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Practices for “clients”: A real user’s empowerment ?

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The citizen: user and administrated

Self-determination and participation : individual freedom and legal guarantees

- Political trend and legal evolution : more user's consideration through recognition of his capacities of self-determination.
- Right to be informed, right to be considered, right to be represented and to participate in social education institutions : evolution in relationship with a modern democracy.
- Considering the asymmetrical relationship between an administrated and the public administration : the necessity of constitutional guarantees between personal freedom and his self-determination.

Client is trendy, decline of client

The citizen in the social services : from user to client

- Semantic, rethoric and legal order.
- The user :
 - ✓ Someone who use a public service, paid or free. Individual subjet that use a social identified good.
 - ✓ Social dimension, not strictly in a politivity or legal dimension.
- The client :
 - ✓ Term who means "someone who buy goods and services, in a symetrical and private and commercial relationship". Voluntary legal contract between to independent subjects. It's an accepted fiction.
 - ✓ Capacity and responsability.

Accent to individual responsibility against social responsibility

Logic of market and individual responsibility :

- Bilateral legal and parity relationship offend the social, community and political dimension as social problem.
- Normative dimension of social work in relationship with a social project and his redistributive function in a modern state (not considered).
- More importance of psychological and individual relationship between the users and the social worker : risk of individualizing, invalidation and culpability. The client responsible of his situation.

Relativisation of social responsibility :

- Difficulty for social worker to do a critical and political analysis of social care system
- Empowerment of the idea that the social worker has a technical and instrumental function.

Client is not « always a King »!

- Social worker as control agent and agent of change.
- Every professional act need to respect legal conditions and a normative project of society in the way to promote the idea of social cohesion.

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