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Normalization paradigm towards life reality. Theories of discrimination and hidden handicappism

Terms of normalization and inclusion are seem to be essential in the area of modern thinking about disabled people. Especially high educated people and rehabilitation specialists don't want to express their reluctance to disabled people with innate impediments, disease or victims of an unfortunate accidents.

However social life show something completely different e.g. hidden programs e.g. public schools.. Teachers of better classes 'A' classes consider teachers of special classes as worse lower class people. The same concerns pupils.

Also parents of disabled treat special teachers as similar to their children. It is typical sentence (made by parent of child with medium mental disease) 'I know he/she won't be either a lawyer or a doctor, but he/she could become a teacher like you'. (Direct Speech).

This statement and other similar show private views and discrimination attitude towards disabled.

Theories of discrimination

In late thirties – views on discrimination were explained away. Psychodynamic theories were set stages for individual treatment /e.g. projection searching for scapegoat, frustration. In fifties there was noticeable an apparent leaving trials of success explanation of nasism ideology due to prejudice against authoritcal personality /Stephan & Stephan 1999/. However in sixties and nineties there was brought interrelation contribution of prejudice to social cultural factors. 'Deeply rooted in society: racism, ageism , handicappism, 'sexism' is explained by intolerance norms and duties to toe the line instilled in adults and children in socialisation process. It is assumed that trace of bygone situation there are some practices and discrimination patterns which are present nowadays in the whole area of institution of society. Law order people to equal treatment of all citizens, but discrimination is still present in politics, judiciary, educational field. There is also inequality in social economic aspect among

ethnic groups¹.

Significance of prejudices was interpreted in motivational area. It was showed the significance of authoritarianism features of observer's personality /prejudice was defensive effect/; in the area of cognitive theories /economy in the field of activity via application of stereotypes/, according to language aspect – preferring masculine forms, what it is obvious that every other category is exposed to stigmatism², according to ethnographic and ethnological aspect – reading of your body and its ailments and making value judgement about bashful illness and single out the individual items due to the way of being infected /sexually transmitted diseases and innate illnesses .

Nowadays it is considered that prejudice at individual level and at the social level don't preclude each other, but on the contrary individual and social forms of intolerance can strenghten each other. In the face of common inequality it is easy to form comfortable and economical opinion that the world is honest and everybody gets what he deserves. That way shifting the blame on victims of prejudice and discrimination is easy because of race, ethnic, health, etc. What can disabled use computer for? Who deserves for benefit disabled for computer and car or rather the family with many children? All the more so as very often members of handicapped families accept existing dishonesty in society and stereotypes, concerning their social group. Charges told about themselves as citizens of second category. This was pointed by Karl Marks, who called that as false consciousness. According to Marks funds production control results in spirit production control.

There is also very similar concept of system excuse. It is considered as psychological process, contributing to preservation existing social relationship even at individual's and group's expense. According to this theory stereotypes excuse exploitation of some social groups and justify their powerless against misery. That's why differentiation of life chances among various group of people seem to be quite obvious and natural to the eye of people from persecuted groups.

System excuse seems to be more important to discriminated group than being in defence of the own business. /e.g. victims of violence, looking for own blame, self accusation e.g. Forrest Gump knows he is not wise /.

Another theory accounting for discrimination process is group real conflict concept. According to this theory the reason of prejudice and discrimination towards the age of groups

¹ Stephan B., Stephan T. /1999/, Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi, GWP, Gdańsk.

² Beck U./2000/, Społeczeństwo ryzyka, PWN, Warszawa.

of various races, multinational, various sexual orientation and religious is care about own benefits. It is considered that competition among groups for limited and valuable resources results in build-up of bilateral prejudice. Competition for goods also results in hostility, extremely in open war. Followers of the theory of group real conflict believe that competition among group is not equal. Majority group defines general inequality in distribution of goods as honest and fair, engaging themselves in discrimination activities to protect their privileged position . Increased competition accompanies lay down of rights for protecting privileges of elit, implementing limits in immigration policy and limits in open competition at the job market .

There are also significant less expenditure for sport to disabled, lack of trainers, worse educated coaches, etc.

But people believe that it is not to own up to prejudice. Officially egalitarianism is obliged. That why there are a lot a form of hidden racism, described in many categories of explanation.

Theories of hidden handicappism

One of these theories is intensification of reaction concept

According to this doctrine ambivalent course to other people is caused by contradictory between positive and negative feelings among disabled people. Followers of intensification concept admit that disabled are persecuted; however other people also are against common society value system.

The feelings about it are extremely various, begining from sympathy, empathy up to contempt and distaste. This ambiguity of attitudes is the feature of dualism of value system, extremely important in modern society: egalitarianism and individualism. Following egalitarianism tell people to feel empathy and support them, but individualism persuade them to intolerance...Katz and others present opinion about ambivalent feelings. It is the reason of some kind of social tension between disabled and non disabled. In consequence sometimes there is increase of tension, sometimes decrease of tension. The most ambivalent emotion disabled shows when he is pride of something or when he feels disgrace... Followers of intensification concept think that it is result of two contradictory value systems: egalitarianism and individualism.

The tension could be decreased by extremely positive or negative behaviour towards disabled. It depends on what kind of situation was recognised. It is obvious in mass media, when disabled are presented as heroes /Murderball/ or losers. It is very seldom as a mixed natural

information, very rare funny. /I have not seen anything, I have not heard anything, knocking to the heaven's door/. It is considered that it is possible to apply this theory to every discriminated group: nation minorities, ethnic minorities, homosexual and mental disabled people³.

Next explanation brings the aversion handicappism theory

Followers of the **aversion handicappism theory** admit that disabled view is incoherent; there is contradictory between individual respected value and feelings.

According to the followers of aversion handicappism theory non disabled accepts egalitarianism and its value system, but feels bad with it with negative feelings about disabled. Handicappist doesn't realise his negative course to minority. He thinks about himself as a liberal who renounced racism. Being in disabled company feels bad, uncomfortable, with fear. These feelings cause anxiety and escape. He avoids disabled. It provides increasing of negative behaviour when the social values norm are not clear, fair. Otherwise aversive racist hides his feelings and act according to egalitarianism and accepted value system.

The most important consequence of prejudice is stigmatism and discrimination by 'normal' people – non disabled .

Affective, cognitive, behavioural reaction of 'normal' people to disabled could be intensified because of the ambivalent feelings. They are caused by specific problems of disabled , which are completely different than other people. To disabled every return message is not clear under attributive circumstances. Disabled has to decide what was that Discrimination or non understanding question. The second possibility is better There is no negative back message.

Specific question of hidden handicapism. Theory of symbolic racism

Similar to aversion handicappism, symbolic handicappism is mixed anti-disabled attitudes and protestant ethic values: individualism, independence, being obedient. It is considered that two factors make independent impact on behaviour as well disabled as non disabled. Symbolic handicappists are defined as well educated people, conservative....disabled press too much for changing. Symbolic handicappism is dedicated to specific set of reaction:

³ Katz, Glass & Cohen 1973; Katz, Glass, Lucido & Farber 1979; Katz, Hass & Wackenhut 1986; Katz &

political views and behaviour of elits. (In contradictory to hidden handicappism). Presented attitude is considered as effect of symbolic acquired features, coming from childhood. The influence of the predisposition is huge, because of its symbolic nature.

Another glimpse on hidden handicappism shows the repentance theory.

Theory shows another contradictory problem. Devine studies differences cognitive process among people with high and low level of prejudice.

According to Devine person with low level of prejudice consider discrimination as a fault and they consciously worked out cognitive structure, representing belief without prejudice. Stereotypes become active automatically, so person must consciously stop the process and initiate arouse of structure of new belief. According to Allport⁴, Devine assume that plenty of people who renounce prejudice sometimes react with discrimination to other stranger members of group. Allport suggested that contradictory of belief and behavior result in repentance, feeling of guilty and self-criticism. Devine indicates that individual with low level of prejudice feel repentance, when her behavior does not fit to ethic standard. Monteith⁵ suggested that people with low level of prejudice (comparing with people with strong prejudice) recognize disagreement between real and ideal behavior try to be engaged in activities in order to control undesirable behavior.

According to these assumption the person:

- 1/experience negative feelings towards her/himself
- 2/focused on her/himself with intensification of trying to control her/his behaviour
- 3/ focused on incentive present at the moment of disagreement;
- 4/ connect stimulus with contradictory re action of attitudes and feeling guilty.

These theories are very useful in analyses of situation of disabled in modern world. It is necessary to be watchful and being ready to fight with intolerance demon towards weakness and otherness.

References:

1. Beck U. (2000) Społeczeństwo ryzyka, PWN, Warszawa.

Wackenhut & Glass 1986, cit.acc Stephan & Stephan 1999/ .

⁴ 1954,cit. by Stephan B., Stephan T. /1999/, Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi, GWP, Gdańsk.

2 Stephan B., Stephan T. (1999) Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi, GWP, Gdańsk.

⁵ Monteith 1993, cit. by Stephan B., Stephan T. /1999/, Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi, GWP, Gdańsk.