Creative disability classification systems
The case of Greece, 1990-2015

av

Antonia Pavli

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CERMES
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Örebro universitet
Institutionen för Hälsovetenskaper
701 82 ÖREBRO
Abstract


Disability classification systems belong to the core of states’ social/disability policies through which persons with disabilities are classified as eligible or ineligible for having access to disability allowances. The study of disability classification systems has stimulated the interest of several scholars from the broader area of disability studies. Either by conducting comparative studies between different states and describing the similarities and differences of these systems around the world or by conducting studies focusing on the politics and semantics in the development of disability classification systems in specific states, all studies have shown a pluralism in the systems for assessing and certifying disability. In Greece, the development of disability classification systems for social welfare reasons emerged as a controversy that lasted for almost twenty years. One factor that strengthened the controversy was the outbreak of the economic crisis late in 2009 followed by the announcement by the governmental authorities of the enactment of a new system for assessing and certifying disability as part of the austerity-driven policies that the Greek state would enact for facing the consequences of the economic crisis. Drawing on an interdisciplinary approach, the overall aim of this study is to describe and analyze the enactment of disability classification systems in the context of Greek social policy from 1990 to 2015. For the collection of empirical material, a qualitative research method was employed, consisting of interviews, written material, and newspaper articles. The main findings of this thesis are: I) the involvement of the political parties in the development of the systems for certifying and assessing disability; II) the involvement of the disability movement in policymaking; III) the “creative” use of statistics by governmental authorities for the enactment of disability/social policies; IV) how the concept of “disability fraud” has been constructed as a “threat” to the society; and V) the vulnerability of disability classification systems in times of austerity.

Keywords: classification system, statistics, medicalization, disability movement, disability fraud, corporatism, economic crisis, STS, disability theory.

Antonia Pavli, School of Health Sciences, Örebro University, SE-701 82 Örebro, Sweden, antonia.pavli@oru.se