

## ARTICLE

### **Civil Society Organizations and Care of the Self: An Ethnographic Case Study on Emancipation and Participation in Drug Treatment**

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**ABSTRACT** Foucauldian analyses of civil society depart from classical approaches in that they don't consider civil society to be a site of societal change or resistance as classical analyses do, but rather one of society's multiple locations where so-called governmentality hits the ground. Although Foucauldian investigations have provided the prevailing discussion with a necessary departure from excessively idealistic images of civil society organizations as sites of resistance and societal transformation, what may have resulted in turn are overly pessimistic analyses that have overlooked the emancipatory aspects of civil society organizations as sites where Foucauldian "care of the self" becomes possible. This article provides the reader with an analysis of these kind of aspects in civil society organizations' work and, more importantly, of the conditions of their existence. The study contributes to the prevailing discussion by offering examples of the possibilities that civil society organizations have to act as a counterbalance and addition to states institutions. The context is Finnish drug treatment policies that took a client-centered and user-friendly approach at the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since then new kinds of methods to work with drug users have been initiated, which have helped the users to recast their identities and find new ways of living as a drug user.

**Keywords:** Civil society organizations; governmentality; care of the self; drug treatment; harm reduction; ethnography

#### **Prologue**

It is a light early spring evening in Helsinki and the first week of my field work in a low threshold health and social counselling service for injecting drug users. The service is run by a civil society organization that is specialized in so called harm reduction policies and known for its progressive and client-centered treatment ideologies. The purpose of the health and social counselling facility is to provide intravenous drug users with new ideas and means to take care of their health and themselves in general while they are using drugs. When the services opened at the end of the 1990s the idea of educating drug users to inject safely, providing them with needles and syringes to do this, and teaching them to practice safe sex and avoid overdoses was almost incomprehensible to anyone apart from a few harm reduction activists. Lay citizens as well as social and health care professionals filled the newspapers with furious columns and letters considering harm reduc-

tion policies and services to be a step towards decriminalizing drug use and pandering to drug criminals. Less excitable critics were concerned about the spread of drug problems as a consequence of more lenient drug policies as well as the abandonment of abstinence as an ideal for policies and treatment. The service was opened in silence to avoid attracting too much attention from critics and the media.

This evening I will participate in a "health education course" that has been arranged for voluntary drug users in the facility this spring after the working day has ended. My intention is, among other things, to follow the everyday realization of harm reduction policies in order to get a clearer view of what this kind of work actually entails and also to evaluate the effect of the policies on the wellbeing of injecting drug users. The course will run over four evenings and will range from safe injecting to avoiding overdoses, HIV and Hepatitis C: all of these are typical harms (in harm reduction language) that are related to intravenous drug use. The educators in the course will be different health care professionals who specialize in epidemiology, HIV prevention, overdoses, and safe sex issues. In addition to this the users who attend the course will spend a month "in the field" working as voluntary health educators and practically applying the things that they have learnt during the course: exchanging clean needles and syringes in their drug using networks, bringing used ones back to the facility, informing drug-injecting friends about the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C, and spreading the news about the health and social counselling facility's services and coaxing them to come along and be tested e.g. for HIV.

This is the first time that the course is organized and I don't know what to expect from the evening. First of all, I'm little afraid that the participants will be in very bad shape, both mentally and physically, and that the atmosphere in the course will be too distressing for me to handle. I am also slightly suspicious about the overall idea of arranging a health education course for drug users. A week earlier I read a scientific article that criticized harm reduction policies for, among other things, being a form of "surveillance medicine." My expectation is that the health education evenings represent a form of "biopower" that tries to manage, govern and normalize injecting drug users through increasing control over their bodies.

When I enter the facility the majority of the users attending the course are already there, sitting by the round table drinking juice and coffee and eating sandwiches and snacks that the employees have reserved for them. A dark-haired, nice-looking man in his forties wearing a t-shirt, jeans and trainers (little later I find out that he is an anesthesiologist, the educator that evening) is standing beside the table and talking in a friendly manner with a young woman who is dressed in a hippie style and looks like an intellectual with her trendy eyewear. I understand from the comments and questions of the woman that she is a user, although this is something that I find hard to believe at first. Actually the majority of the participants are different from my expectations. Although some of them look a little "rough," with their bad teeth and fuzzy eyes, and some are seemingly intoxicated, most of the participants are in pretty good shape. Contrary to my fears, the atmosphere is warm and friendly. The participants and the employees seem to know each other quite well and they joke with each other in a light manner. I overhear a conversation where one of the participants tells an employee about his upcoming eviction and the employee promises to help him. The theme of the evening, overdose prevention, raises a lot of discussion among the participants, and many of them state more than once that the facility has "saved their lives." "Write that in your notebook," one of them says to me.

A few weeks later I talked about the course with the employees and asked them how the participants were doing. One of the participants, "you remember Pete," signed up for treatment

after the course, which is in employees' words "very typical." I recall "Pete" being very enthusiastic about the course and telling me that he could do something like this for a living. He was slightly older than the rest of the participants and gave the others little lectures about the harms of drug use during the discussions, saying things like "Only an idiot uses unclean paraphernalia." A young, beautiful-looking couple that I named Helen and Bobby in my field notes after the movie *The Panic in Needle Park* started writing articles for a journal that is targeted at drugs users, and they have also become active volunteers, exchanging needles and syringes among their friends and networks and returning the used ones to the facility. The employees said that "Make," who to me represented perhaps the most "typical" user on the course with his worn out clothes and scarred face, was quite moved after the course and had told them that he had never been able to finish something off. "You could see that the diploma he got at the end of the course was very important to him." For me the course was an eye-opening experience – clearly something more than "health education" or "biopower" was going on. (adapted from fieldnotes from June 2003).

## 1. Introduction

This article handles the role of civil society organizations in contemporary welfare policies and social and health care services. These policies and services are ideally participatory and client-centered in nature (as opposed to bureaucratic and expert-led services of the traditional welfare states) and civil society organizations in particular have come to be seen as central locations for their realization.<sup>1</sup> The questions addressed in this article are: what potential do civil society organizations have to shape the delivery of services in a more inclusive and participatory direction and, what could this mean for the citizens that take part in the activities of these organizations. The context is Finnish drug policies, where different forms of client-centered and participatory methods have been actively developed and implemented in the policy and treatment field since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Foucauldian analyses of civil society depart from traditional approaches<sup>2</sup> in that they don't consider civil society to be outside the state and its functioning as its counterbalance, as traditional analyses do, but rather one of society's multiple locations where so-called governmentality hits the ground. According to Miikka Pyykkönen, who rests his ideas on Foucault's notions about the "governmentalization of the state"<sup>3</sup> and Mitchell Dean's ideas of government as a calculated activity that is undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, "government works abundantly through complex networks of civil society."<sup>4</sup> In addition to this government has become, in modern Western societies, more and more often a process of self-evaluation and self-reparation that takes place in the context of the everyday life of individuals and also in civil society.

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Janet Newman and John Clarke, *Publics, Politics & Power; Remaking the Public in Public Services* (London: Sage 2009); Pekka Sulkunen, *The Saturated Society; Governing Risk and Lifestyles in Consumer Culture* (London: Sage 2009); Miikka Pyykkönen, "Integrating Governmentality: Administrative Expectations for Immigrant Associations in Finland," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 32 No. 2 (2007), 197-224; Bjorn Hvin-den and Håkan Johansson, *Citizenship in Nordic Welfare States; Dynamics of Choice, Duties and Participation in a Changing Europe* (London and New York: Routledge); Fredrick Powell, *The Politics of Civil Society; Neoliberalism or Social Left?* (Bristol: The Policy Press 2007).

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Civil Sphere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Pyykkönen, "Integrating Governmentality," 200; see also Mitchell Dean, "Liberal Government and Authoritarianism," *Economy & Society*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2002), 37-61.

<sup>4</sup> Pyykkönen, "Integrating Governmentality," 200.

This strand of Foucauldian thinking has been particularly strong in studies on new social movements and neoliberal governance, where civil society organizations as well as various other forms of civil activity have been perceived as sites of governance where democratic citizens or subjects are “brought into being.”<sup>5</sup> A good example is Barbara Cruikshank’s famous analysis on prevailing technologies of citizenship, which according to Cruikshank make individuals willing to be active and capable of self-government in different kinds of community associations or emancipatory programs.<sup>6</sup> In a similar manner, according to Catherine Wilson, “effective government produces subjects who will participate in social movements,”<sup>7</sup> and this type of civil activity has increased especially in the contemporary neoliberal condition, which privileges autonomous self-governance over more overt technologies of power. Wilson also holds that current discussion on new social movements could benefit from Foucault’s theory of power. This kind of analysis could help us to see these movements not only as liberating agents from repressive power, as is often the case, but as places of state governance.<sup>8</sup>

This article adopts a slightly different viewpoint. It holds that although Foucauldian investigations have provided the prevailing discussion with a necessary departure from excessively idealistic images of civil society organizations as sites of resistance and societal transformation, what may have resulted in turn are slightly too pessimistic analyses that have overlooked the emancipatory aspects of civil society organizations as sites where Foucauldian “care of the self” or “arts of existence” become possible.<sup>9</sup> As Richard Shusterman for instance has pointed out in his discussion on Foucault’s care of the self,<sup>10</sup> the individual body should not only be seen as a site for inscribing social power, but also as a place where different power relations could be challenged with the help of new ideas about the individual body and its possibilities: a “Foucauldian message”<sup>11</sup> that has been fruitfully adopted by e.g. feminists and gay theorists in their proposing of alternative body practices and criticizing of normative body-disciplines.<sup>12</sup> Foucault’s own famous

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<sup>5</sup> Barbara Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower; Democratic Citizens and other Subjects* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Wilson, “Beyond State Politics: Subjectivities and Techniques of Government in Contemporary Neoliberal Social Movements,” in Sam Binkley and Jorge Capetillo (eds.), *A Foucault for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Governmentality, Biopolitics and Discipline in the New Millennium* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 30-46, 30.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>9</sup> On discussion e.g. Kevin Thompson, “Forms of Resistance: Foucault on Tactical Reversal and Self-Formation,” *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol. 36 (2003), 113-138; Amy Allen, “Foucault and the Politics of Ourselves,” *History and the Human Sciences*, vol. 24, No. 4 (2011), 43-59; Alan Rosenberg and Alan Milchman, “The Final Foucault; A Central Issue in Governmentality and Government of the Self,” in Sam Binkley and Jorge Capetillo (eds.), *A Foucault for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Governmentality, Biopolitics and Discipline in the New Millennium* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 62-72.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Shusterman, “Somaesthetics and Care of the Self: the Case of Foucault,” *The Monist*, vol. 83, No. 4 (2000), 530-551.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 535.

<sup>12</sup> Shusterman refers to Foucault both as an “analytic genealogist,” who showed us how docile bodies were made in various, often seemingly innocent, but nevertheless very normative, body-disciplines to advance certain socio-political agendas and as a pragmatic methodologist, who strived to advance alternative ways of living to overcome these disciplines (*ibid.*, 538). “Different strokes, for different folks,” as Shusterman summarizes Foucault’s idea of breaking away from repressive ideologies entrenched in our bodies (*ibid.*).

definition of ethics, which he based on his analysis of ancient practices of care of the self, entailed an idea of conscious practices of freedom “through techniques of living,”<sup>13</sup> which gave the subjects the possibility to form a satisfying relationship, not only to oneself, but also to others. Consequently, what follows in this article is an effort to provide the reader with an analysis of these kind of aspects in civil society organizations’ work and, more importantly, of the conditions of their existence.

This article is based on my altogether one and a half years of participant observation of the activities of one civil society organization working in the Finnish substance abuse treatment field during 2003-2007. The organization runs a social and health counseling facility for intravenous drug users and the data consists of field notes about the day-to-day activities of this service (100 pages), as well as in-depth interviews with the clients and workers of the service concerning the meaning of the work conducted there (N=25 and N=17). Much of the service’s activities took me by surprise as the field diary excerpt at the beginning of this article discloses and led to a need to find new and more versatile ways to understand the governance of problem drug use in civil society organizations. What, for example, first looked like a one-sided supervision of drug users and their bodies at the level of drug policy, such as in different drug policy plans and documents, turned out to be something quite different at the level of everyday action, such as positive forms of self-transformation and practices that in the long run supported drug policy transformation due to the ways in which the policies were carried out in civil society organizations. This emancipatory and transformative dimension in the work of civil society organizations has often been overlooked in previous Foucauldian investigations and has also resulted in certain blind spots in our understanding of civil society organizations from this perspective.

This article is constructed as follows. I’ll start by looking at the previous Foucauldian discussion on civil society as a technology of citizenship or strategy of government, a view, which is outlined with the help of Cruikshank and Wilson.<sup>14</sup> After this I look at the critique presented on this view as well as on Foucauldian approaches to governance in general, and outline my own perception of the possibilities of civil society organizations to re-shape and contest prevailing welfare policies and provide drug users with new forms of care and belonging. The empirical part of

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<sup>13</sup> Foucault, Michel, “Subjectivity and Truth,” in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (New York: The New Press, 1997) 87-92. On discussion see also Richard Shusterman *Pragmatic Aesthetics; Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Oxford UK and Cambridge US: Blackwell, 1992); Milchman and Rosenberg, “The Final Foucault,” 71; Stephanie Batters “Care of the Self and Will to Freedom: Michel Foucault, Critique and Ethics,” Senior Honor Projects (2011), 231. Available online at:

[http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/231/?utm\\_source=digitalcommons.uri.edu%2Fsrhonorsprog%2F231&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/231/?utm_source=digitalcommons.uri.edu%2Fsrhonorsprog%2F231&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages)

<sup>14</sup> Cruikshank uses the terms in her book to describe the way in which prevailing civil society initiatives shape the nature of citizenship in contemporary societies. According to Cruikshank: “technologies of citizenship are the means by which government works through rather than against the subjectivities of the citizens” (Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 69). On the background is Michel Foucault’s idea of governance as the conduct of conduct that aim guide to shape rather than restrict the actions of others (ibid., 4). Also, the ideals and practices of “emancipation” and “self-government” put strongly forward in the contemporary civil society discourse could be seen as “strategies of government”(ibid., 123) that seek to maintain societal order by creating subjects that are willing to participate actively in their own governance.

this article consists of two chapters where I analyze different forms of what I call emancipatory and participatory governance made possible by the civil society organization under investigation.

## 2. Foucauldian Civil Society Discussion

The concept of civil society usually generates positive images and feelings. Political scientist Neera Chandoke calls it a “hurrah word”<sup>15</sup> that is accepted by everyone and also becomes the most important site of societal change in contemporary societies. Another typical connotation is an image of a vibrant and harmonious sphere of society outside governmental apparatus “where tyranny has finally been laid to rest”<sup>16</sup> and where the decisions are made in concert without pressure or coercion. These images date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to the period of what political scientist Fredrick Powell has called Enlightenment humanism,<sup>17</sup> which raised civil society in particular to the fore as a motor of democracy. For instance, Scottish Enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson, who, according to Powell, initiated the modern debate on civil society in his “*Essays on the History of Civil Society*,” held that civil society was essential to maintaining a good society. Ferguson’s contemporary in America, Tom Paine, defined for his part in his book “*Common Sense*” the government as an artificial (although necessary) “evil” and “civilized society” as its counterpoise.<sup>18</sup> The activation of civil society has also been seen to be one of the integral factors on the background of the rise of Western associative democracy. For instance, the emergence of different kinds of counterpublics and public spheres in different parts of Europe and the United States in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries have been seen as essential preconditions for the initiation of the democratization process in Western societies.<sup>19</sup> The development culminated in 1848, which according to Powell “inaugurated” the right to associate in the Western world.<sup>20</sup>

Even though the view of civil society as an autonomous actor outside state-power has been met with much more criticism since its initial appearance—Marx for example called it as an “illusion that needs to be unmasked”<sup>21</sup>—the concept has managed to hold on to its positive associations. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century civil society has, in fact, once again become such an all-embracing buzzword for anything that is positive that is seen to function like a magical remedy for almost all of today’s complex societal problems.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in the field of communitarian thinking, which rose to the center of welfare policies at the end of the 1990s, civil society and its associa-

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<sup>15</sup> Chandoke, Neera “Putting Civil Society in its Place,” *Radical Politics Today*, 7. Available online: <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/spaceofdemocracy/word%20docs%20linked%20to/Uploaded%202009/chandhoke/chandhoke.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Fredrick Powell, *The Politics of Civil Society: Neoliberalism or Social Left?* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2013), 1

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-42; see also Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001 [1782]); Thomas Paine, “Common Sense,” in Sidney Hook (ed.), *The Essential Thomas Paine* (New York: Mentor, 1969).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*; see also Alexander, *The Civil Sphere*.

<sup>20</sup> Powell, *The Politics of Civil Society*, 58.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>22</sup> On discussion: Michael Edwards, *Civil Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004); John Keane, *Civil Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

tions are seen as composing the “heart”<sup>23</sup> of the society, needed to keep communities and societies together in the midst of complex societal transformation. In the field of welfare policies this has led to efforts to generate a new sense of community among citizens as well as to a widespread belief that communities should be restored as central agents of welfare policy.<sup>24</sup> More “leftist” interpretations have, for their part, given civil society the more radical task of changing society. In the field of social movement studies, civil society and its organizations have been embraced as e.g. actors that could contest the prevailing neoliberal world order by providing alternatives to its ideas of competition and market-based models of social policy and service provision.<sup>25</sup> The images that have been put forward have included diversity and liberty.<sup>26</sup>

Foucault, on the other hand, was much more reserved. In his twelfth and final lecture in the lecture series at Collège de France in 1978-1979<sup>27</sup> he contested particularly Adam Ferguson’s idea of civil society as a historical-natural given that would assure, in Foucault’s words, “the spontaneous synthesis of individuals”<sup>28</sup> outside state power, and put forward a view of civil society, not as an opposite to the state and its institutions, but rather as part of modern governmental technologies. What was at stake—as Nikolas Rose, Mariana Valverde, and Pat O’Malley discuss in their review on the development of Foucault’s analysis on governmentality<sup>29</sup>—was a move towards a more dispersed view of power and governance in modern societies than the traditional state centered conceptions have held: one that was not only interested in looking at the controlling or repressing “machinery of control” of the state,<sup>30</sup> but included in the definition of power any kind of effort, inside or outside the state, repressive or voluntary in nature, that aimed to shape the actions of the individuals.<sup>31</sup>

Jacques Donzelot<sup>32</sup> refers to this aspect in Foucault’s thinking as a “refutation of a fixed distinction between the state and civil society,”<sup>33</sup> which has been developed further after Foucault particularly in the field of governmentality studies. A good example is Rose’s own community

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<sup>23</sup> Kalle Haatanen, *Yhteisöllisyyden paradoksit [The Paradoxes of Communitarianism]* (Helsinki: The University of Helsinki Press 4/2000), xx.

<sup>24</sup> On governance through community see e.g. Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Present; Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> See e.g. Donatella della Porta, “Critical Trust: Social Movements and Democracy in Times of Crisis,” *Anno* vol. II, no. 4 (2012), 33-43; on discussion see also Powell, *The Politics of Civil Society*, 189-190.

<sup>26</sup> Keane, *Civil Society*, 69.

<sup>27</sup> Michel Foucault, “Twelve: 4 April 1979,” in Michel Senellart (ed.), *The Birth of the Biopolitics: Lectures at Collège de France 1978-79* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 291-317.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 296.

<sup>29</sup> Nikolas Rose, Pat O’Malley and Mariana Valverde, “Governmentality,” *Legal Studies Research Paper 09/94* (The University of Sydney, Sydney Law School, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Here I am indebted particularly to Cruikshank’s discussion of Foucault’s governmentality. As Cruikshank writes, governing includes “any program, discourse or strategy” that try to shape the action of the individuals, even voluntary forms of self-governance (Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 4). According to Rose, O’Malley and Valverde instead of seeing “any one single body—such as the state—” as responsible for governing, Foucauldian perspective recognizes that governing can take place by a variety of actors and in variety of contexts (Rose, O’Malley, and Valverde, “Governmentality,” 3).

<sup>32</sup> Jacques Donzelot and Colin Gordon, “Governing Liberal Societies; the Foucault Effect in the English-Speaking World,” *Foucault Studies*, vol. 5 (2008), 48-62.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

analysis in *"Powers of Freedom,"*<sup>34</sup> where Rose establishes a connection between Jeremy Bentham's infamous Panopticon and prevailing community policies, and sees the latter as representing a similar form of disciplinary power as the former.<sup>35</sup> A similar inclination is present according to Donzelot in Barbara Cruikshank's aforementioned analysis on neoliberal technologies of citizenship, where Cruikshank, in Donzelot's words, "denounces the invitation to self-government" and sees the current empowerment and participation programs as forms of control and power rather than something liberating.<sup>36</sup>

Rose himself has referred to prevalent community policies as a new diagram of power, a "community-civility game," based on what Rose calls "ethico-politics."<sup>37</sup> This kind of politics "obliges us to think ethically"<sup>38</sup> according to Rose, and promotes different forms of self-techniques as a central means to do this. Communities and civil society organizations are for their part perfect locations for the cultivation of this kind of mentality as they operate near the citizens and their networks. Similar analyses of civil society as a tool of governance have been put forward by another prominent governmentality theoretician Mitchell Dean.<sup>39</sup> As Dean describes the workings of what he calls advanced liberal government, "this style of rule is composite, plural and multiform [...] Of crucial importance is the way it operates through a multiplicity of these practices of liberty."<sup>40</sup>

Consequently, privileging civil society and its different advocates in welfare policy entails a number of risks, if for instance the activities and values of these organizations are taken for granted rather than seen as something produced within different strategies and relationships of power. Kasper Villadsen and Mitchell Dean for instance, warn about this in their recent article on state-civil society thinking in Foucauldian discussion.<sup>41</sup> Particularly current new public management regimes have been seen systematically to strive to extend their rationalities and techniques into the field of civil society and, in this way, contribute to its "governmentalization" and de-politicization.<sup>42</sup>

### **3. On Resistance, Care of the Self and Civil Society**

More positive accounts about the role of civil society organizations in current governance regimes have, however, been presented as well. Miikka Pyykkönen has for instance reminded us that not all governmental techniques put forward by civil society organizations should be condemned, as they may be in many ways essential for the peaceful development of societies and successful cul-

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<sup>34</sup> Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom; Reframing political thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> in Donzelot and Gordon, "Governing Liberal Societies," 55.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>37</sup> Rose, 188.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 165-166.

<sup>41</sup> Kasper Villadsen and Mitchell Dean, "State-Phobia, Civil Society, and a Certain Vitalism," *Constellations*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2012), 401-420.

<sup>42</sup> Pyykkönen, "Integrating Governmentality," 200, on discussion see also Nina Eliasoph, *Making Volunteers; Civil Life after Welfare's End* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011). As Eliasoph writes about the de-politicization of civil society organizations: "The busy civic engagement programs" may gather food for the hungry, but opening up a discussion about the origin of hunger might just be too complicated and upsetting for them (*Ibid.*, 236).

tural hybridization.<sup>43</sup> Also, although civil society organizations and social movements may seek to shape human conduct, this is often done in ways that further societies' democratization or the capacities of the individuals.<sup>44</sup> These kinds of questions have been raised increasingly to the fore in the 21<sup>st</sup> century discussion on Foucault as his ideas of different forms of resistance and practices of self-transformation have begun to gain more and more ground as starting points of the investigations. Next I will look at this discussion more closely and, in the light of this investigation, approach civil society organizations as societal sites, where the creation of different, new, and alternative ways of being and living could become possible as well the contestation of prevailing norms and forms of expertise.

According to philosopher Amy Allen, one of the most misunderstood parts in Foucault's work is his idea of the individual as an effect of power.<sup>45</sup> As Allen writes, "critics often take this to mean that Foucault thinks that the individual is merely or nothing more than an effect of power."<sup>46</sup> This, in turn, would also make agency, autonomy or resistance impossible. Allen herself, however, sees this as a mistaken interpretation. As she continues in her article<sup>47</sup>, establishing her view particularly concerning Foucault's idea of the politics of ourselves:

Foucault's account [...] highlights the ways in which power shapes our very individuality. However, this does not mean that individuals are merely or nothing more than effects of power [...] his conception of the individual as the "relay" of power suggests, to the contrary, that she plays an active role in the maintenance and reproduction of power relations [...]

A little later in this article Allen refers to Foucault's notion of subjection as a "Janus-faced"<sup>48</sup> process where the individuals are at the same time produced in existing power-knowledge relations, and possess the capacities for critical reflection upon them as well as for self-transformation.<sup>49</sup> Although this means that individuality is never something "genuine" or "inert" in us<sup>50</sup>, Allen nevertheless holds that Foucault's perception points to a more dynamic view of governance and individuals' relation to it than has been traditionally anticipated by his critics.

The crucial question is how to analyze power in all its complexity and depth and, at the same, acknowledge the possibilities for individual autonomy.<sup>51</sup> Another important question, one

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<sup>43</sup> Pyykkönen, "Integrating Governmentality," 217.

<sup>44</sup> As Catherine Wilson writes: "Paradoxically, while individual subjectivities have been increasingly governmentalized, the techniques of governance are increasingly democratized. Social movement groups employ governmental techniques much as the state does, but with different leverage and different effects" (Wilson, "Beyond State Politics," 41). Little later Wilson also points out that subjects may also organize for social change by deploying different governmental techniques, such as organization education classes for children and adults about important themes like for instance animal rights (Ibid., 42). Dean highlights, for his part, the ambivalent position of "freedom" in advanced liberal regimes of government (Dean, *Governmentality*, 165). He writes: "it can act as a principle of philosophical critique of governance, while at the same time be an artefact of multiple practices of government" (ibid.).

<sup>45</sup> Amy Allen, "Rethinking Resistance; Feminism and the Politics of Ourselves," *Eurozine*, vol. 5, no. 5 (2010).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 8.

that has been addressed by Kevin Thompson in his analysis on Foucault's ideas of resistance and aesthetics of existence,<sup>52</sup> is how to put forward more autonomous and "non-fascist" forms of life than modernity with its "iron-cage" combination of totalization and individualization has provided us with.<sup>53</sup>

In Allen's analysis, an interesting dimension is her perception of collective movements as sites of contention between the prevailing norms and forms of power. For instance, according to Allen feminism is a good example of a social movement that has been able to describe and interpret the social reality from new standpoints and shaped not only women's ideas of themselves and of their possibilities but also the ways that entire societies work. The movement has, first of all, created a whole new vocabulary for describing social reality that has helped women to recast their identities and fight against oppression. In addition to this, the emancipatory narratives put forward by the movement have had a significant impact role in providing women and also men with new political ideas<sup>54</sup>.

Although Allen holds that we can never be in a position to know if an act is genuinely emancipatory or progressive (she uses the discussion on women's consumption of pornography as an example of this; whether the use of pornography is an act of resistance or a form of giving in to masculine desire),<sup>55</sup> nonetheless the example of feminism shows that societies can change as a result of various collective as well as individual acts that contest their basic assumptions. In her earlier writings Allen has also outlined her own view of the role of social movements in contemporary societies, bringing together Foucault's ideas of the role of power in the constitution of subjectivities and Hannah Arendt's more positive vision of power as the ability to act "in concert." As Allen writes:

[w]e are formed as subjects and agents by being subjected to dangerous strategic power relations (e.g. sexism racism, class oppression, and heterosexism, to name a few of the most salient in contemporary Western societies). However, this does not leave us trapped in an iron cage in part because, as Arendt saw, we are also formed as subjects and agents by the normatively positive, communicative power that is generated through action in concert (e.g. in feminist, anti-racist, socialist and/or gay rights social movements).<sup>56</sup>

From the point of view of civil society discussion, a noteworthy aspect in Allen's definition of governance is the central position that she gives to different social movements as social sites that bring people together, make them to act together and, in this way, also provide people with resources to resist and re-shape the different power relations that surround them. This could be seen as speaking on behalf of seeing at least some part in the actions of the civil society as separate from and

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<sup>52</sup> Thompson, "Forms of Resistance"; see also Kevin Thompson, *Spaces of Invention; Foucault and the Question of Transformative Institutions* (University of Chicago Political Theory Workshop November 28, 2011). Available online at: <http://ptw.uchicago.edu/Thompson11.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> Thompson, "Forms of Resistance," 114.

<sup>54</sup> Allen, "Rethinking Resistance," 9; on discussion see also Alexander, *The Civil Sphere*, 75.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

<sup>56</sup> Amy Allen, "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency: Between Arendt and Foucault," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2 (2002), 131-149, 145.

also as additions to those of the states' institutions, which usually operate from a more individual and hierarchical, expert-client, basis.<sup>57</sup>

The question that Allen leaves open, however, is how the formulation of new ideas and political forms take place. This question has been approached by Kevin Thompson in his analysis on forms of resistance in Foucauldian thinking.<sup>58</sup> First of all, merely resisting something was not enough for Foucault according to Thompson, as resistance is often determined as seeking to interrupt something<sup>59</sup> and is not really concerned with developing viable alternatives. Instead, invoking truly new and alternative forms of thinking and acting in contemporary societies would require a fundamental change in our perceptions and also in the workings of our contemporary institutions.<sup>60</sup> In this context, Thompson discusses two distinct forms of resistance in Foucault's work: 1) tactical reversal, which strives for the reversal of the prevailing power relations and 2) aesthetics of existence, which aim to create new forms of autonomous existence in society and, in this way, contest the prevailing forms of governance, which Foucault called fascist.<sup>61</sup> In his later career Foucault started to favor the latter according to Thompson, as only this would open societies up for true transformation.

Although Foucault's ideas about what "aesthetics of existence" could mean in practice were left quite undeveloped, there are parts in his work that, according to Thompson, make it possible to reflect on how e.g. the institutions could be refashioned in such a way that self-governance, care of the self, as well as various other "non-fascist" forms of governance could become possible. For instance, in his later career, Foucault introduced the concept of "spaces of invention," which Thompson sees as one of his rare practical suggestions for the development of welfare policies.<sup>62</sup>

In short, as Thompson describes, spaces of invention are institutions or relatively stable social sites where the contest between different configurations of power could become possible, as would their refashioning and transformation.<sup>63</sup> Also, the relationship between state-provided welfare and individual autonomy, which is often seen as very tense, could be rethought and renegotiated through them and, in this way, facilitate the emergence of new forms of sociality and even solidarity. This would first require the opening of the societies' central infrastructures and institutions to different forms of experimentation, new forms of decision-making, as well as the dismantling of the prevailing hierarchies based on knowledge. Secondly, the practices of the institutions

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<sup>57</sup> On discussion see e.g. Sulkunen, *The Saturated Society*.

<sup>58</sup> Thompson, "Forms of Resistance."

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-119, 123.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>62</sup> Thompson, *Spaces of Invention*.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. Thompson bases his essay on Foucault's interview with Robert Bono, at the time the National Secretary of the most prominent confederation of the major French trade unions. The central topic of the discussion handled the way in which the goals of autonomy and social security, often regarded as opposites to each other, could be achieved and brought together in social policy. Thompson crystallizes the discussion in the first page of the essay in a following way: "Foucault insists that to balance social welfare and individual and corporate autonomy requires, on the one hand, what he calls a 'certain empiricism,' a transformation of the domain of social institutions into a 'field of experimentation,' which would seek to decentralize authority and bring the users of a system such as social welfare closer to its decision-making centers, and, on the other, 'conceptual innovation,' which would take up the project of rethinking the categories and frameworks under which the questions of security and autonomy themselves are formulated and approached" (*Ibid.*, 1).

should both foster individuals' possibilities for self-governance and be collaborative in nature. Thirdly, we need institutions that could balance the state's power and offer possibilities for the contestation of this power.<sup>64</sup>

Self-governance would not mean, on the other hand, like many of Foucault's critics often assume, retreating to self-centered individualism or freedom to do what one wants. The essential goal would be to give the individuals the possibility to lead their lives as they see best: not on our own, however, but in a relationship with each other; "to forge a site within which participants could take up the work of self-formation in a genuinely collaborative fashion," as Thompson encapsulates Foucault's ideas.<sup>65</sup> This is not usually the case in the contemporary governance regimes that strive for normalization and where experts often assume the role of judge.<sup>66</sup>

From the point of view of the civil society discussion, the question that arises, is that couldn't the civil society organizations function as places where such new forms of individual and collective existence could be put forward? For instance, Jean Comaroff has discussed the possibilities of health-activism to unite marginal citizens groups and, in this way, open up a possibility for social change and individual recovery.<sup>67</sup> She has also criticized Foucauldian views of too pessimistic analysis of governance in the contemporary societies, as different health policy interventions are often perceived in terms of control, rather than something that could provide individuals with new resources and capacities. Next I will turn to my empirical case and present my idea of civil society organizations as "spaces of invention" that make possible different forms of participatory and emancipatory governance. However, as I will show in the analysis, this is not a given feature of these organizations: it requires deliberate attempts on the side their representatives, first of all to include the clients in the activities of the organizations and, secondly, to contest prevailing forms of knowledge and expertise that subordinate the individuals' possibilities for autonomous existence.

#### 4. The Case of Drug Policy Change in Finland

The context of this article is Finnish drug treatment, which underwent a major transformation at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. On the background of the change was an increase in different drug related harms related to injecting drug use, such as HIV, Hepatitis C and overdoses, and, because of this, a radical and quick change of what Finnish drug policy researchers Pekka Hakkarainen and

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<sup>64</sup> Here Thompson refers to Foucault's answer to Bono's question, if trade unions could work as forums for experimentation: "this work must now come from all those who intend to counterbalance the state prerogative and to constitute counterpowers. What comes out of union action might then eventually, in fact, open up a space of invention" (*Ibid.*, 1-2); see also Thompson, "Forms of Resistance," 123-124.

<sup>65</sup> Thompson, *Spaces of Invention*, 2; on discussion see also Milchman and Rosenberg, "The Final Foucault"; Roe Sybylla, "Hearing Whose Voice? The Ethics of Care and the Practices of Liberty: a Critique," *Economy and Society*, vol. 30 no.1 (2001), 66-84.

<sup>66</sup> See e.g. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish; The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1995). Foucault e.g. notes that "we are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the 'social worker'-judge" that strive for normalization" (*ibid.*, 304).

<sup>67</sup> Jean Comaroff, "Beyond Bare Life: AIDS, (Bio)Politics, and the Neoliberal Order," *Public Culture*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2007), 197-219; see also Katarina Jungar and Elina Oinas, "Beyond Agency and Victimization: Re-Reading HIV and AIDS in African Contexts," *African Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2011), 248-262.

Christoffer Tigerstedt<sup>68</sup> called Finnish “drug panorama”: the ways in which drug issues were perceived and handled in Finland. One of the central features in the transformation was the adoption of harm reduction policies and practices in the drug treatment field as well as the move towards new kinds of user-friendly and easily accessible “low threshold” services where “clients” or “users” could have more choice than they previously had. This was in order to reach drug users outside services better than before and make services and treatment more lucrative and easily approachable to them. The civil society organizations adopted a central role in the progress as both developers and providers of the services.

In short harm reduction policies consist of a range of public health policies, programs and practices that aim to reduce the harms associated with the use of drugs. Typical interventions entail needle and syringe exchange programs, overdose prevention and other form of health and social counselling related to drug use and opioid substitute treatment. Besides providing services, harm reduction strives to advocate users’ rights and include their views in the development of drug and welfare policies. For instance in Denmark and Britain, there have been well-established drug user movements for couple of decades that have played a central role in the development policies and put forward views favoring harm reduction.<sup>69</sup> Similar user groups can be found nowadays from all around the world, as well as from Finland.<sup>70</sup>

The research data used in this article at hand is derived from one such harm reduction intervention, namely a needle and syringe exchange facility for injecting drug users that was founded in the southern part of Finland in the beginning of 2000. The analysis is based on my observations of the clients’ and the employees’ encounters in different parts of the services’ activities (altogether 100 pages of field-notes) as well as on the interviews with the clients and the employees (N=25 and N=17) of the meaning of the work done at the service. The focus in the analysis is especially on the role of the service as a facilitator of drug users’ emancipation and participation in the development of services, policies, and society in general that was one of the services’ central agendas. As the manager of the service described their aspirations in this issue: “*to act as their (the users) voice somehow [...] so it could be heard.*”

In short, the analysis is based on following observation and interview data: 1) following of the client’s and employees’ interaction and activities in different part of the service as well as following of the different ways clients’ used the service, 2) following of the health education courses that were arranged for the voluntary clients about the prevention of drug related harms during or outside the opening hours (altogether 4 courses) and 3) interviews that handled various themes from the prevention of drug related harms and realization of harm reduction policies to user’s and employees’ views about the current service system and about the activities that took place in the

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<sup>68</sup> Pekka Hakkarainen and Christoffer Tigerstedt, “Ristiriitojen huume politiikka–huumeongelman normalisaatio Suomessa,” in M. Heikkilä, and M. Kautto (eds.), *Suomalaisten hyvinvointi 2002* (Sosiaalialan tutkimus- ja kehittämiskeskus: Helsinki 2002) [“Conflicting Drug Policy–the normalization of drug problem in Finland,” in M. Heikkilä, and M. Kautto (eds.), *Well-being in Finland 2002* (Helsinki: National Research Institute for Social Welfare and Health, 2002)]

<sup>69</sup> Betsy Thom, Karen Duke, Vibeke Assmussen Frank and Bagga Bjerge, “Stakeholders in Opioid Substitution Treatment policy,” *Substance Use & Misuse*, vol. 48, no. 11 (2013), 933-942.

<sup>70</sup> Vibeke Assmussen Frank, Jorgen Anker and Tuukka Tammi, “Drug User Organizations in the Nordic Countries,” *Substance Use & Misuse* vol. 47, no. 5 (2012), 462-473; Jorgen Anker, Vibeke Assmussen, Petra Kouvonen and Dolf Tops (eds.), *Drug users and spaces for legitimate action* (Helsinki: NAD Publications, 2006).

facility. In the analysis I will, first of all, describe what takes place in these activities and, secondly, offer my own interpretation of them with the help of a Foucauldian framework.

The purpose in the analysis has been to shed new light on those Foucauldian drug policy investigations in particular that have seen harm reduction as a new form of discipline and control that represses the users rather than supports them, as well as works against their favor and well-being by adopting new disciplinary procedures based on medical and epidemiological knowledge production. A famous example is Peter G. Miller's analysis of harm reduction as "surveillance medicine" and "new public health" thinking, where drug users are seen not only entitled, but also obliged to take responsibility for their own health.<sup>71</sup> The everyday reality is, however, much more dynamic and multidimensional in nature, as I will show in the analysis. Firstly, medical and epidemiological expertise have been able to provide the drug users' with new possibilities for e.g. taking care of themselves. Secondly, the drug users also gladly welcome this expertise and apply it innovatively in their own lives.<sup>72</sup> Next I will continue to present my analysis in more detail.

## 5. Participatory governance

The first thing that I paid attention to, having started my field work at the health and social counseling facility under investigation, was the ability of drug users to use the facility and its services and premises very freely, without too many restrictions imposed on the workers. In addition to this, the clients were able to resist and re-shape the work that was conducted in the facility, and their views were also taken into account by the workers. This view was very different from the ones that I had encountered in previous analyses, which often presented drug users as mere objects of different policies: policies that "positioned" the users under their surveillance, as Fischer and his colleagues describe in their analysis on safe injection sites (SIS).<sup>73</sup> In the course of my investigation I also came to learn that this difference was in many ways a result of the different institutional and interactional choices that the service workers had deliberately made during its existence. In short, these choices reflected the self-image of the facility as a client-centered and "liberal" place and, more importantly, as a part of a larger civil society organization that aimed to transform

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<sup>71</sup> Peter Miller, "A Critical Review of the Harm Minimization Ideology in Australia," *Critical Public Health*, vol.11, no.2 (2001), 167-178; on discussion see also Benedict Fischer *et al.*, "Drug use, Risk and Urban Order: Examining Supervised Injection Sites (SISs) as Governmentality," *International Journal of Drug Policy*, vol. 15 (2004), 357-365; Tuukka Tammi and Toivo Hurme, "How the Harm Reduction Movement Contrasts Itself Against Punitive Prohibition," *International Journal of Drug Policy*, vol. 18, no. 2 (2009), 84-87; Jani Selin, "Hallinnan näkökulmia huumeriippuvuuden hoitoon Suomessa vuosina 1965-2005," *Studies in Education, Psychology and Social Research*, no. 421 (University of Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä).

<sup>72</sup> On discussion see also Helen Keane, "Critiques of Harm Reduction, Morality and the Promise of Human Rights," *International Journal of Drug Policy*, vol. 14, no.3 (2003), 227-232; Philippe Bourgois "Anthropology and Epidemiology on Drugs: The Challenged of Cross-Methodological and Theoretical Dialogue," *International Journal of Drug Policy*, vol. 13, no. 4 (2002), 259-269. I am indebted to Philippe Bourgois's and Helen Keane's critical reflections on Foucauldian drug policy analyses in particular. Philippe Bourgois has for instance criticized his own field, critical anthropology, of too pessimistic and even nihilistic analyses of harm reduction interventions that have failed to provide the harm reduction practitioners with any practical suggestions of how they could reform their work. Helen Keane has stated for her part that "an overarching suspicion of regulation can lead to a position where all health programs and medical care are diagnosed as inherently oppressive" (Keane, "Critiques of Harm Reduction," 232).

<sup>73</sup> Fischer *et al.*, "Drug use, Risk and Urban Order."

the prevailing drug policy and drug treatment environment by initiating entirely new ways of working with drug users.

First of all, the institutional environment of the organization, with its open doors and a space that did not divide the “staff” and the “clients” into their own areas, invited and encouraged both the drug users and the staff to become actively involved with each other and develop the work done in the service together. Although this “openness” owed partly to the fact that the services’ premises were very small and that there wasn’t any room for dividing the space into different areas, the employees also explained to me that not dividing the space into separate “worlds” was a deliberate attempt to bring the clients and employees closer to each other and, in this way, make the services easier to approach for the clients. In the quotation below, one of services’ health nurses discusses the significance of the service’s institutional arrangements for its activities. She had worked in a number of different treatment institutions before starting her job at the health and social counselling facility and in the quotation she compares the counselling service to these institutions.

Here we cannot escape the clients and hide in our own areas or “glass booths” you find in hospitals and many treatment places as well. Sometimes it is often very stressing as some of the clients require constant attention, they want to discuss with you about some problem and it’s very unclear what is actually the problem and so on, but, you know, in the end it feels good when someone says that they feel better after a long discussion or a short coffee break together.

A little later in the interview the nurse attributed the service’s “openness” partly to its starting points as a civil society organization. For instance, in the city’s treatment places it was very hard to bring about even minor changes in the activities due to the very bureaucratic nature of these services. This has made the interviewee feel powerless and frustrated at times. In the health and social counseling facility the atmosphere was, on the other hand, more “dynamic” and “involved,” and the interviewee also felt that she had a lot more say in how things were conducted there. As she ended her comparison: *“you see that things don’t work, but you cannot change them [...] but here we can paint those walls (services’ inner walls) whenever we want to and, you know, in any color we choose [...]”*

I paid attention to this flexibility in my own observations as well. For instance, there was no official protocol or institutional agenda that the clients were expected to follow. As I’ve written earlier elsewhere with my colleague,<sup>74</sup> one could literally enter the service straight from the street and use the services during the opening hours as one wanted. The staff also accommodated the clients’ ways of entering and using the institution, even if they did not really feel up to it. One of the clients reflected the service’s openness in an interview by saying that in other treatment institutions one was supposed to answer a list of questions before “getting down to business,” “how much [drugs] you have consumed and so on,” as the interviewee explained. Instead, at the health and social counseling facility the atmosphere was more relaxed: *“If I ask, they answer, but otherwise they leave me alone. And that’s the way it should be.”*

Also other clients often compared services’ practices and facilities with those of public institutions. A common feature in this comparison was criticism of public institutions’ procedures that treated drug users “like cattle” and, vice versa, praise for the practices of the facility as open, wel-

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<sup>74</sup> Anna Leppo and Riikka Perälä, “User Involvement in Finland: the Hybrid of Control and Emancipation,” *Journal of Health Organisation and Management*, Vol. 23, No.3 (2009).

coming, and respecting. In the quotation below a client, a young women in her thirties who injected buprenorphine, compares her visits to the city's social services with visits to the health and social counseling service. While workers in the social services often appeared distant and disrespectful, in the health and social counseling facility the interviewee felt herself welcome.

If, for instance, I go the social services [...] they are there, like, is she going to bite, when they read from the papers that I use drugs [...] But here everyone is always ready listen and they know me here. I come here almost every day, just for a coffee or something.

Later in the interview the interviewee explained that workers at the city's health centers and social offices actually made her feel furious: "They just sit there and stare you with this frustrated and judgemental face [...] and I know just what they think [...] and then I start raving."

The workers explained this difference to me by pointing out that the role of civil society organizations was different from that of the public institutions in the health and social service system. As one of the workers explained to me, "*we don't have this controlling function that for instance public social services have [...] so we can be more relaxed with the clients.*" The lack of the controlling function gave, according to the worker, the clients the possibility to work with the workers more openly than with the representatives of the social services and other public institutions. As the worker explained, "*they don't have to for instance lie to us that they don't use drugs and they also feel that they can tell us other unpleasant things about their lives.*" My own observations pointed in a similar direction. My first field notes are filled with descriptions of the encounters between the workers and the clients of the service, where these two parties, often seen as opposites, discuss and joke with each other in a light manner, exchange compliments or engage in discussions about various different things. The physical and emotional "closeness" of these two parties was, in fact, one of the most surprising findings for me at the beginning of my research, as the sociological classics had taught me that the most crucial features in the operation of different treatment institutions were, first of all, the conflict between the clients or "the inmates" and the staff and, secondly, the subjection of clients to institutional goals and principles.

In the facility under scrutiny, one of the clients often came to the facility with roller skates on and used the place just as he pleased in many other ways. This was no exception: other clients were able to describe quite independently how they used the service.<sup>75</sup> The next field note excerpt from the service's health education course from October 2003 shows how the "agenda" of the service was also open to resistance and negotiation.

Kimmo asks frustrated, what is the point of all this (health and social counseling). "Why do these services exist? This is too a little solution for too a big of problem. What is at stake in the end is politics." Sami (an employee) is confused and says, "Kimmo I don't what to say, what you said is just so substantial. I just don't know what to say." Kimmo continues: "I mean people have serious problems. They don't have any money, they're homeless and they have mental health problems and here we are, taking a course on health counseling. What is the purpose of all this in the end?"

From the point of view of governmentality studies, which often tend to see governance as very totalizing, a very interesting feature of the data was that the agenda of the courses was changed

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<sup>75</sup> Leppo and Perälä, "User Involvement in Finland."

after the critique presented by Kimmo's and also the other clients'. In later courses, there was for example a lawyer to discuss with the users of their rights. Another important theme that was included in the course after client's wishes was the operation of the health and social care system. In other words, clients were able to consolidate the work that was done in the service and also bring new angles to it.

At the end of my field work period the service started to arrange "peer work" courses for the voluntary clients. In these courses the clients were given information about different harms of drug use, how to prevent them and about the way the social and health care system functioned to help the clients help their friends and other "peers" in these matters. This could be done by working in the health and social counseling facility a couple of times a week, for which the compensation would be a little activity fee and also a possibility for professional guidance. The participants in the course found this almost a revolutionary development. A couple of years after the research, one of them had become one of the most active peer workers in Finland, touring different cities and communities and educating the public sector's health and social work personnel about harm reduction. She described his feelings about the course and similar activities in a following way:

Finally someone has realized that, hey, let's involve the drug users' to the development of the services as well. It's been 'a stroke of genius' in many ways. I mean, my god, how good it feels, when you are asked to be part of something.

So far the results are very interesting from the point of view of the discussion on the possibilities for new forms of existence and self-formation with the help of new institutional arrangements and practices. In the light of my data it seems that by offering spaces for spontaneous interaction and participation for drug users, many of them were very willing to enact even radical changes in their lives. An interesting feature in the services' activities was also that they seemed to provide the drug users with new ways of being and thinking almost "by themselves" without active "pushing" on the side of the employees.

## **6. Emancipating governance**

The activities that took place at the service were also emancipating in many ways. Many of the clients expressed to me in the interviews or in the midst of their activities at the service that they felt themselves "human again." Other phrases that were repeated often were "this place has saved my life," or "I wouldn't be in this situation without these guys" (the services' employees). Some of the clients referred to service as their home and the employees as their "only family." Other terms that I heard during my field work period were "living room" and "café": all expressions that spoke about the services' somehow open and easy-going nature. One of the regular clients called the employees her "angels" and explained to me in the interview that the place had made her feel much better about herself.

I was like this before [gives a "crazy" expression]. I've always had it difficult. My parents abandoned me when I was a child and I lived with my grandmother. I couldn't understand why they did that [...]. Then I met this guy when I was 14 and he raped me [...]. Somehow that made me crazy and I didn't get any help for that [...] and I know that you shouldn't blame others for your drug use [...] but still, if I would've gotten even some help back then [...] And I've been so restless always, I don't what's wrong with me [...]. And you know it's not nice to walk on the street knowing that I'm a drug user [...]. Hello! I'm Susan and I inject

drugs, nice to meet you too [...] but here I feel more normal [...]. I'm going through this ADHD evaluation at the moment. Perhaps I'm not crazy, but I just have this condition.

From the point of view of the Foucauldian discussion on the care of the self, a noteworthy aspect in the client's story is the credit that she gives to the facility as a place that has enabled her to acquire a better self-understanding. If, before, the interviewee considered herself "crazy," now she is able to see that there have been several things in her past that might make her behavior, like drug use, more understandable: abandonment, rape, lack of help, and maybe even a physical disability that has been left undiagnosed. Consequently, she feels more normal now

The idea of governance as a source of innovation and potentialities crystallizes the activities that took place at the facility. For instance, besides complementing the facility's atmosphere, the clients often discussed the different opportunities that the facility had opened for them. As one of the clients put it in the interview, he "finally" had the possibility to take care of his health. The nature of governance as a source of new opportunities comes across very well also with regards to the discussion on peer work at the end of the previous chapter.

I've discussed the different identities that were available for the clients at the facility in another context.<sup>76</sup> For instance, if drug users have been previously considered only as "junkies" or "criminals," in the facility they were referred to as experts of harm reduction. This in turn had seemingly emancipatory functions for some of the clients. In the following excerpt one of the services' peer workers, a woman in her 40s, who was in opioid substitution treatment, described her activities as a peer worker. To her peer work was, first of all, a possibility to help others and, secondly, also herself.

[...] I just took this one girl to birth control clinic and on Wednesday I escorted this one to drug treatment evaluation. Now, I was able to bring these three girls here from their apartment. Just to get them out of there. I have some clothes reserved for them [...] I can use this experience for my advantage, when I'm applying for this practical nurse education next year.

According to my observations the emancipatory nature of the service owed a lot to its nature as a place that had faith in drug users' own initiative more than average drug treatment facilities. The clients were not pressured to do anything against their will. Instead, the employees wanted to give them time to get used to the facility and its staff and take the initiative when they felt like it. I referred to this as the employees' "discreteness" and "face-saving behavior" in my field notes, which made the clients trust the service and also become more open to its activities. One of the employees told the following story in the interview, which resonates well with Foucault's ideas of governance as a relationship that strives for individuals' self-realization with collaborative, instead of coercive methods:

This one man came here almost every day for a couple of years and just exchanged needles and syringes. Didn't say a word and looked like he wanted to kill everybody. But I always greeted him, said hi and goodbye and see you again. And then one day he started talking. And there was no end to it (laughs). It's was like a lamp had turned on in his head or something. Now he is one of our most active peer workers.

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<sup>76</sup> Riikka Perälä, "Huumeidenkäyttäjien terveysneuvontakoulutukset uutena hallintakäytäntönä: etnografinen analyysi huumeongelman uusista hallintastrategioista," *Sosiologia*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2009).

Perhaps one of the most interesting observations was, however, that the activities at the facility had emancipatory effects on the employees too. Many of the workers told a very similar story in the interviews about the ways in which working at the facility and side-by-side with drug users “had opened their eyes” *vis-à-vis* drug problems and drug users. I end the empirical part of this article, in the quotation below, where a social worker, who had worked in the facility since it began, tells me about her transformation as a worker as well of her perceptions of drug users:

There is so much potential in these people [the drug users]. And here (in the facility) it becomes visible as we take them as they are and they don't have to e.g. fake that they are not using or that they want to recover. It is very liberating for many [...] I was terrified when I first started here. I mean, I had learnt from the media that drug users are like demons or something. It was also very difficult for me to accept that these people use drugs and I am not allowed to intervene in that [...].

### Conclusions

Through a Foucauldian framework, one cannot often escape the conclusion that the well-being and health of individuals in contemporary societies are “governmentalities.” Monitoring and administering them are ways of accomplishing societal order. Civil society organizations have, for their part, been perceived as sites where this monitoring and administering increasingly takes place. In this article I have wanted to supplement this way of thinking by adding a more dynamic way of thinking about the questions, which address the control of health and well-being in contemporary societies. I have also wanted to put forward a view of civil society organizations as sites that could operate not only as sites of governance but also as sites where new forms of solidarity, thinking about individuals' health and well-being, and care of the self could become possible. They are also places where the prevailing forms of knowledge and expertise could be contested. Finally, I have aspired to rethink ways of using Foucauldian analytics of governmentality, and to ask how those thoughts could be used to develop society instead of just producing diagnoses of forms of control.

As my results indicate, accomplishing societal order through the control of its individuals' health is not as simple a process as is sometimes claimed: it is not a “top-down” phenomenon<sup>77</sup> but rather a process where many different voices and perspectives are expressed and heard, including those of the individuals which the system aims to control. Different practices put forward by societies' institutions, such as civil society organization, can also genuinely back-up and help people and offer them tools for rethinking and seeing their lives in new ways: a dimension that has often been bypassed in Foucauldian investigations.

In my data, it was for instance evident that the different “governmentalities” put forward in the facility at hand offered drug users with new ways to think of themselves and their lives. They were not e.g. only addicts, but also citizens that had rights to proper services and to their own views about the service system. Furthermore, this transformation did not take place in relationships that would have put users in a dependent position (which is often the case in drug treatment), but in relationships that supported users own aspirations and goals and respected their

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<sup>77</sup> cf. Ian Hacking, “Between Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman: Between Discourse of the Abstract and Face-To-Face Interaction,” *Economy & Society*, vol. 33, no. 3 (2004) 277-302.

independent decision-making: an essential feature in Foucault's idea of practices of care of the self, according to Milchman and Rosenberg.<sup>78</sup>

However, as I also show, this didn't happen spontaneously: first of all it required deliberate attempts on the side of the representatives of civil society organizations to rethink their work as well as their relationship with their clients and, secondly, to open the practices and structures of the institution to genuine participation. These findings give tools not only to scientists to ponder and discuss civil society and its actions, but also to the representatives of civil society organizations to develop their work.

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<sup>78</sup> Milchman and Rosenberg, "The Final Foucault," 71.