which was told by a male superintendent, stresses the challenges and criticism encountered during modernization. In analyzing the stories, the author explored the following themes: (1) the discourse of modernization; (2) pre-existing or interpretive narratives; (3) the notion of the dialectical, liberated, and dispersed subject and the various theoretical forms in which life histories emerge; (4) the concepts of subject and surface and their relationship to the discourse of life history and modernization; (5) fluent and fixed icons of life history; (6) lost virginity and floating space as images of modernization; and (7) rituals of passage, storytelling, imagination, and the researcher's voice. (Fourteen endnotes and 27 references are included.) (MN)

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Linda Andersen

Telling Modernization: Three Voices

Life History, Gender and the Discourse of Modernization

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Life History Project
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Telling Modernization: Three Voices. Life History, Gender and the Discourse of Modernization

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TELLING MODERNISATION: THREE VOICES

Life History, Gender and the Discourse of Modernisation

When one listens to the rhetoric of modernisation a variety of voices emerge^a. The voices of scepticism, challenge and reflexion visualize three typical 'scenarios of modernization'. These sentiments, voiced by a male and female manager in human service, infiltrate and enlighten the discourse of the Danish modernization. Modernization deals with how to democratize and rationalize human service and in general the welfare state. It refers to a governmental program aimed at improving the productivity of the public sector. The program was launched in the 80s and characterized by a combination of "hard" (improvement of productivity and effectiveness) and "soft" (democratic and professional) goals. Modernization seeks to decentralize power from state to local counties, change centralized administrative and financial systems to framework and site-based administration and provide institutions with self-management and a more democratic structure¹. This is not a simple and straightforward exercise. Nor does this exercise produce plain and operational results. The process implies professional results and changes intertwined with emotional reactions, frustrations and repercussions. Thus, in order to understand modernization the subjects of women and men in human service, their life history, as well as social and cultural aspects have to be involved. To commit oneself to democratic processes of modernization is very much influenced by both the past and the present.

I have been performing evaluations about modernisation within human service for several years (Andersen, 1998a & b; 1996; 1994; 1992; in press). In this chapter I present three stories about site-based management in two human service institutions: a youth centre and a boarding school for autistic children. They illuminate fragments of the complex condition that modernization represent. I have been quite occupied with how to bridge between constitutional dimensions of how employees and users navigate in modernization. In this chapter I offer a cocktail combining narration, life history and a discursive perspective. The narratives are representations of everyday

^a This chapter is a revised version of *Lost Virginity and Floating Space. Three Stories about Site-Based Management, Life History, and Discourse*. In 'Telling Tales. On Evaluation and Narrative. Edited by T. A. Abma. Advances in Program Evaluation. Jai Press 1999

life in human service that seeks to embody life history, gender and a discourse of modernization². I hope to illustrate, how two different voices visualize characteristic positions in the practice of modernization.

I'm quite sceptical of site-based management. Of course, I don't oppose the fundamental idea. But I think democracy has been embraced by management and rationality. This has created an explosive cocktail. Still..., I do believe that more democracy basically begins with the needs of the users of human service.... Too much nowadays relates to money. I'm uncomfortable with how money in human service overrules everything. Once I could offer my know how to other institutions without demanding compensation. That was quite nice!

Female voice

The purpose of site-based management is to develop the institutions and to deinstitutionalise as many residents as possible. From that point of view modernization could be a step forward. But it takes a lot of work and a competitive mind. Most of my staff are positive about the possibility of earning our own money -- soft money'.... It increases the freedom of the institution. We have more options to do what we want. So actually...., today we have more potentials to implement our professional ideas and maybe realize a larger amount of the residents' needs.... I think it's quite a challenge.

Male voice

The presence of one female and one male voice demonstrates, how a perspective of life history transilluminates different strategies of modernization. Thus, a narrative approach can profit from a discursive perspective and vice versa. In the narratives a discourse of modernization has a modelling function, where concepts and experiences like site-based management and democracy are interpreted and managed. And this is where lost virginity and floating space comes to my mind. As images of how to navigate in the modernised human service.

I have quite strong and ambivalent feelings about my research. It's very stimulating that my research is closely related to major parts of human, organizational and political realities. But I want to pursue my academic freedom and to follow methodological and theoretical paths and ideas that are exclusively mine. When being in the research field I do understand why the staff at the human service institutions are so engaged in the promises and problems of

site-based management. But on the other hand I wonder why they have such a hard time controlling themselves and establish a working-atmosphere of co-operation and empathy towards the residents.

Researcher

A third voice, that of the evaluation researcher, adds another flaw to the concept of life history. How and why the choices of methodology, relations to informants, interpretations, and writing are produced influence the stories. In other words, the storyteller's life history shapes the stories told about "the others"³. I try to illustrate this point by introducing three different interpretations of the 'subject'. Since narratives are the voices of the subject it has a crucial meaning how we as researchers interpret and position the subject in our narratives.

A Representation of the Managed Modernisation

When I talk about the discourse of modernisation I seek to identify the ways texts and mode of actions are constructed. The discourse analyses point to substantial concepts and phenomena that establish the pragmatic objectives. How the modernisation programme seek to establish its authority. Questions like: why should human service be modernised; what are the objectives of the modernisation processes; who should be the main actors; how should these objectives be achieved; which concepts and manners of speaking are involved, stand as important to isolate.

Furthermore I suggest that a discourse analyses can profit from a narrative approach. This approach apply the concept of life history in order to understand how the individual manage and interpret the modernisation programme. My ambition is to tell stories that illuminate how individuals in human service institutions relate to the discourses that embed them. The ways the individuals relate to the discourses are dynamic and interpretative. Discourses often opens for a number of directions and interpretations that can be transformed into actions and manners of speaking. However, it is often lost in the distance which processes and phenomena that have significance for how and why individuals interacts with discourses.

I try to reconstruct (some of) the positions and processes from which individuals learn and develop. These positions often embed and intertwine subjective and objective dimensions. By offering a narrative shape I have al-

ready hinted my background. In this process I consolidate my empirical data such as interviews, field rapport and open questionnaires into a textual form - the narrative. When understanding contemporary modernisation I find it crucial to start off by defining a subject. Through the lens of the subject we are able to follow social and individual processes of transformation. Thus, it is these semantic processes that are of interest. The narratives of Vibeke and Finn seek to expose how they manage and understand modern human service. Through their stories we are able to learn more about the fractures and resistances of modernisation - and how they deal with these. Furthermore they also encircle the potentials of this development. The narratives deepen our understanding of how socially and materialistic forms of manifestations - e.g. the modernisation programme - transform through subjective expressions. We are then able to detect how the objective are present in the subjective processing.

A perspective of life history seeks to follow individual processes of transformation in order to learn more about the meaning and associations that accompany these. It is beyond discussion that the modernisation programme install a development that seek more efficiency, rationality and marketization. Whether the programme also make room for more democracy and strengthen a more user-attentive human service still remains to be seen. These tensions and contradictions are very much familiar to Vibeke and Finn. Consequently everyday life in human service could be seen as ongoing processes of negotiation and interpretation. When trying to learn more about the dynamics and ways these processes follow a variety of questions are of interest. Which kind of rationalities and irrationalities do Vibeke and Finn ascribe when developing human service? When democratizing human service organizations which positions are ascribed to employees, managers, clients and politicians? Which strategies do Vibeke and Finn pursue for which reasons? These questions are of interest not because we want to justify the actions of Vibeke and Finn. But because we want to reconstruct their motives and underlying meaning of their actions and interpretations.

Therefore, life history applied to educational and valuation research present a challenge. Life history simultaneously appears as a fixed and a fluid icon of human activities and experiences. It embodies features of culture, context, gender, generation, ethnicity, and modernity. Modern subjective and cultural expressions are given a glimmer of recognition and understanding.

How can we understand the modernizing praxis, strategies and reflections, that Finn and Vibeke are part of? Polemically speaking, life history and biography could be interpreted as a grand theory on a small scale. We just need to get access to the life histories of Finn and Vibeke, then everything falls into place. At the same time, however, life history elucidates the discontinuity and fragmentation present in human life. Involving an interpretation of life history does not provide us with a fixed and well-done stereotype for human behaviour. The methodology of life history does not present itself as a coherent solution to the flimsiness of modernity. Consequently, a life history approach is not able to pinpoint the interplay between subject and society in a static and universal shape. Narratives form a particular configuration in which the subject is given voices to experiences and ambivalence produced by cultural, gender, and generational societal conditions⁹. But these do not assume fixed and static forms, but change over time and in different settings.

Finally I position the researcher as a narrative subject. When telling the stories of how Finn and Vibeke modernize the human service I play my part as well. Narrative as pieces of construction and interpretation is put together by a body, mind and heart. The researcher piece the narrative together, make choices, do interpretations, leave something out and bring other forward. Therefore, I try to reflect my personal and professional life history in a search for possible fragments of meaning to elucidate my narratives.

Scepticism, Development, and Professional Pride: A Female Voice

At first sight the institution appears as a somewhat worn place with large old buildings scattered placed. An old garden surrounds the buildings with marks of gardening. A grey plastered building in a modernist style, located at the end of the garden, disturbs the aura of an old patrician house. Going inside I note the characteristic mix of the professional and private, combining the living room atmosphere with treatment awareness.

Vibeke is a 46-year-old psychologist and the superintendent of Karens' Minde - a tall almost gray-haired women with a gentle and thoughtful radiation. She is quite engaged in the processes of site-based management although she has transformed the core of modernization her own way. The body of human service, she says, is very challenging... and exhausting. The working environment is quite demanding. Let's face it: some of our residents being autistic are meeting their's match. The staff has to be engaged and to keep a distance. They should be empathic and understanding, but also delimiting and balanced. That's why site-

based management confronts the professionals with complex demands. These past years of experimenting with framework allocation have definitely drawn my attention to that⁴. The professionals have to transform old and professional relationships into democratic and equal dialogues. And these changes call for new images and practices between professionals and residents... just as it changes relations between superintendent and staff. These are the paradoxes of the welfare state....and I know from experience that this is a challenge!

I care a lot about creating an engaged and reflective working environment, but it's not easy! We have just finished a one year process of development that had all staff involved. The developmental goals were directed towards supporting a reflexive and theoretical treatment practice. And not the least trying to figure out - how to position the residents as active and respected cooperative parts. Since the staff is around 40 professionals such goals needs patience and long enduring working processes. We had a research consultant to help us, because I don't feel that we are quite capable of managing such processes ourselves.... It's just....sometimes I grow tired of all these changes. I mean..., why can't we just be left in peace with sufficient funding and do our jobs? I think we are doing a pretty good job. Why do we have to reclaim land all the time?

In this sequence Vibeke visualizes the whirlpool of modernization. She describes a human service professionalism, where the reflexive demands of modernity are pride of place. A reflective practice is a vital and inevitable dimension of human service professionalism (Andersen, 1998). Modernization involves economic, organizational, and cultural development processes established through subjective changes. In other words, the program for modernization is demanding and ambitious. In institutional everyday language, the focus is the following: human service institutions are now given funds in the name of site-based management. From this follows a demand for increased formal competence in a number of areas, including savings transferred from year to year, independent earnings that the institution may spend according to its own wishes, flexible budget divisions and nontraditional employment of specialists (Andersen, 1992). The allocated framework of appropriation, which is politically decided, is to be negotiated between the different parts of the institution: superintendents, staff and, possibly, clients. This involves a priority of the different operational costs and activities of the institution. The institution's treatment profile is organized by supervisor and personnel in respect of the general guidelines defined by administration and politicians. The residents and clients are then invited to have a more active and decisive role in the institution. For example by participating in institutional committees where activities and treatment pro-

grams are discussed or by defining and discussing institutional programs for particular clients. These changes require supplementary education and development projects where staff, superintendents, clients, administrators and politicians can acquire this new routine. Below, Finn, another superintendent, adds another aspect to the key position of developmental projects, when he talks of the professionals as monarchs versus cooperative partners.

Challenge, Contractor and Criticism: A Male Voice

The room is quite large and has a dense atmosphere, since this is the weekly staff-meeting at the youth centre. The staff -- half men and women -- are engaged in discussion concerning the possibilities of attracting new target groups. The discussion among the participants indicates that opinions are divided on the question. Finn, the superintendent, interferes by stating different types of arguments. He stresses the challenges connected to a further development of the treatment profile and points to the work-related pleasure and satisfaction due to further professional knowledge; how the promises of site-based management should include young people on the fringes of normal life; how new target groups mean more funding to the youth centre and consequently more staff.

His flow of talk causes different responses from the staff. A woman disputes what she characterizes as an impressive but slightly manipulative advertisement display and enumerates a number of critical remarks. She points to an overworked staff; how the primary target groups receive insufficient treatment due to limited funding; and how a new treatment profile by no means automatically releases higher funding. A male colleague points to other dimensions of the subject discussed. He states a sharp criticism of the administrative management in the county. They speak with many voices when offering site-based management and more democracy and at the same time wanting to manage through detailed regulations. Just as the politicians also seem to have a hard time filling their part. Finn listens to the arguments and the sometimes heated discussion. At some point he closes the discussion concluding that the subject needs to be further developed before an agreement can be reached.

Later, when I'm sitting in his solid and cluttered office, he says: I like to be on the cutting edge of things. This ambition implies a lot of meetings of which not all are equally effective I've to admit. But the reward is a high level of information and the potential of having influence. It's also my impression, that my staff like having a superintendent who is a man of influence! Perhaps this also affects fundings, standards and treatment profiles. Although.... I hope not! I mean..., the size of funding and institutional resources should not be so influenced by the manifestation and position of the superintendent.

I think site-based management has a lot of potentials. Despite all the fuss that the administrators and politicians often cause. Human service has always been very preoccupied with how to create engaging and developing environments. So

the idea that democracy and site-based management should include the residents are nothing new to us. But having said that I want to add, that of course does modernization challenge the professionals. They are confronted with a change of direction, habits, and culture. Earlier the professionals were more like absolute monarchs. The present practice demands a lot of communicative skills and a more refined empathy and understanding of the users lives and actions. So life in human service is both more demanding but also more satisfying.

In the text Finn illuminates further fragments of modernization. He accentuates a personal and engaged approach in the debate about democracy and quality-improvement. At his institution a high-profile management is mixed with a meeting-democracy with a blend of professional criticism. Thus the narratives point to different institutional strategies. Vibeke's practice is focused on a reflexive professionalism, the development of a modern learning organization and a scepticism towards a reckless modernization and the implementation of a market. Finn's practice takes a certain pleasure in the new possibilities of public competition and development that modernization imply and although a certain criticism is expressed this is somehow overruled by the challenge that this developmental program also represent. But their institutional strategies are not drifting phenomena that are free to interpret and model. The described institutional praxis are embedded in a discourse of modernization. It is a discourse that both release and bind. Hereby the discourse offers firm as well as flexible concepts and developmental goals. And one of the structuring principles in order to understand how and why different institutional strategies and practices are generated could be to involve a perspective of life history (Leithäuser & Volmerg, 1988; Volmerg, 1994; Becker-Schmidt & Knapp, 1987; Weber, 1998).

The Discourse of Modernization

The modernization program spans a pragmatic, linguistic and symbolic discourse (Andersen, 1998a & b; in press). The pragmatic discourse points to developmental goals, work methods, and defines the main actors in the organizational changes. Vibeke and Finn occupy as superintendents one of the leading parts. They are confronted with the challenge to embody the discourse. The linguistic and symbolic discourse consists of argumentative chains, symbols and concepts that the text of modernization includes or seek to constitute.

In the pragmatic discourse of modernization concepts like site-based management and democracy hold a very distinct position. These concepts appear to be decisive ideological and practical sources of inspiration for achieving the goals. This is true in written discourse in the program text, where the concepts make up the cornerstones. They are also vital in a practical discourse, as illustrated in the the narratives of Vibeke and Finn. On the one hand, the discourse profits from a historic, social-democratic cultural heritage, where democracy, participation, and solidarity have been key concepts. On the other hand, site-based management and democracy in modern society no longer are unequivocal and firm concepts. Furthermore, the concept of site-based management has changed in the grip of the pragmatic and management-oriented modernization discourse. Originally it held a historic horizon shaped as a critical ideological and liberating practice, which manifested a really autonomous management of one's own and others' needs in a work related and solidaric context (Schmid, 1993). In the modernization program site-based management includes a more instrumental, efficiency-oriented, management-like emphasis. In the critical and liberating context, site-based management aims at liberation from market forces. In the spirit of modernization, however, site-based management aims at involvement with market forces. This is precisely what makes Vibeke so uncomfortable and is her most serious criticism of modernization. Whereas Finn seems to combine criticism with a spirit of the contractor. In this way modernization has created a tense cocktail combining democratic goals of participation and influence with economic goals of rationality and efficiency. Democracy and site-based management in the modernized investment has lost its virginity and projects a variety of forms and interpretations that follows different paths. In the infancy of the welfare state we still believed in preventive and informative goals and activities. Also this ideological stance has lost its virginal innocence at the expense of a more sober-minded and pragmatic position..

The context of modernizing bring together two different ideological and practical universes. A philosophical, ethical, pedagogical current should be fused with a productivity, administrative, and management rationale. Hence, it becomes the task and challenge of the institutions to achieve the democratic ideals and treatment goals, while at the same time administrating limited economic resources. Human service is expected to to democratize

and quality-improve, but for lesser monesy. The staff-meeting at Finn's illustrate the everyday repercussion of this paradox.

Thus, the positioning of concepts like democracy and site-based management opens up for different local interpretations and practices. The staff-meeting at Finn's youth centre propose one democratic genre: the debating and consensus seeking 'meeting-democracy'. But, as illustrated, not all the participants have equal voice or influence. Finn, being the superintendent, has a certain position and knowledge, different from his staff and the young clients. Staff members also take up different positions in the institutional power configuration. Thus, the 'meeting-democracy' is often an opaque and incalculable praxis. At Vibeke's institution she seeks to consolidate a democratic atmosphere from another strategic position and uses a pedagogical developmental work-method. In this way she hopes to establish and qualify the basic reflexive and professional foundation of a future democratic organization. But she is also confronted with the long-windedness of democracy - and sometimes grow tired.

The linguistic discourse concentrates on an optimistic and mobilizing tone of language and argumentation. Through this, a new and modern genre of state administrative text is produced: the open, interpreting, and flexible public text. An open invitation is presented to stakeholders as counties, public servants, and institutions to interpret and implement the program goals (Høyrup, 1988). However, the program is not decisively and unequivocally important. It is merely a 'dead text' until the moment where it touches reality. The program has a mobilizing, initiating, and inspiring nature. So the interpretation and practice of the human service institutions is quite important. It is on an everyday basis that modernization is constructed. The voices of Vibeke and Finn are important stakeholders offering their interpretation of the modernization-goals. Vibeke stresses developmental projects, where the professional identity is transformed into a reflexive, critical and a user-sensitive praxis. Finn is engaged in transforming a traditional youth centre profile in order to attract new target groups, while accentuating the challenge and professional fulfilment. The story of Vibeke and Finn then illuminates how the processes of modernization embed different scenarios. Each is facing and struggling with the ambivalence of modernity and modernization⁵. Vibeke focuses on a strategy of refining an autistic professionalism with a moderate urge to expand. While Finn is the contractor inspiring to gain new ground rooted in a confident professionalism.

Telling Modernization: Pre-existing or Interpretative Narratives

I keep coming back to that same question. What is going on? How do I bring sense to it? How do they themselves understand what is going on? When I seek to understand the trails of life and work and chose the form of a narrative, what becomes visible? And what is invisible? The name of Vibeke and Finn indicates gender, obviously. But are the differences related to gender, to modernity, or to context? Have I given enough attention to the complex setting and history of age, family, educational background, financial context and occupational experience? Trying to find that subtle balance between substance and surface.

Researcher

When narrating the research field we are confronted with the quintessence of positivism, where the objective researcher reproduces the reality incarnated. Based on this epistemological tradition the reality is to be discovered and categorized. As a researcher I need to find and discover the story of Vibeke and Finn. But narratives are never there to be found and told in the hands of the imperceptible and neutral researcher. As an evaluation researcher we are not able just to look at an object -- and reproduce this in the form of a narrative. The positivist phrases 'just tell it as it is' tend to be a scientific naivety. Everything that meets the researcher's eye, body and mind transform immediately into a theoretical form (Willis, 1986). I write about Vibeke and Finn and transform fragments of their life, work and identity to a research narrative representation. They don't have access to the representation themselves. Although I might choose to extenuate my research by phrases as 'multilayered, doubled voicedness', or 'bringing voices forward', still the facts remain. I tell their stories as my stories.

A representation is a transcription of objects and events that are understood and interpreted through an internal organizing of data. These data are mediated through conceptual constructions and ways of perceiving the world. In this process some dimensions become visible and others invisible. The poststructuralists have pointed out, how science tends to transform a multifaceted reality through a monolithic report with a homogeneous subject. Much research tends to constrict reality rather than enlarge it. Furthermore, science establishes a particular precedence. Science is traditionally viewed as a conscious activity based on disciplined observing, reading, and writing.

These processes displace the unconscious processes. Consequently the unconscious has no position in the construction of the empirical authority. The unconscious constitutes the empirical science (Clough, 1992). Thus, the eye and hand that project the research narrative through a theoretical screen play an important part. It influences which stories to tell. Narratives are the voices of subjects. However, the subject is not a univocal concept. Theoretical preferences affect the construction and interpretation of the subject. How -- and if -- class, gender, power, and suppression constitute the subject indicate subtle distinctions. The theoretical positioning of life history and biography display these differences. Dominant traditions like critical theory and hermeneutics, social constructivism, and "theory of modernity" all take life history into account, although they differ in their concepts and understanding of the subject and the social. Is the narrative subject dialectic, liberated or dispersed?

The Dialectical, Liberated, and Dispersed Subject: Life History in Various Theoretical Shapes

In critical theory the subject is interpreted as a dynamic and dialectical interplay between a historical materialism and a psychosexual universe⁶. The subject is projected as a hybrid of Marxism and psychoanalysis, stressing economic and social structures as well as civilization-criticism. These processes of becoming a subject -- socialization -- conceptualize the processes and affects a society has on its members. The human subject is a historic, cultural, socioeconomic, and subjectively a constituted phenomenon (Leithäuser, 1988; Volmerg, 1994; Becker-Schmidt & Knapp, 1987)⁷. The society we live in, the family in which we grow up, the way the father and mother relate to the child, all influences, how the subject becomes a human being. The psychoanalytical view insists that individuals' interpretations and actions are subject to several different rationales and dynamics⁸. These are controlled by conscious and unconscious motives. The psychodynamic history of the subject is crucial to an understanding of interpretations and actions (Andersen, in press)⁹. The perspective of life history is to represent human life as a complex texture of substance and surface. A texture that is dynamic and contextualized. Thus, critical theory maintains that forms of manifestations need to be deepened and transformed through a substantial analyses. Humans are substance as well as surface.

Poststructuralists and social constructionists advocate a non-fixed, socially and interactively constructed identity: the decentred subject. They accentuate anti-essentialism and anti-realism as an important epistemological consequence (Burr, 1995; Steffe, 1995; Stevens, 1996; Wetherell, 1996). When realities are socially constructed in local settings, the notion of one objective reality is called into question. Knowledge is not to be seen as a pre-existing or objective cultural, social, or psychological phenomena, mirroring reality, but rather as negotiated interpretations and actions that are scattered, multiple, and differentiated constructions. This paradigm then, situates life history as a configuration of the subject which identifies the dynamics in the relations and processes of everyday life. The subject creates itself in a continuous and contemporary process that establishes a heterogeneous and conflictual identity (Søndergaard, 1994). The subject is culturally and historically contextualized in the sense that categories and concepts are historically shaped and changed. The social constructivists often do narratives, but the aim is more a deconstruction of life history than a tracing of the coherence and dynamics of individuals' lives (Potter, 1987).

The theorists of modernity represent a third dominant paradigm projecting a liberated and detached subject. Like critical theory, this paradigm seeks to combine structure and subject or agency. It seeks to identify the discrepancies in the subject of modernity, but in a contemporary, constructive framing rather than as a question of a genesis. Modern life has become relative, ambiguous, and unpredictable with a strong emphasis on the individual's ability to create a life project. Discontinuity is a unique characteristic of modernity and social forms and institutions have changed. Today, time and space have been separated, allowing the individual to be liberated from local habits and practices. Hence, social conduct has changed to something that may be established across distance and time (Giddens, 1991). "Cultural liberation" is another distinct feature of modern society. Nowadays, every person must contemplate and construct an individual life project. Modern life has become reflexive and opens the way for "viabilities" (Ziehe, 1989; Ziehe & Stubenrauch, 1981). Thus, the subject is fundamentally decisive in modern life, where a "workable and doable" mentality dominates¹⁰. The post-modern subject constructs itself through "self-identity" (Giddens, 1991). A self-identity is a reflexively organised endeavour against a backdrop of new mediated forms of experience. It consisted of the sustaining of coherent yet

continuously revised biographical narratives, in which the notion of lifestyles takes on a particular significance¹¹.

Substance and Surface: Life History Revisited

Thus, the implication of life history, subject and evaluation is by no means simple and predictable. The approach requires a number of epistemological and methodological considerations with which the evaluation researcher should be involved. Is modern man a liberated, active, constructing subject who creates local, momentary, and contradictory patchwork identities? Or do we still grant the subject a more substantial societal and cultural contextualization in the form of gender, class, generation, and family background? Are urges, feelings, and courses of development of any significance in the lives of women and men¹²?

My evaluative narratives are constructed around and by subjects interpreted as active, dynamic and driven by conscious as well as unconscious motives and desires. The way Vibeke and Finn manage their institutions is a complex texture of conscious reflections, professional knowledge, financial resources and fragments of their life history. Thus, the interpretation is not embodied solely in an inner psychic reality, but incorporate social, economic, cultural, and organizational aspects -- in the form of a scenic analysis (Leithäuser & Volmerg, 1988; Lorenzer, 1986). The psychoanalytical viewpoint positions the unconsciousness in science as in life. It emphasizes the ways in which the unconscious influences how people symbolize work, organizations, and relations. Furthermore unconscious processes also structure the researcher's data collection and relations between researcher and research subjects (Hunt, 1989). The narrative component of evaluation research must be able to reflect actions and social processes in a dialectic of the subject and the social. Simply speaking life history provide evaluation research with another response. The rationalities of human thoughts and actions are enlarged when interpretations -- and especially understanding -- are free to move both in the present and the past. When asking Vibeke and Finn about their interpretation of modernization and human service, they themselves move between the present and the past. They bring in fragments and memories of childhood, of gender, of relations to parents, school and labor market as significant bearings in order to enlighten the present dilemmas.

A discourse of life history and modernization explodes the traditional evaluative preferences. The linear and progressive process where program goals is negotiated amongst stakeholders, formulated, implemented and then evaluate tend to construct a scientific illusion. The rational and fixed evaluative methodology fails when the ambition is to reflect the multiple and complex modern realities. Therefore, life history applied to evaluation research present a challenge. Life history simultaneously appears as a fixed and a fluid icon of human activities and experiences. It embodies features of culture, context, gender, generation, ethnicity, and modernity.

Fluent and Fixed Icons of Life History

As I have demonstrated previously, the evaluative perspective of life history elucidate the praxis of modernizing and democratizing human service. Vibeke and Finn produce a complex texture of conscious reflections, professional knowledge, financial resources and fragments of their life history. They bring in fragments of their personal and professional lives when trying to reflect on their actual challenges -- and how they try to solve these. In their flow of talk recollections take position. The past blends with the present. When talking about the challenges and problems that modernization and democracy represent and how these are managed, associations interweave. Through fragments of memories a patchwork of meaning is established. Here different images of the self become visible. These images suggest how identity, interests, and orientation could be represented and how this relates to organizational dynamics and relations.

I remember how I always felt myself in a sort of double position in my family. On the one hand I was the only girl and my family had certain expectations. Not the usual stuff about being nice and pretty, but more socially.... that I had to behave myself, take care of others and not put myself first. On the other hand I was pretty independent for a girl. My mother always tells stories about all the times I scared her to death running on my own..... Later when I had to decide my professional life I had some doubts. I was interested in human science, literary history and psychology as well as more creative craft. But since I was quite good in school I think the familiar beat the unknown. Deep down I doubted whether I had a talent for being an artist. So the academic way seemed more predictable. And I succeeded although I do remember crises from time to time. It's strange because I

no longer recall how I overcame these..... Probably I allowed myself to be depressed for a couple of days and then I pulled myself together and went on studying.

Female voice

Vibeke describes herself as a hybrid of independence and exploration along with caring and sociality. She crosses these tracks later, when talking about her uneasiness about modernization. Her professional identity seems inevitable linked to a strong concern with 'the other' -- the autistic children and the staff. Her critique of modernization is linked to the concern for 'the other' and her worry that competition, quality-management, and rationalization disturbs this focus.

Although I am somewhat ambivalent about it, I have to admit that I was quite competitive as a boy. Not in a cruel manner ...of course. But in a more humane way.... I remember how I always took the initiative.... when playing football and in school. I had a lot of hobbies... was very active and often my mother would storm and rage because I didn't do my homework... It didn't bother me.I keep thinking about this playmate of mine he was odd and strange. But I kind of liked him..... I took him under my wings..... Protected him from the other boys and I really don't know why... sometimes he was a pain in the ass.

Actually I've been thinking about, whether you need to be competitive to have a leading position. It's definitely to your advantage, but looking at my colleagues I see that not everybody is as joyful about it as I am. Some of the female and male superintendents clearly enjoy the freedom and enterprise in site-based management. Others would rather be without.

Male voice

Finn reveals a strong -- although to him also strange -- sense for caring and protectiveness, interweaved with a strong desire for competition and bodily activities. In his interpretation and modernization praxis his pleasure in enterprise, initiative and having influence, is also visible. When listening to Finn's and Vibeke's stories they both appear and disappear as gendered icons. They explicitly bring a variety of bearing marks that constitute their gendered identity. But they also negate and transform these into new gendered hybrids.

I'm very ambivalent about the rhetoric of being a female superintendent. I mean I hate being stigmatised and interpreted. All that media-stuff about womanhood! But nevertheless the question intrudes on me, because it's not only just about me,

but also my reflections about male and female staff, male and female residents, and male and female superintendents. And of course there are differences. Just as age, generation, class, vocational experiences and family leave a trace
Female voice.

Lost Virginity and Floating Space as Images of Modernization

But Vibeke and Finn also contextualize. When talking about modernization, they bring in the scenic analyses, when referring to how financial resources infiltrate the democratic praxis and possibilities. They both have succeeded to manage quite well financially, although they advocate greater resources for human service. They also share a severe regret for, how the politicians have linked site-based management with annual financial reductions, because they find this to be counterproductive to the organizational and professional changes. The local power structure and relations between the politicians, principals and managers at the administration also influence the latitude. It seems like the discourse of modernization favours particular behaviour patterns that enrol in the pre-existing hierarchy.

Modernity has also affected human service. In many ways Vibeke and Finn embody these changes. They demonstrate different strategies in order to develop a modern reflexive professional organization. Their statements depict different scenarios. One is filled with the stress, ambivalences and discrepancies that modernization and democracy evokes. Another exposes the energy, pleasure and gratifications that professional challenges and development bring about. A third one points to the bewilderment, irresolution and uncertainty that the breaking off in the canon of human service cause. These conditions are related to the developmental rationales that accompany modernization. The zeal to modernize is not the only rationale influencing the lives of employees and clients. Modernization both profits from and is restrained by modernity (Andersen, 1998a & b). There used to be a clear, normative and professional canon deciding the best for human service clients. Human service has lost some of its clear-cut focus and no longer possesses standard and univocal answers. Today, it is necessary to uncover and discover these answers in cooperation with clients. Only at that point may strategies and plans of action be formulated, and, perhaps, be put into effect. But there are no guarantees. Modern human service has become relative, ambiguous and unpredictable. Hence, the program of modernization can be interpreted as a social administrative footprint of modernity.

Modernization presupposes the establishment of a communicative and symbolic discourse, that will not be too weighted down by tradition and habit, but is creatively free, not centralized, but rather decentralized and ambiguous. The processes of modernization therefore profit from modernity features such as reflection, liberation and decentering.

So to navigate in the modernized everydaylife could be seen as exercises in lost virginity and floating space due to the liberation that modernization installs. Finn and Vibeke are faced with a challenging and demanding compulsion to construct modernization at their human service institutions. They are supposed to compete and use the market forces in creating a human service. At an institutional level they are supposed to articulate a new professional canon that to some extent are burdened by the wearisome preventive and informative goals. So compared to the past Finn and Vibeke are much more left in open space - for better or for worse.

Rituals of Passage, Storyteller, and Imagination: A Researcher's Voice

I wonder how my transforming from a working class girl to a university professor influence my research. I was born and raised in Norrebro - a working-class area of Copenhagen. My father was a miller and my mother an unskilled labourer. I am the eldest daughter, with two younger brothers, and my childhood reflected a typical gendered division of labor. I was responsible for my brothers and part of the housework while my mother worked. At the same time my father's greatest ambition, directed exclusively at me, was unquestionably my academic project. I vividly remember the many times the story was told of how uneducated my father was despite his abilities and desire. This was due in part to finances and in part to my old-fashioned Jutland grandfather, who stubbornly insisted on paternal reproduction: his son was going to follow in his footsteps and be a miller.

Consequently, I took on my father's educational ambitions, which were also partly my own, while my mother was a silent silhouette. A transformation from a working class girl to an academic woman creates moments of estrangement and homelessness in both worlds. You don't relate to your family as before because your new manner of thinking, speaking, and acting is different and strange. In the academic world you don't have the same ballast as the majority, so you are different there as well. You become a cultural traveller in both worlds. This intermediate position often develops a seismographic perspective due to your "visitor's status."

Perhaps research and the academic world have acted as a liberation project from the motherly element at the urging of the fatherly element. Without question I have travelled a road to another life, to a different latitude and scope, and to different doubts and decisions. Whether by chance or not my research has evoked similar feelings of being on the inside or on the outside, of being familiar and unfamiliar, of being a stranger trying to invade. And has activated a transference of the loving mother and the rewarding father.

I have spent several years doing field work and many other qualitative methodologies at institutions like Vibeke's and Finn's. Over the years I have been increasingly conscious of the significant ways my personal past and present are weaved into my research. Ethnography and field work balance between participation and observation (Spradley, 1979; Wolcott, 1995). In this process the researcher will both assume and be assigned roles that contain elements of regression and transference. If these roles replay or are reminiscent of conscious or unconscious conflicts from one's own past, the transference will be that much more active and important in the research work (Hunt, 1989). When staying in human service institutions you gradually develop a variety of relations, images and dialogues with the residents and staff. These relations between researcher and research field are established and regulated by conscious and unconscious conditions. Consequently, this influences the stories and representations produced by the researcher. The establishment of an ego-dissociation is a precondition of a successful and productive positioning in the research field. Through this the researcher's ego is split into the 'observing ego' and the 'experiencing ego'. The 'experiencing ego' record and participate in the activities in the setting, while the 'observing ego' from a continuous meta-position considers and conceptualizes the observations (Sterba, 1934). When residing in Vibeke's and Finn's institutions, I have to be both observing, but also experiencing. Neither one of these processes should dominate the other. Nor should I be too burdened by my own life and experiences in order to let the new and unknown world in. On the other hand it is inevitable that the new world synthesizes with the old world inside you. The outside world meets the inside world.

The psychoanalytic concept of transference describes parts of these processes'¹³. Transference is a dimension of the researcher's interpretive praxis, relation to the field, and relation to the research subjects (Devereux, 1967; Leithäuser, 1988; Volmerg, Leithäuser, Neuberger, Ortmann & Sie-

vers, 1995; Wellendorf, 1986). My transference towards the research field may be symbolized by two metaphors: "the loving mother and the rewarding father"¹⁴. These images reflect experiences, fantasies, and desires from my childhood and youth. The loving mother and rewarding father are fantasized images of relationships, gender and academia, which might be the silent silhouettes of my research narrative. Some of these I project to my research subjects and relations in different settings. When residing in the human service institutions I have become aware of my fantasies concerning the objects and processes of my research. In these imaginations they would respond to me and my work with loving interest, pride, and acceptance. They would discuss my conclusions, express their interest, and act cooperatively to confirm them. At other times I would produce others images. I would become irritated and withdrawn because I experienced the research field as reserved and uninterested. These reaction patterns of the superintendents and staff in human service can be interpreted as symbolizing the loving and the punishing mother. They embody the loving mother when responding to my presence and my research, especially in offering their energy, interest, and perseverance. They also embody the punishing mother in the aggression, irritation, and repudiation they at other times would submit me to at meetings and in our daily interaction. A transference that contains elements of motherly care and fatherly reward intensifies in a particular way the dimensions of the study's dynamics and characteristics.

My research subjects and I were drawn into a number of conflicts, power constellations, and pre understandings leading to various situations and interactions. Initially I perceived these events through a dim filter, being the result of my life history's baggage. I reacted by becoming slightly depressed by the lack of recognition and reward emanating from my subjects, which I desired, or by becoming aggressive and irritated over their various rejections. This subsequently reduced my capacity for empathetic and sympathetic understanding. It was crucial for the analytical quality of the research setting to realize and place (part of) my transference into the research process. Otherwise, the feelings and force of the transference could rest as a heavy yoke on the evaluation research. Linking the research to my personal life history in an unreflected manner could result in an inappropriate "overheating" of a complicated professional and emotional research setting. The inevitable result would be that my personal project would overshadow more 'objective' findings that modernization processes are a conglomerate of pro-

fessional, emotional, and social relationships (Andersen, 1998a). When I approach the research field partly desiring to “conjure up” the loving mother and the rewarding father I recognize that this symbolism has significance for the academic project

But my research also awakens other feelings and memories. The world of administrative management, with its regulative attempts to alleviate social problems, evokes a well-known ambivalence. Some years ago I was a social welfare worker at a social service agency in Copenhagen. After a brief time on the job I decided to leave for further university studies despite the offer of a permanent position. Thus, I am well acquainted with the rationale and the operating methods of a regulated, formal, and goal-oriented system. At the same time, I was sceptical of and uneasy with the framework often produced by the social welfare agency’s straightforward and instrumental approach to social problems. Furthermore I doubted whether I would be able to stand up against the administrative and professional culture’s tendentious dehumanization and bureaucratization of human problems. Thus, I am well acquainted with the ambivalence that state- and system-oriented cultures produce in their interaction with human lives and development processes. By irony of fate or influenced by other forces, I see now, how my research encompasses some of the very same problems recreated in a different setting.

Epilogue

It is suggestive how some research-praxis based on a critical methodological approach -- despite the good intentions -- might pave the way for an impenetrable and manipulable scholarly canonization. Even in such a position the scholar is still in power over data, research subjects, and stories. Breaking up the traditional methodological distinction between researchers and the objects of research still seems to reframe the omnipotent researcher. When researchers are free to create performances, multilayered stories, and double voicedness, thereby subverting the unity of the modernist sense of self, whose images are we then recreating? If I am slightly annoyed about the muttering silence of the female critical voice and the dominance of the male voice in the discourse of modernization, whose ambitions and liberation am I reproducing? Perhaps the more silent voices are absorbed in other activities and questions -- of equal importance? So whose stories have I

told? Have I been narrating about the modernized everyday life in human service? Or have I been telling tales trying to imagine the loving mother and rewarding father in the images of Vibeke and Finn? It is the irony of reflexive modernity that it engrafts a dimension to modernization. Modernization is talking about it while doing it. Quality management, as one of the primes tools of modernization, is founded on talking and telling. Thus, there might be a position for the researcher after all. Recreating the realities through the scientific retelling of human lives. The discourse and praxis of modernization seem to install a (well-known) need for the researcher as storyteller to give evidence about the existence of modernization.

Notes

1. The program has had a major impact on the institutional level in the public sector, where quality management and measurement, innovative and developmental work, and continuing education is the tool of implementation.
2. The methodological framing grounding the chapter comprised a hermeneutic and participatory action research approach with ethnographic and psychoanalytical fragments, founded on: ethnographic fieldwork at human service institutions, meetings and cooperation with the county administration; 14 semi-structured interviews performed when visiting 10 institutions; open questionnaires involving 27 human services institutions, aimed at headmasters and shop stewards; and a discourse analysis focussing on national and local documents (Andersen, 1992).
3. Due to the limitation of this article I'm only able to indicate how the three 'voices' of modernization interweave the Danish setting of modernization. A perspective of life history placed in a discourse analyses covering three 'tracks' is quite complex and demands quite a space to be unfolded. And it is obvious that the practice of modernization includes other stakeholders like the residents and users of human service, the staff, politicians, etc.
4. Vibeke is referring to a three-year experiment involving 27 human services institutions in the county: daytime and around-the-clock institutions for physically and mentally disabled or troubled children and adults. The program goals span a variety of professional, administrative, democratic, and economic dimensions: change from a centralized to a site-based management and framework administration; provide staff and users with more influence on every day institutional life; reduce the consumption of resources and develop the institutional preventive profile; reduce bureaucracy and develop a more flexible institutional structure of operating.

5. The processes of modernization establish a number of paradoxes, all of which are intertwined in human service: economy versus human development; motivation versus compulsion; involvement versus distance; site-based management versus pseudo-democracy; efficiency-oriented quality control versus democratic and client-sensitive quality discussions; over-bureaucratization versus de-bureaucratization.
6. In this brief presentation of keywords in critical theory I do not in any way acknowledge the major theorist that has been part of the Frankfurter and Hannover tradition. However my intention is far from doing an overall and adequate presentation, but is a more humble and fragmented outline of important perspectives that characterize this paradigm.
7. There are three developmental lines determining the psychic structural formation and of importance to the job performance and satisfaction. First, the inner object relations, which are developed in the individual in primary socialization. The inner representation of fundamental feelings such as love and hate influence in various ways, how one deals with wage labor, work relations, and work performance. Second, building and development of the self is important. And third, libidinous, aggressive, and narcissistic impulses participate in the dynamic process that unfolds in wage labor (Leithäuser & Volmerg, 1988).
8. Wage labor, for instance reactivates a number of individual developmental traits that can be understood through the psychoanalytical concept of displacement. Libidinous, narcissistic, and aggressive instinctual needs are displaced from the individual to one's concrete work performance and work relations for the purpose of satisfying these needs. Thus, wage labor establishes particular psycho dynamic processes in which impulse satisfaction consists of particular individual propotions (Leithäuser & Volmerg, 1988).
9. Regina Becker-Schmidt has developed a social theory of learning in the tradition of critical theory. Her learning concept includes dimensions as perception, reflection, and emotion, since reality is established through a correlation between these psychical dimensions. Ambivalence, separation, and inconsistency are crucial for an understanding of modern life -- and the societal and historic conditions that have caused this (Becker-Schmidt & Knapp, 1987).
10. Ziehe proposes subjectivizing, ontologizing, and intensification as characteristics of modernity. Modernity is a subjectivization phenomenon where the theoretical triad -- society-culture-object -- penetrates deep into the pores of our sensual forms, interpretations of existence, and life styles. Greater closeness and intimacy are sought in subjectivization. The security that modernity has abolished is sought

in ontologization. In intensification is created an intensity in everyday life with meaning, experience, and a cultivation of that which is modern (Ziehe, 1982).

11. Giddens clarify, that lifestyles differ from the term often used in advertisement and media. He emphasizes that the more tradition loose its hold and daily life is reproduced in a dialectic interplay between the local and global the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among some diversities of options. But modernity also produces difference, exclusion and marginalisation. Consequently lifestyles also refer to decisions and courses of action made under conditions under severe material constraint (Giddens, 1991).
12. Gender, however, is (still) a source of irritation in modernity. Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen criticizes Ziehe and Giddens for idealizing and universalizing the modern male and female without linking their concepts and positions to gender. They generalize and gender-neutralize their concepts of reflexivity, individualization, and do ability as though they were historical newborns. In this way they render invisible feminine competences such as reflexivity, esthetization, and imagination and fail to grasp the underlying gender polarization that supplies the binary mold in which modernity theory is cast. Consequently Ziehe and Giddens leave gender complementarities undiscovered and ambivalence is inextricably and tragically tied to modernity (Bjerrum Nielsen, 1995).
13. When using transference a path of knowledge is established, that complements and deepens other forms of data collection. It establishes analytical processes that are transformed by the researcher's awareness, intellect, and feelings. Thus, analyses of transference produces insight into the dynamics and content that are usually difficult to attain by other methods of data collection. I have employed key psychoanalytical concepts as an analytical can opener for events and development traits in the processes of modernization (Andersen, 1998; in press). In the psychoanalytical sense counter transference refers to unconscious and conscious feelings, fantasies, and attitudes of an analyst towards the person analysed. When studying organizational transference the research focus exposes the dynamics and positioning established between researcher and organization. Transference is an analytical medium producing a data-flow of surface and substance of an organization's dynamic and structure.
14. A researcher's interest in a certain field of research is structured by rational and instrumental factors, but there can also be other motivations involved. Jennifer Hunt indicates the conscious and unconscious motives and transferences that have had an impact on her research into American police. This consists of associative links between her first educational experience with future police officials, her own political radicalism in her youth involving antiwar and anti racism movements, her

father's radiance and appearance with his beard, and her memories of playing cops-and-robbers and soldiers with her older brothers (Hunt, 1989).

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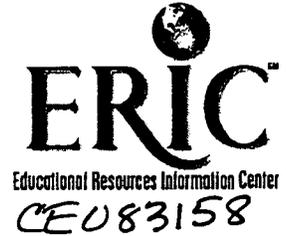
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