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Discourses on employability: constituting the responsible citizen

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In the last couple of decades, there has been a shift from speaking about employment to speaking about employability. The interest in this article is directed at how discourses on employability are mobilized in the wider discursive terrain of governance. How does governance operate, what subject is produced and, more specifically, who is positioned as responsible for the employability of the citizen through such discourses? These questions are addressed by analysing three different kinds of texts: transnational policy documents on lifelong learning and the labour market; a Swedish policy text on in-service training in the health care sector; interviews with employees at six nursing homes for elderly people. A discourse analysis is performed inspired by the concepts of governmentality and the enabling state. Although the analysis indicate that the individual is constructed as responsible for her/his own employability, and the state and the employer are construed as enablers. This is not clear-cut or deterministic as different kinds of texts produce different kinds of positioning. This kind of analysis might help open up a new space for thought and action.

Introduction

In recent decades, transnational and national policies on education have focused increasingly on questions concerning lifelong learning, especially in Europe (cf. EC 2001; Ministry of Education 1998). A shift has occurred from speaking about education to speaking about learning. Learning is no longer only connected to formal schooling. Instead, learning today is connected to numerous practices such as everyday life, working life, etc. This shift brings with it a focus not only on learning but also on the learner. More than previously, educational policy positions the learner as responsible for her/his own employment, rather than referring to wider structures of inequality built into the labour market or the educational system (cf. Edwards 2004). Thus, the emergence of lifelong learning indicates a reconfiguration in the positioning of the citizen in terms of governance (cf. Fejes & Nicoll 2008; Rose 1999).

Discourses on lifelong learning are connected to another discourse which participates in the re-positioning of the citizen in terms of governance – namely, employability. A couple of decades ago, employability emerged as discourse, which replaced the previous way of describing the workforce (cf. Clarke and Patrickson 2008; Kruss 2004; McQuaid and Lindsay 2005). Instead of speaking about a shortage of employment and describing the citizen as employed or unemployed, policy now spoke about a lack of employability and the citizen came to be described as employable or not employable (Garsten and Jacobsson 2004) or in need of employability skills (cf. Williams 2005). Employability is currently used as an explanation, and to some extent a legitimation, of unemployment (Stråth 2000). This kind of discourse positions the citizen as responsible for her/his own employment, and less emphasis is placed on structural inequalities and problems in the labour market.

Thus, discourses on employability and lifelong learning seem to signify a shift in terms of how government is conducted and how the citizen is positioned as a subject of government. Questions of such reconfiguration

concerning how to perceive government have been elaborated upon by researchers who draw on Michel Foucault's (2007) concept of governmentality (cf. Dean 1999; Fejes and Nicoll 2008; Rose 1999; Fejes 2008). From such a perspective, government becomes something more than the government of the state. Here, government becomes an interconnection of the government of the self, the government of others and the government of the state, which Foucault (2007) termed the conduct of conduct. Such a perspective makes it possible to acquire an understanding of how discourses on employability position citizens as subjects, and how governing in a broader sense operates in the present time. In this article, drawing on a governmentality perspective, my interest is therefore directed towards how discourses on employability are mobilized in the wider discursive terrain of governance. How does governance operate, what subject is produced and, more specifically, who is positioned as responsible for the employability of the citizen through such discourses? By asking such questions, the ambition is to denaturalise discourses on employability, and illustrate how there are different ways to construe such discourses and thus different ways possible to produce subjects (cf. Popkewitz 2008).

The analysis relates to a strand of critical policy analysis, where employability can be seen as a planetspeak discourse (Nóvoa, 2002; Fejes 2006; Ball 2008); a way of reasoning that seems to have no structural roots, no social locations and no origin. It is part of a "worldwide bible" that is in every tongue and it seems to provide solutions to the problems faced. It travels through the world and is inscribed in different countries and practices where it takes different forms. This article therefore, as a way to acquire a broader understanding of how governance operates, focuses on how such discourse is translated in three different kinds of texts: transnational policy texts, national policy texts and interviews with people involved in an in-service training programme in the health care sector in Sweden. From such perspective, these texts are not seen as hierarchical where the focus is on tracing whether policies created in one practice are "actually" implemented in the next. Rather, the focus is on how discourses

are shaped in different practices by analysing different kinds of texts, how subjects are positioned in terms of responsibility, and how entities such as the state and employer are positioned in relation to such responsabilisation (cf. Rose 1999). This makes it possible to cast such discourses in sharper relief, to help denaturalise the present and thereby try to open up a new space for thought and action (cf. Popkewitz & Brennan 1998; Fejes & Nicoll Forthcoming; Simons et al, 2009). What is “critical” in this kind of analysis is making things contestable, as Popkewitz (2008, p. XV) argues:

To make the naturalness of the present as strange and contingent is a political strategy of change; to make visible the internments and enclosures of the commonsense of schooling is to make them contestable.

By analysing how discourses on employability operate and are translated in different texts, it becomes possible to illustrate how, through the workings of power, employability is construed as natural and as something desirable. At the same time, it makes visible how these discourses are not totalising, or coherent. With its focus on a transnational and national policy practice, and local work practices, thus throwing the discourses on employability in sharper relief, this article contributes to the ongoing discussion on employability and its relation to how governance operates by providing an empirical example of how discourses position subjects in different practices (cf. Garsten & Jacobsson 2004; Williams 2005).

Empirical material and analytical perspective

The article is based on an analysis of an in-service training programme for health care assistants (HCA) who wished to become licensed practical nurses (LPN). The programme was part of a major state initiative, called Step for Skills, focused on raising the skills and competencies of the employees working in elderly care in Sweden, and to make the vocations in health care more attractive. In this programme, HCAs who had worked many years with elderly care were given the opportunity, during work hours, to participate in a process of recognition of prior learning, teaching

and assessment. Thus, they would be able to receive a certificate from the health care programme at upper secondary school level, and thus be employed as LPNs. The in-service programme was based on a close connection between the workplace and an educational provider, where the activities were in part jointly planned by the educational provider together with the employer, and where the activities to a large extent were located in the workplace (for a more elaborated description of the programme see Fejes & Andersson 2009).

As the aim of this study is to see how governance is shaped through discourses on employability more broadly, and more specifically to focus on what subject is produced and positioned as responsible for the employability of the citizens, different kinds of empirical material are needed. To gain an insight into the discourses operating on a “local” level, 20 semi-structured interviews (Kvale 1996) were held with a total of 30 HCAs, LPNs, local managers and teachers, all of whom were participating (in different roles) in the in-service training programme at six different nursing homes for elderly people. Altogether, 14 participants, 6 local managers, 5 supervisors and 5 teachers were interviewed of whom all worked or had previously worked as HCAs or LPNs. 14 interviews were individual, and 6 group interviews were conducted with 2–5 interviewees together. The focus of the interviews was on questions about participation in the in-service training programme, why the person participated, how the programme was implemented, and how the programme was perceived in terms of output and quality. The purpose of the group interviews was to further elicit the available discourses on employability as such interviews – as settings where different arguments meet – might help them to further describe and problematise issues discussed (cf. Vaughn *et al* 1996).

To analyze the “national” discourse on employability in health care, a green paper produced by the committee on Step for Skills was analyzed (Step for Skills 2007). The transnational discourse on employability was analyzed by reviewing policy papers written by the EC and the OECD that concern issues about employability. Thus, two EU policy papers on lifelong

learning and the labour market (EC 2001; EC 2007) were selected together with two OECD documents on human capital and adult learning (OECD 1998; 2005).

As my interest is in analysing how governance is shaped through discourses on employability, the analysis was conducted drawing on a governmentality perspective combined with a discourse analysis (cf. Foucault 1972; Fejes 2006). Governmentality emerged in Foucault's (2007) later writings and was developed by other researchers (cf. Dean 1999; Rose 1999). Here, government is analyzed as something more complex than the government of the nation-state: it involves the government of ourselves, the government of others and the government of the state. Further, there is a focus on liberal mentalities of governing. Liberalism is not seen as an ideology that can be related to a specific political party. Instead, liberalism is seen here as a mode of governing, or ideas about how governing should be conducted.

Foucault (2007) argues that during the last few centuries, there has been a shift in rationalities of government and how governing operates in society – from a situation in which society was planned through legislation and repression, to a situation where governing is conducted by the citizens themselves. Here, the notion of freedom is important. The governmentality of today is dependent on the freedom of the citizen. The starting point within such rationality of governing is that the freedom of the citizen is both a prerequisite and an effect of governing. Without the freedom to choose, there is only a situation of constraint, and thus there is no governing.

There is a different notion of the state related to such a perspective – a decentred state. The state is not an a priori actor who does things. Instead, it is seen here as an epistemological pattern of assumptions of how governing should operate (cf. Fejes & Nicoll 2008; Hultqvist 2004). In his writing, Nikolas Rose (1999) has called the contemporary state the 'enabling state'. An important aspect of such a state is providing the opportunity (enabling) for citizens to make choices in accordance with her/his wishes and desires, thus the political ambition to govern coincides with individual dreams and

aspirations. Here, freedom is both the prerequisite and the output of governing.

Based on the above, this article will draw on a governmentality perspective to analyse how discourses on employability are mobilized in the wider discursive terrain of governance. How does governance operate, what subject is produced and, more specifically, who is positioned as responsible for the employability of the citizen through such discourses? Here, the decentred notion of the state, and the idea of the enabling state will be used to connect the citizen as a subject produced through the discourses with the state and the employer. The policy papers and the interviews have been analyzed as text, drawing on a discourse perspective (Foucault 1972; Fejes 2006). By analyzing texts and focusing on statements, it is possible to see how the world is constituted in the specific practice analyzed. More precisely, the analyses have focused on what is being stated, how it is being stated and what is being constituted through such statements.

In the following, my analysis of the transnational policy texts will be presented followed by the analysis of the national policy text and the analysis of the interviews. The article will end with some concluding remarks.

Transnational discourses on employability

If we turn to policy making in the EU, we can see how a more flexible labour market and measures for making work pay are seen as response to the challenges of globalization. Such measures should be combined with employment security and investment in human capital as a way to improve employability.

Member States should pursue labour and product markets reforms that at the same time increases the growth potential and support the macroeconomic framework by increasing flexibility, factor mobility and adjustment capacity in labour and product markets in response to globalisation, technological advances, demand shift, and cyclical

changes. In particular, Member States should: renew impetus in tax and benefit reforms to improve incentives and to make work pay; increase adaptability of labour markets combining employment flexibility and security; and improve employability by investing in human capital. (EC 2007, 11)

Here, the idea of investment in human capital is central. Citizens should be offered the opportunity to train themselves, thus becoming better prepared to get a job. Similar ideas are raised by the OECD, which argues for the need of investment in human capital to manage ourselves in the knowledge-based economy.

As we move into “knowledge-based” economies the importance of human capital becomes even more significant than ever. Against a background of tight fiscal constraints in almost all countries, Governments are concerned about the importance of measuring the impact of education and training budgets on economic performance and the welfare of societies. Together with businesses and individuals, public authorities share a common interest in renewing and increasing the skills base of the population and workforce. Moreover, there is an increased awareness of the importance of lifelong learning in a society where economic, social and technological change call for flexibility, adaptation and learning throughout life. (OECD, 1998, p. 3)

This quotation is interesting in several respects. First of all, human capital is proposed as a solution to present and future problems within the knowledge-based economies. A truth is constructed about the future, which needs to be managed by creating citizens who are flexible, adaptable and constant learners. Secondly, a consensus perspective is emphasized with the idea that business, individuals and public authorities are said to share the same interest, i.e. they all want to create a skilled workforce. However, flexibility and adaptability are construed as individual characteristics, thus there is an emphasis on the responsibility of the individual to become such a subject.

When comparing the EU with the policymaking of the OECD, there are, as illustrated above, similarities. In the policies of both organizations, a more flexible labour market is seen as a solution to unemployment. Further, human capital and lifelong learning are advanced as a way to face the uncertain future. However, there is a noticeable difference in the focus of

the two organizations. The OECD (1998) discourse on employability is more economically driven than the EU discourse. For example, the focus of the OECD is on the knowledge-based economy, instead of the knowledge-based society promoted by the EU (EC 2001). Further, according to the OECD human capital is

the knowledge, skills, competences and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity... Human capital thus constitutes an intangible asset with the capacity to enhance or support productivity, innovation, and employability' (OECD 1998, 9).

Thus, human capital is foremost an investment in skills that can be utilized to increase economic prosperity and employability. However, it is also recognized that social issues such as equal distribution of skills are important. For example, it is stated in one of the texts from the OECD that:

recent studies show that an equitable distribution of skills has a strong impact on overall economic performance. This is an important finding, one that helps justify policies to upgrade the skills of disadvantaged groups. It also shows that the distribution of skills is important over the long term for living standards and productivity: more equitable investments in skills can foster growth by making the overall labour force more productive. (OECD 2005, 1)

However, even though aspects of equality are raised, the framing for such discussions is within an economically driven discourse where the main goal is an overall good economic performance.

The economic discourse is also present in the EU policy texts. However, such a discourse is also closely related to ideas about social cohesion. For example, in the memorandum on lifelong learning it is stated that:

Overall, consensus can be surmised around the following four broad and mutually supporting objectives: personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability/adaptability. That lifelong learning promotes this wide range of objectives is reflected in the extended definition below, in the light of which all references to lifelong learning in this document should be understood. (EC 2001, 9)

Here, we can see how social inclusion and personal fulfilment are emphasized as important goals in connection with employability and lifelong learning. Even though economic goals are important, learning for personal or civic purposes is stressed as a “good” goal in itself.

Despite the differences between the OECD and the EU discourses on employability, we can see how subjects are positioned in a similar way in terms of responsibility for their employability. In previous quotations, we can see how flexibility and adaptability are emphasized in the OECD texts as something that is an individual characteristic. Adaptability signifies a subject who is responsible for being adaptable to new and changing circumstances in the labour market. The citizen needs to train and re-train, to be mobile and flexible as a way to be able to keep her/himself employable. Such a connection between adaptability and employability is also clearly emphasized by the EU, which the following quotation illustrates.

In economic terms, the employability and adaptability of citizens is vital for Europe to maintain its commitment to becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based society in the world. Labour shortages and competence gaps risk limiting the capacity of the European Union for further growth, at any point in the economic cycle. (EC 2001, 6)

To sum up so far, discourses on employability operating in the EU and OECD documents include ideas about economic prosperity and development, social cohesion and equality, flexibility and adaptability of the citizen. Even though, as is visible in this analysis and pointed out by other researchers (cf. Jacobsson 2004), there seem to be a consensus perspective promoted via these documents where the state, the employer and the individual are all positioned as being jointly responsible for creating the “good” future, where lifelong learning and investment in human capital are central, it is still the individual who is positioned as responsible for becoming adaptable and flexible as a way to become/remain employable. One could say that there is a responsabilisation of the individual (cf. Rose

1999). The individual needs to take responsibility for using the opportunities for lifelong learning, by means of education and in-service training, offered by the state and the market, thus transforming her/himself into an employable person. The role of the state is then more distanced than was previously the case (cf. Fejes and Nicoll 2008; Fejes 2006). Now, structures for supporting the individual in her/his own choice are created instead of collectively planning the future by means of legislative measures and regulations.

In the next two sections, my interest is directed towards the discourses on employability created by means of a Swedish policy discourse on in-service training in the health care sector and interviews with HCAs and LPNs at six nursing homes for elderly care. A main question is in what way the individual, the state and the employer are positioned in relation to each other. Can we discern the same responsabilisation of the individual as in the transnational discourses?

Swedish policy discourse on employability

As a way of increasing the competence and quality in the health care sector in Sweden, the state initiated the project Step for skills. During the period 2005-2007 more than SEK 1 billion (EUR 100 million) were granted to projects in municipalities across Sweden. The aim was to give advice, ideas and support to the municipalities and to fund projects such as workplace education, recognition of prior learning, development of the educational programmes for the health care sector, developing methods for making visible career paths, developing leadership and supervision. The target group consisted of persons working in the health care sector related to elderly care, especially those working closest to elderly people. (Step for Skills 2007).

This initiative was, according to the policy text, initiated due to the fact that only 40% of those working in elderly care have the required educational

certificate from upper secondary school, at the same time as it is a challenge to recruit new employees to this sector. The green paper on Step for skills argued that:

According to the progress report on elderly care by the National board for Health and Welfare from 2003...the municipalities still have great problems recruiting personnel with the correct level of competence. (Step for Skills 2007, 250)

Here, the supply of labour is constructed as not being employable. Many of those working in elderly care today lack the necessary skills for such work, according to the green paper. At the same time, there is a shortage of adequately educated people available in the supply of labour. According to the committee's calculations, there will be a shortage of 200,000 skilled LPNs in 2015. Here, we can see how the correct level of competence is something that, to a large extent, is still lacking. Indeed, there are HCAs but they no longer have the knowledge and skills defined as necessary to be a good employee in the health care sector today.

Step for Skills can thus be seen as a political initiative aimed at making the supply of labour employable. Thus, the idea is that future challenges can be handled. According to the committee, the responsibility for creating the employable persons lies with the municipalities, which are responsible to fund elderly care. But the state is also construed as entity that needs to support the municipalities.

Care of elderly people is an activity that faces major challenges in the future. Finding an overall solution that will secure the correct level of competencies among the employees and manage the provision of competence in the long term is a complex and comprehensive task requiring large resources, which is mainly the responsibility of the municipalities. However, the committee can, based on the experiences of Step for Skills, establish the fact that a long-term engagement by the state is necessary and desirable. (Step for Skills 2007, 15)

The responsibility of the municipalities is emphasised several times in the green paper. The individualised responsibility clearly present in the transnational discourses on employability is not as visible in the green paper. Such a downplayed role of individual responsibility can be related to the discursive picture of the future created by the committee. It is suggested

that the present and future shortage of skilled labour in the health care sector be managed through efforts by the municipality and the state. The problematics of governing are thus related to these two entities. They need to make sure that there is qualified and skilled personnel who can take care of the basic welfare related activities.

However, the responsabilisation of the individual is not totally absent in this discourse. An increased responsibility is created via the demand on a higher level of competence suggested by the committee, and through the measures aimed at creating the opportunities for continuous learning in the workplace. For example, by creating what the committee calls learning workplaces. In such way, the individual is supposed to be encouraged to continuously update her/his knowledge and thus become more employable.

Several municipalities have deliberately invested in the development of learning workplaces. Study places with computer access, literature and journals have been created as a practical prerequisite and co-workers have been given time for self-study or for studies in smaller groups. Time for reflection, group conversations and exchange of experiences are other methods used. (Step for Skills 2007, 165)

Here, learning is construed as a norm and as something that should take place continuously in the workplace. Through the creation of practical conditions for continuous learning, the individual is encouraged to take responsibility for her/his learning. Thus, the individual is positioned as responsible. Such measures are not coercive. However, they create norms for what should be seen as a desirable way of acting. It is then up to the individual to either accept or not accept the responsibility offered. Such positioning can be related to the discourse of lifelong learning where policy texts concerning education, both in the EU and in Sweden, define the individuals' responsibility for turning her/himself into a constant learning citizen (cf. Fejes and Nicoll 2008). The state is thus created as an enabler that offers and prescribes certain ways of behaving. Through active choices, the individual turns her/himself into a constant learner.

In this section, I have illustrated how the state, the municipality and the individual are positioned differently than is the case in the transnational

discourses on employability. Here, in the national discourse, it is foremost the municipality and the state that are positioned as responsible for the employability of the citizens. By introducing specific measures, they should make sure that there is a qualified and skilled labour force available in the health care sector. The individual is indeed positioned as being responsible for her/his learning, but such a role is not as visible as it is in the transnational discourses. At the same time, we can see how education is centrally positioned by the committee, where education is seen as leading to increased employability among those already working in the health care sector.

Local discourse on employability

So far, I have illustrated how education and lifelong learning is presented as a central component for increased employability among the population, both in transnational and national policy texts. At the same time, the state, the municipalities and the individual have been positioned somewhat differently. In this section, I will analyze the discourse on employability as it is mobilized in interviews with HCAs and LPNs at six nursing homes for elderly people.

A statement repeated in the interview transcripts is the idea that the municipality and the private companies (where the interviewees are employed) have changed their demands on their employees. Now, they are demanding that all their personnel should have a certificate equal to the certificate from the health care programme at the upper secondary school level. Such a certificate is a prerequisite for the employees to be employed as LPNs (instead of being employed as HCAs). The new requirements create a future threat which needs to be tackled by means of more education and learning. In the following two statements by two HCAs, we can see how such an idea is created.

Yes, it's because I want to be an LPN. If there is a change in the municipality or something, it would then be easier to get a new job.

Now when they recruit, you have to have a degree as an LPN. It's not about your competence, instead... (Marie)

I then got interested in studying. The job I have at the moment. Then I became permanently employed here at [Solhagens'] home for elderly people. Then you need the correct level of education. So I spoke with my boss and told her that I wanted to participate in this education. So it was an interest on my part. (Christine)

These statements construct a strong individual responsibility. The individuals themselves construe future threats in terms of not being able to continue as an employee in the future. Such threats should be faced by updating one's education. These statements can also be interpreted as a way of handling future risks within the framework of which competencies need to be increased as a way of participating in the competition for new jobs.

This idea of risk is more clearly expressed by one of the HCAs.

Foremost to secure your job... To secure your job in the future, to avoid being kicked out when one becomes..., I am 44 years old. If this home were privatised, I might feel that I don't want to stay here. I want to be employed by the municipality, and then I wouldn't stand a chance of getting a job in the municipality, I think, only with a HCA certificate. (Sofie)

Here, we see how future threats concern the risk of the nursing home being privatised (operated by a company instead of the municipality), and the risk of not having the right qualifications. We can see a similar statement in another interview with one of the HCAs. Here, we also see how privatisation is seen as a future threat.

Because I... now I believe, now I'm this old. But I think in this way, you never know with the municipality. Without notice – poff, and then we are privatised. And it will probably not get better now when we have a right-wing government because then every nursing home should be privately run. And I believe this will lead to them saying that they only want LPNs. And I mean, it's not... it's a requirement, I understand that the requirement should be an LPN. So, partly, and then I wanted to study to become an LPN. Yes, I think it's fun! Very hard, but fun. You are happy every time you have taken an exam. (Jasmine)

This quotation illustrates that it is not only about threats and calculation of risk. It is also about an interest in in-service training. In other words, these statements construct an idea of self-responsibility. Each person should make

their own calculation of risk in the future, and education can be a tool to counter those risks at the same time as self-interest related to the educational participation is constructed.

Despite the role of self-responsibility, there is also to some extent a responsabilisation of the municipality and the state. They are the ones positioned as responsible to make possible participation in in-service training. Several statements concern the necessity of economic support as a condition for participation in in-service training. If the in-service training for the HCAs had not taken place during paid workdays financed by the municipality and the state, participation would have been limited, according to the interview participants. The following quotation from one of the interviews with an HCA illustrates this.

Yes, I can honestly say that I wouldn't have participated if it hadn't taken place during working hours. It was about seizing the opportunity when offered. To participate in the education. Otherwise I wouldn't have taken the initiative to apply for participation in a regular programme, thus having to take time off work to be able to study. I wouldn't have done that. (Beverly)

In these statements, there is a responsabilisation of the individual, at the same time as the individual is positioned in relation to the employer and the state. The latter two are constructed as enablers making it possible for the individuals to realise their wishes – in this case, to increase their employability, and to make something interesting and fun.

Conclusion

In the last 30 years there has been a shift from speaking about employment to speaking about employability (Jacobsson 2004). The discourse on employability has been taken up in several areas such as education and labour market policies. In this article I have argued that the contemporary discourses on employability are created differently in transnational and national policy texts and in local nursing practices in terms of positioning subjects and entities as responsible for the employability of the citizens.

In transnational policy texts concerning the labour market and lifelong learning, there is a consensus perspective as regards the responsibility for employability shared between the employer, the state and the individual. However, the discourses where ideas about adaptability and flexibility are central, position the individual as being responsible for her/his own employability, at the same time as the state and the municipality are construed as enablers. These latter two entities should make it possible for the individual to make the necessary choices to become employable.

In the national policy text concerning Step for skills, the municipality and the state are construed as being responsible for the employability of the supply of labour. According to the committee, there will be a shortage of skilled workers in the health care sector in the future. Accordingly, different measures are suggested as a way of increasing the employability of the supply of labour at the same time as the vocation as LPN is being made more attractive. The focus on the individual is less emphasised here compared to the transnational discourses. Here, however, the individual is positioned as responsible for updating his/her own knowledge during working hours as part of the learning workplace.

The responsible individual is centrally positioned in the discourse created through interviews in the local practices. The municipalities' demand for higher qualified personnel in the health care sector is construed as a threat that needs to be met by participating in educational activities. However, the state and the municipalities are positioned as entities who need to make participation in such activities possible.

To sum up, we can see how transnational, national and local discourses on employability have been translated, re-shaped and manifest themselves in different practices. At the same time, responsabilisation is operating in all these practices, although it is positioning subjects and entities differently in terms of who is positioned as responsible for developing employability in workers. As have been illustrated, even though there is a responsabilisation of the individual, this is not clear cut. In other words, there are different discourses available of how the citizen can position her/himself in terms of

responsibility for employability. This will be further discussed in two ways: as an implication of changing modes of governing and as a way to open up a different space for thought and action.

In one way, the responsabilisation of the individual, although not clear-cut in all the texts analysed, can be seen as illustrating how a different mode of governing has emerged than was previously the case. One could say that the role of the state is redefined from being a distributor of resources to offering services (Jacobsson 2004), or as Rose (1999) argues, there has been a shift from a social state to an enabling state, where the state should make it possible for the citizen to make active choices. The employer is partly positioned in the same way – making it possible for the individual to stay employable in relation to the workplace in which she/he works. Thus, the individual is positioned as responsible for making use of the opportunities offered as a way of transforming her/himself into an employable citizen.

Another way to phrase these changes is that the state has become distanced from the governing practice. Governing should now be conducted via each citizen's "free" choices. This is particularly visible in the statements analysed from the interviews with health care workers. Here, participation in in-service training is construed as desirable in relation to the future even though it is voluntarily to participate. In this way, we can see how there is no need for governing to operate through legislative measures. Instead, governing can operate powerfully by enabling active choices. This is not to say that this is what "really" happened, or that this is how these care workers "really" thought about these issues. Instead, in the kind of discourse analysis carried out in this article, the interest is directed towards how something is spoken of, in this case, how we speak about employability. In turn, these discourses create subject positions – positions possible to adopt, for example, the employable LPN as a subject, or the enabling employer as an entity. Or in other words, even though there seem to be no governing taking place, as there is no oppressive power visible, power operates powerfully and elicits, fosters and shapes responsible subjects.

In a second line of argument, the analysis carried out in this article might open up a new space for thought and action (cf. Popkewitz 2008). By comparing different kinds of texts, the discourses are cast in sharper relief, and thus help provide different descriptions of how responsabilisation is mobilised and how subjects are positioned in discourses. The outcome is a general, pragmatic and diagnostic account of discourses and practices of employability (cf. Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982). This is not an account that is generalizable in its findings, it is a provisional, general interpretation that sets out markers where possibilities for and limits to practices emerge as issues to be confronted, recast, and re-evaluated. Or, in line with Popkewitz (2008, XV) ‘to make visible the internments and enclosures of the commonsense of’ employability ‘is to make them contestable’.

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