A Scandinavian Disability Studies tradition?

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- Not in explicit terms of Disability Studies
- No explicit exchange with existing Disability Studies traditions in other countries
- … apart from personal contacts

But a research tradition of the same family as DS?

- Definitions of what DS **really** is

- Family commonalities
- … that could later examined in relation to other DS traditions

The two phases of Swedish Disability Studies

- A breakthrough for a political interest in disability as a welfare issue in the late 1960s
- An environmental turn
- A growing social science research concerning disability

- An initiative of disabled researchers to establish Disability Studies
- A critique of current disability research by HSO
- The plans for a Disability Studies conference Spring 2008

A Nordic Disability Studies tradition characterized by

- An alliance between disability research (studies) and a political agenda for improving living conditions of disabled people
- An environmental turn
- A constructionist turn
- Insider's perspectives
- An emancipatory agenda
- A pluralistic view where the Disability-Studies-oriented research covers social or human science perspective on disability

The Nordic Relational (relative) Model
neither individual, nor contextual essentialism

One way of phrasing this is to say that these projects [adopting the relative perspective] take the relative definition of handicap seriously. It is impossible to understand the processes producing disability—and consequently exclusion and discrimination—without studying the interaction between the individuals and the context. In order to understand this interaction it is necessary not to lock oneself into the idea that certain individuals have certain shortcomings or problems and that these problems are to be focused, or that one beforehand has decided that the context has certain characteristics. Such projects demand a certain openness towards what is going on; a sort of respectful approach to a reality where competent and reflective persons act and shape the order we want to study (Söder 1999, p.33, my translation).

Four different versions of the Nordic relational, interactionist model
(Gustavsson 2004)

- ICDH and ICF approaches
- Critical realism
- Systems theory
- Critical interpretation

ICDH and ICF approaches
(WHO 1980, 2002)

- Disability is understood as a disadvantage relative to both individual impairments and contextual barriers

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Critical realism
Bhaskar (1978), Collier (1994) and Archer (1995).

- A critique against radical social constructionism
- The need for un understanding of interactions between different strata of reality on four different levels: the societal (social), the psychological, the biological and the molecular level.

Observation (systems) theory
(Luhmann 1995)

- Disability is observed differently from the perspectives of different systems: (biological, psychic and social systems).
- Antirealist and anti-essentialist
- A critique against biopsychosocial languages and theories as naïve realism

Critical interpretation
(Ricœur 1986, 1990)

- Disability can be studied within different disciplinary perspectives
- All results have to be understood within (translated to) a critical life-world perspective
- … in a dialectic between experience-near and experience distant analysis

A Disability Studies program
of
Hegemonic Categories of normality and functionality

at the department of Education, Stockholm University

Normality and functionality as represented in regular school textbooks

- A study of upper secondary school textbooks where disability is absent and invisible and normality/functionality is present and visible
- Comparisons with textbooks thematizing disability

Disabled people's multiple self-categorizations

- A study of self-categorizations of normality and functionality presented in life stories by disabled people
- A comparison between activits and lay persons from different cohorts (born in the 1940-50s and 70s-80s)

Normality and functionality in the ICF

- A document, case study of the aim to replace the old international classification of disabilities by a new classification of all people's functioning