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Halfway Down to Solitude : Ageing as the Process of Engagement/Disengagement through Social Welfare in Finland

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Halfway Down to Solitude: Ageing as the Process of Engagement/Disengagement through Social Welfare in Finland

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1. Introduction: solitude as a social phenomenon

The anthropology of Europe has been illustrated with the western idea of modernization, society and individuals. Since society and individuals have been regarded as opposed to each other in the modern era, individualism has become a popular ideology in Euro-American society. Louis Dumont defines modern individualism as an idea that puts greatest value on an individual, which is ‘the independent, autonomous, and thus essentially non-social moral being, who carries our paramount values and is found primarily in our modern ideology of man and society’ (Dumont 1986: 25). However, his argument ignores the fact that even in modern society the idea of an independent self carries a negative value as well. This negative aspect of the modern individual is called solitude. It is a term for the asocial person and the requisite of an independent self. What do these conflicting values of the modern individual indicate?

One typical example of this lonely, independent and conflictive self is Robinson Crusoe. As is already well known and well argued in social scientific discussions (cf. Marx 1909), Daniel Defoe’s famous novel *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (Defoe 1719) features the stereotypical character that represents modern capitalism. Surviving a shipwreck, Robinson Crusoe conducts his life in an isolated island in a well disciplined, proper manner for twenty-eight years. For example, he encloses a piece of unowned land and transforms it into a farm so that he can live as civilized a life as possible. He even produces a balance sheet of his life. He is described as having an independent and economic mind. Since self-independence and autonomy are the main characteristics of the modern, western individual of the capitalist era, Robinson Crusoe has been regarded as a symbol of *homo economicus* (Otsuka 1977).

Further to this popular interpretation, the story of Robinson Crusoe is also imbued with the strong sense of loneliness. Crusoe is alone in an isolated island until he finds (what is described as) a savage native, ‘Friday’, and enlightens him. Thus this isolated island became a synonym for solitude. Although Robinson Crusoe’s solitude was physically tangible, solitude is also a condition when a person is ‘socially’ isolated (Shimizu 1999), so that it can be found in modern society, as well. Manabu Shimizu, who argues about solitude from the standpoint of the sociology of emotion, states that ‘the essential quality of solitude lies among “the social”’ (Shimizu 1999: 12). For

example, there is a condition when a person in the midst of other people is totally ignored by. In social sciences parlance, this is called 'social death' (Mulkay and Ernst 1991). Social death is an idea which has been argued especially among medical sociologists who assert that a human being does not only physically die, but also can die through a social process. A common reaction to the topic of death is to try to avoid it or to not bring up such a delicate subject (Glaser and Strauss 1965).

Elderly people, in particular, are often considered socially dead. In ageing studies that analyse American society, the neglect of elderly people has been strongly criticized as ageism (cf. Savishinsky 2000; Newman 2003; Stafford 2009). It is common expression to say there is no room for elderly people in this youth-oriented society. In the sociology of ageing, there is a classic concept called disengagement theory (Cumming and Henry 1961) that explains the social death and solitude of modern elderly people. This theory presumes that as one ages, removal from previous activities becomes greater. According to this theory, the disengaging process is constant and inevitable. Sociologist Bryan Turner supplemented this theory by proposing the idea of a 'reciprocity maturation curve' (See Figure 1), which indicates the disengaging process of getting old by the relative absence of reciprocity (Turner 1987). Turner pointed out that ageism does not stem from economic factors, but arises from the stigma of dependency on other people (Turner 1987). Therefore, he suggests analysing the degree of dependency from a reciprocal point of view, because 'all social relations are characterized by endless forms of exchange, which create and require the norm of reciprocity' (Turner 1987: 122).



Figure 1 The reciprocity maturation curve (Turner 1987: 123)

From the beginning, this theory has been severely criticised. In particular, the anthropologists who study ageing pointed out that there are many societies where elderly people maintain their roles or their power.¹⁾ However, when it comes to western (modern) societies, the anthropological study of ageing regards ageism to be a common phenomenon.²⁾ The disengagement theory has been regarded to hold some truth in 'modern' countries such as some in Europe and in Japan.

In short, old age is presumed to be a less-social (=lonely) period of life in modern society. Compared to pre-modern or traditional societies, elderly people today are forced to live alone and to be detached from younger generation. Therefore the anthropology of

ageing has described practices of community creation by the elderly people themselves as a means of resistance to this tendency (cf. Keith 1979). This type of discussion is problematic for it portrays the solitude of old age only as a flaw in an intergenerational system or a blind spot in society. As has been already pointed out by sociological studies, solitude is, rather, a social condition shaped by social institutions. If this is the case, which parts of the social institutions have an influence on the 'lonely' lives of elderly people? Is it really solitude or merely a reflection of the discrimination from younger generations?

In this paper, I will describe the linkage between ageing, solitude and the life of the modern individual. As in the story of Robinson Crusoe, is there any mutual shaping between them? What kind of influence does this linkage exert on the lives and welfare of elderly people? How are the negative and the positive aspects of being alone intertwined with each other? Examples are drawn from my field experience on the social services³⁾ in a small municipality in Finland called Archipelago Town.⁴⁾ This town is a bilingual municipality with a population around 12,000. The data shown below is based on the anthropological fieldwork conducted in this town from 2002 to 2004 and supplemental research thereafter.⁵⁾

2. The Finnish welfare state and the local welfare system in Archipelago Town

Before describing the results of my fieldwork, I will give some background on my research. Especially the structure of the Nordic welfare state is the essential factor that affects the way of life for the elderly in Archipelago Town, because the welfare state is designed to incorporate the standard household structure and average citizen's way of life. The shape of the family is the platform and the consequence of the welfare state, which also defines the value of an individual.

There are many typologies regarding welfare states. The most influential one is undoubtedly the welfare regime theory by Esping-Andersen. Finland is classified as a social democratic regime as are other Nordic countries. This regime is characterized by a high rate of de-commodification, the strong position of the government and the relatively weak role of the family (Esping-Andersen 1999). Indeed, many elderly people in Archipelago Town live alone. There are families and relatives, but they do not have an alimentary responsibility to them. The critical feature of the Nordic welfare states lies in this individualism. It is not only that the state benefits individuals, but also that social services are provided to support people living alone.

Therefore this paper examines the following questions, First of all, how is solitude, as a negative aspect of the independent self, dealt with in a welfare state where individual independence is valued? How is it embedded in the process of ageing? The way the welfare system shapes the process of ageing should be interpreted by questioning the kinds of rights and obligations citizens possess in the Nordic welfare states. To examine these questions, I will describe the recent structure of the social service provisions.

Social service provisions for elderly people in Finland have undergone a huge change because of the criticism of institutional services and the serious recession in the 1990s. The de-institutionalization movement started with the exposure of distressing conditions in mental hospitals. This has been supported by the idea of normalization, which advocates offering a life as normal as possible. The movement widened the applicable scope to physically handicapped people, elderly people, among others. Moreover, the idea was convenient for municipalities with limited budgets since institutional care costs much more than home care. After the downfall of the Soviet Union, the Finnish economy, which had been dependent on the trade with the USSR, suffered a serious recession. Municipalities that had been responsible for providing social services to the residents tried to cut those service costs. In this way, the shift of social service from institutional care to home care has progressed. Meanwhile the number of institutional beds has decreased, home-care service became a primary focus. Nowadays, independent living means living at home. In Finland, the number of nursing home beds decreased from 27231 beds in 1981 to 23234 beds in 1991 (Aro et al. 1997: 139), and 16080 beds in 2010 (Suomen Virallinen Tilasto 2011: 31). The Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health summarizes this tendency as follows: 'Providing service at home is the most humane and cost-effective approach, achieving huge results of welfare by available resources' (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2003: 101). Therefore, the elderly in Finland have to spend longer and longer periods at home than before.

Also in Archipelago Town until the 1980s there were institution-centred services. There was an 88-bed nursing home, a large psychiatric institution, and more, supported by the tax revenue mainly generated from people working in local industries. The economic depression and de-institutionalization movement urged the 'localization' of the welfare structure. At present, there are three kinds of elderly welfare services in Archipelago Town: economic assistance, physical assistance and other types of care. This third type of care includes things like leisurely services provided at the service house or day service centres for the elderly.

The following table (Table 1) shows what kinds of social services are provided for elderly and how many times it has been used per year in Archipelago Town. According to this table, all kinds of social services for elderly are provided within the municipality, but the services for the elderly people living at home are most frequently used. There are several day service centres within Archipelago Town. The target customers of these day services is mostly people living in non-institutional settings.

The allocation of this kind of services should be understood geographically. In Archipelago Town, the municipality's welfare service is allocated to the town centre. For example, the sheltered housings stand near the churchyard and the home care services target mainly two central areas of the town where apartment housings are common (Triangles in Figure 3). These care workers are able to go to the periphery area, if people request it. However, it takes time to go to the peripheral area by crossing the sea. Therefore there are not many service deliveries to those areas. (See Figure 2, 3)

Still this centralized welfare service causes no problems because there is a tendency among the elderly population to move from the periphery to the town centre as they



Figure 2 Map of the main island of Archipelago Town



Figure 3 The town centre of Archipelago Town
 Triangles: apartment housings areas
 1: Senior's Cottage day service centre 2: Burch Village sheltered housing
 3: Malmkulla public nursing home 4: T-Hill group home

Table 1 Social services for the elderly and the number of users

Name of service	Service type	Users per year
Malmkulla: Public nursing home	Institutional care	52
Burch Village: Sheltered housing	Institutional care	60
Tin Hill: Group home	Institutional care	4
Home care	Home visitation	138 (7608 times)
Home visiting nurse	Home visitation	52 (420 times)
Safety telephone	Home visitation	105
Food catering service	Home visitation	96
Sauna service	Day service	15
Senior's Cottage: Day service centre	Day service	Free visits
Senior's Cottage: Day care	Day service	9
Sunshine: Day care centre	Day service	22
Burch Village: Service house	Day service	Free visits
Burch Village: Short stay	Day service	Not counted

reach retirement age. They explain their reasons by saying 'it is difficult to keep our own big house when we get old', or 'when I cannot drive anymore, it is better to live in the city centre'. This population movement towards the city centre involves two steps. The first is from the suburbs to the apartment housing in the centre. Then, the second step is from those apartments to a residential home.

During this process of changing living arrangements and acquiring social services, it is preferable to stay in less-institutional conditions as long as possible. Consequently, the home care services, which are designed mainly for the people living in apartment housing in the city centre, are the main force of the local welfare system in Archipelago Town. The care workers help elderly people to live 'independent' lives at home. Under this circumstances, how does this geographical life course for elderly people in Archipelago Town have an influence on their social lives?

3. The reciprocal nature of social service

To describe the social life of elderly people in Archipelago Town and its relation to social services, the disengagement theory and the reciprocity maturation curve discussed above should be re-considered. According to Turner, people are reciprocally disengaged from previous social status as they age (Turner 1987). However, the geographical allocation of social services distorts the reciprocity maturation curve.

In Archipelago Town, there are many social services that attempt to entertain elderly people living in the city centre. Of course there are services by which elderly people are physically and economically taken care, however, there are also outpatient day care facilities in the city centre (see the Table 1), where various kinds of social activities are provided for visitors.

Table 2 Activities at outpatient day care facilities and related organizations

	Senior's Cottage	Service house for the sheltered housing area	Public nursing home	Private nursing home	Parish
Christmas	•	•	•	•	•
Lucia fest.	•	•	•	•	•
Easter	•	•	•	•	•
Midsummer	•	•	•	•	•
Elderly week	•	•	•	•	
Regular meetings					•
Irregular events	•	•	•	•	
Bingo	•	•	•	•	•
Dance, gymnastics	•	•	•	•	•
Handicrafts	•	•	•	•	•
Prayer	•	•	•	•	•

The table above (Table 2) shows kinds of social activities offered at those facilities. Mostly, the contents are similar. For example, regular and irregular events mean that some volunteer presenters come to talk about their areas of expertise. Those presenters themselves are usually retired. Not only the regular / irregular events but all the activities listed above are characterized by inviting people from outside the facility. People from other facilities or other organizations are invited to assist at annual festivals such as Christmas or at entertainment hours such as Bingo. In this way, they are functionally not complete within the facilities but depend on outside human resources.

In addition, the outpatient day care facilities are run by volunteers. For example, there is only one official employee hired by the municipality at Senior's Cottage. The other 6-10 staff volunteers to stay from morning to afternoon, baking cakes, serving coffee and chatting with visitors. Most of those volunteers are young olds. They live in their own houses and are still able to drive or ride bicycles. They do not have to live in apartment housings near the Senior's Cottage, but it is presumed that within 10 to 15 years they will become service beneficiaries. Therefore, it is possible to find a medium- to long-term reciprocity between young olds and old olds around social services.

Freewill visitors also contribute to the operation of the facility. In Senior's Cottage, visitors often bring some small gifts such as farm products that they have grown, cakes they have baked, little potted plants, or table mats. They seem to feel some obligation to offer conversation topics or to make the main room cozier. These contributions are not only spontaneous; some activities held in Senior's Cottage assume the active participation of visitors. For example, every Wednesday morning there is a knitting circle called the Mother Theresa Group. The visitors knit wool blankets to send to India through a church organization. There is also a charity fair during the Easter season so that visitors can bring their own handicrafts or second-hand goods. In this way, there are many activities that contribute to the facility or contain some philanthropic element.

As is shown in Table 2, this type of social service is not only seen at Senior's Cottage, but is also popular at other facilities in which non-physical or non-financial care is provided. These kinds of social services are designed for reciprocal activities. Indeed, these services aim to maintain the social life of elderly people by stimulating reciprocal practices. In other words, they cause the disengaged elderly people to 'engage' in social relationships.

Therefore, the reciprocity maturation curve described above should be refigured as in Figure 4. When elderly people are capable of living at home, they are active in many social groups, such as volunteer organizations, sports and hobby clubs, church associations and neighbourhood groups (e.g. the Fire Company or a local women's association called Martha). The volunteers at Senior's Cottage have this type of retirement life. However, they would be less mobile if they had to give up driving or tired from going out. In those cases elderly people tend to stay at home more often than they had previously. When they move into apartment housing, their social lives become active again. There are many elderly people in the same area, so it is much easier for them to communicate with each other. At Senior's Cottage, they can come and go freely to have coffee, conversation, other activities and meet friends. This social life continues until they come to feel more fragile and are unable to go out even on foot. Those people who cannot get up by themselves, clothe themselves nor prepare food themselves are not able to participate in this neighbourhood communication. So their social lives become once more inactive and they are removed to be institutionalized.

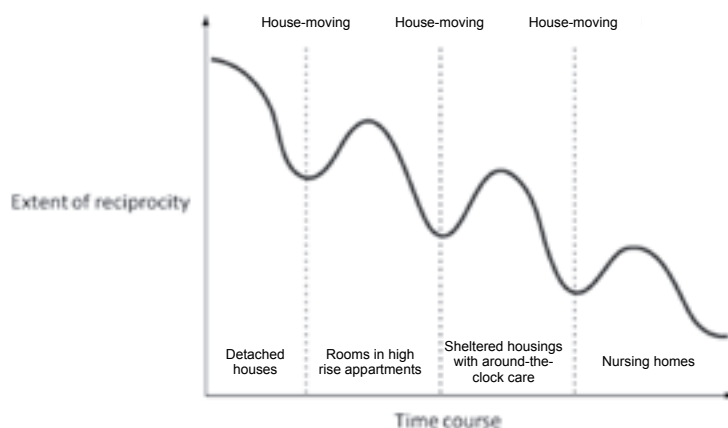


Figure 4 Reciprocity Maturation Curve refigured

Therefore, the reciprocity curve of the elderly in Archipelago Town can be analysed as follows: First, when the social life of the elderly becomes inactive, they are moved into the next stage of life course. Second, territorial reciprocity often takes place in the town centre because most of the activities are held there. Therefore, the level of reciprocity depends on the mobility of elderly people who can go to the town centre. This is not only because it is economically efficient to include care receivers in the

execution of services, but this reciprocal nature of social service is one of the essential ideas of the elderly welfare itself.

Because the Finnish social welfare system puts a high value on an individual's independence, the social services in Archipelago Town support the independent and non-institutional lives of the elderly. The municipality offers social services that enhance reciprocal activities for those who are living alone in the city centre. In this sense, the local welfare system regards the non-reciprocal living condition of seniors as negative and one which needs improvement. In short, they recognise this condition as solitude.

4. People who want to be alone

However, the nature of social services includes non-reciprocal aspects, too. If the care recipients are conscious of their position as customers, this tendency would be reinforced. For example, there are totally un-reciprocal services provided at Senior's Cottage at the same time as this facility offers voluntary activities. At the day care⁶⁾ part of Senior's Cottage, there are at most five people who spend the day. One staff member with professional nursing experience has to accompany them during the entire period of their stay.

In this situation, there is not much conversation between elderly people even though they are usually sitting side by side. The staff members make small talk with them, but these day care service users pay almost no attention to the other elderly people. They do not donate things nor actively contribute to the operation of the facility. It is possible to see this as being that those elderly are passive care recipients because they have serious dementia. However, it is clear from the following example that sometimes even demented people are also active participants of reciprocal relationship while a clear-minded elderly person can be very passive.

In Archipelago Town, there are many parish activities and types of charitable assistance for seniors.⁷⁾ For example, anyone in town can visit the deacon's office to ask for economic assistance or seek health consultation, and they hold Pensioner's Camps (*eläkeläisleiri / pensionärsläger: fin / swe*) during summer⁸⁾ in which one or two deacons accompany up to twenty participants. People who have serious dementia or who are wheelchair bound also participate. In this camp, the participants are expected to help each other and contribute to the recreational activities. In this regard, the Pensioner's Camp has an organizational structure similar to that of Senior's Cottage.

However, there was one very passive participant named Julia in this camp. She was a very healthy, intelligent 89-year-old woman living alone. She began participating in the camp rather recently. The deacon Berith Hansson wondered whether Julia had been bored with the camp. Julia is a highly educated woman, so Berith guessed that the mindless chatter of other participants might sound absurd to her. However, in the interview, Julia spoke of the camp as being extremely enjoyable.

[About the camp: interview with Julia (1 August 2008)]

Julia: When I'm alone, the time goes by so slowly. It is good to have someone around

you. And those two deacons are excellent people. We have programs all day and if you don't want to participate in any of them, you can do something else.

Author: So you liked it.

Julia: Yes. Next time I will know what I can do better than last year. I could bring books to read. Last year I asked the deacons for some books. Berith told me that most people coming there (to the camp centre) are rather young,⁹⁾ so they don't read much. The place is really nice but... there were no books! I can understand, though. Berith tried to find something to read, but there wasn't anything for me. Next time I will bring my own. But many guests (presenters) come to talk, and there is a gymnastic program... yes, I did have a very good time there.

Julia praised the pensioner's camp. On the other hand, she expressed her discontent of having no books to read. Although Julia told me in this interview that reading books is her favourite activity, Berith's concern that Julia might be bored was understandable. For Julia, it is the various entertainment programs, beautiful environment near the sea, guest speakers, and the nice deacons that she thought highly of. Though these are the main aspects of the camp, Berith seems to think that these things alone may be boring. For Berith, the most important objective of the camp is to communicate with other participants. However, Julia made no comment in this regard. For Julia, the Pensioner's Camp is a place where she can receive comfortable services somewhat unilaterally.

Julia's stance toward social services can be seen not only in this camp but also in her daily life. She eats lunch every day at the service house of the sheltered housing area, Burch Village, which is a 20 minute walk from Julia's apartment house. However, she does not make conversation with the residents of those sheltered housings. She spoke about other elderly people as follows.

[About old age: interview with Julia (1 August 2008)]

Julia: They are too old. I cannot converse with them. That place is the last stopping point before the death.

Julia: We are all getting too old. Most of the residents are over 80 years old. We are very well taken care of, and we are just alive, alive, and living. For me it is enough. At least, for me. These many years and months... But it is proper. We must live. I pray that God does not forget me. Some people live to be 100.

Julia: If you live a good life, you can prepare to die. (Some sentences omitted) For me it is enough.

This pessimistic view might be derived from her social background, for she was the wife of a Swedish-speaking landlord who had passed away few years ago. Other camp participants were from a lower social class, although the difference was slight. Her taste for books also distinguishes her from other camp participants. However, there is another factor which deprives the elderly service recipient of reciprocity.

If we call the lack of interaction described in Julia's case 'solitude', it is the social service as a service which makes the recipient solitary. For Julia, the camp is a place

where she can enjoy good services. Her logic is based on that of market economy in which exchange is completed by purchasing a service. It is possible to regard the social services of the municipality or the church as the product of market economy because they are not for free. Those facilities or services are purchased beforehand through taxes.¹⁰⁾ Therefore the service recipient can act as a customer.

The difference between the day care and the day service at Senior's Cottage is based on the same logic. Senior's Cottage is a public facility whose staff salary is paid by the municipality. After all, this budget comes from the residents' taxes so the free visitors (who also pay taxes) at Senior's Cottage can enjoy the services without any uneasiness or sense of obligation. Nevertheless, they seem to feel obliged to contribute to the facility by reciprocal action. On the other hand, the day care users pay 12 Euro a day, although part of the cost is covered by municipal assistance. Therefore, the staff of the facility tries to offer service to match the price, and to do so, they prioritize day care users over freewill visitors in the day service. In this way, the consumer's point of view is embedded in the organizational structure of Senior's Cottage.

This consumer's standpoint entails freedom of choice, the modern citizens' form of independence, enhanced by the element of neoliberalism. This is why both the negative and the positive values of individualism are found in the social welfare system. If this is the case, solitude as the negative side of independent living for elderly could be eliminated by social services. However, this service could also evoke a consumerist attitude as well as reciprocity. This is the very mechanism which led Julia to avoid communication and reciprocity with other elderly people. The solitude of old age characterized by disengagement from the former social life is transformed to that of *homo economicus*.

Now we can return to the original question. How and why are the solitude and the independence of Robinson Crusoe intertwined with each other? If the idea of the modern individual is illustrated by the capitalism and the market economy, it is the client-supplier relationship which deprives people of their reciprocal activities. This reminds us of classical theory of economic anthropology about the disembedding process of modern market economy by Karl Polanyi (Polanyi 1944). If that theory is always valid will the social welfare activities disembed from this reciprocal relationship in the future?

5. Conclusion: 'social' welfare

In this paper, I have shown the two faces of the elderly welfare system in Finland. In Archipelago Town, life after retirement is regulated by frequent changes in accommodation and the configuration of social services. Without the social services, the social world of elderly would gradually shrink as they move into an institutionalized setting. However, social services encourage elderly people to engage in reciprocal activities.

On the other hand, social services also isolate care recipients by treating them as consumers. This tendency is strengthened by the conditions of providing the services, the personal characteristics of the service recipients, and the ideology of the current welfare

system which is to allow for independent living as long as possible. Therefore, the modern welfare system makes an individual solitary to a certain extent. Meanwhile, it is also social services that connect people. This sounds very contradictory.

This contradiction derives from the ambiguity of exchange as social act. Marcel Mauss defined 'gift giving' as a special kind exchange because it makes the recipient feel obliged to reciprocate (Mauss 1990). If there is an obligation to reciprocate, the distinction between gift and exchange becomes obscure (Testart 1998). For Mauss, this ambiguity was a key feature in archaic, traditional societies; while the market exchange is a totally different system from the total prestation of gift exchange. Polanyi systematized this schema by proposing the idea of 'embedness' of economy (Polanyi 1944). He thought of the disembedding process of the economy from other social institutions as a prerequisite of the market economy principle. Reciprocity is the key logic of the archaic economic system that is embedded in society as a whole.

However, this contrast between the archaic and the modern society becomes all the more complicated because Mauss took the welfare system (such as social security) as a resurrection of the archaic custom of gift exchange (Mauss 1990). In reality, as is discussed in the previous chapter, social services also have an aspect of a consumer-oriented product that has been purchased beforehand. As Pierre Bourdieu indicated, the objective truth of a gift can vary so that the mode of payment (e.g. tax system) creates a time lag of exchange and disguises it as a reciprocal activity (Bourdieu 1977). Because of this time lag people are able to ignore the reciprocal obligation, or to be aware of this



Figure 5 Visitors resting in the backyard of Senior's Cottage. E. Takahashi, 2009.

obligation. In this way, the principles of market exchange and gift exchange are intertwined with each other even in contemporary welfare systems. The local welfare system in Archipelago Town has made the citizen unconsciously choose between the logic of market exchange and that of reciprocal exchange. Depending on their way of thinking, the conditions of receiving service and their living situation, people become consumers or reciprocal participants. That choice determines the life of the modern individual between two opposite natures of welfare, solitude and the social. In this way, the welfare system steers the ageing process of the modern Robinson Crusoes halfway down to solitude.

Notes

- 1) For instance, Carl Eisdorfer says, ‘the data from other cultures suggest that maximum participation of the elderly is the preferred route for policy’ (Eisdorfer 1981: xxi). As is seen in his words, anthropologists criticized of disengagement theory by insisting that the relation between ageing and disengagement is culturally relative.
- 2) This type of criticism in the discussion of the anthropology of ageing is called ‘modernization theory’. Donald Cowgill and Lowell Holmes derived a law of inverse proportion between the status of aged people and the degree of modernization by comparing 11 cultures including pre-modern societies and industrial societies such as the U.S. (Cowgill and Holmes 1972). Of course there has been much criticism of the simple schema of Cowgill and Holmes (Foner 1984; Rhoads and Holmes 1995) due to their introduction of social transformation which does not correspond to the derogation of elderly people or the low status of elderly people in pre-industrial societies.
- 3) Social services are ‘services organized by society, or arranged with its support and control to satisfy the needs of individuals and families in so far as services are not provided by individuals, or they are by their nature such that their provision should belong to society’ (Sosiaalihuollon Periaatekomitea 1971: 42-43).
- 4) Archipelago Town is an alias assigned to the town by native people.
- 5) To be precise, the ethnographic present for this paper is 2002-2009. In January 2010, Archipelago Town was merged with four other municipalities. Afterwards, the municipal social welfare services for the elderly were integrated with the sections of other municipalities, as well.
- 6) In Japan, this is called ‘day service’. The service beneficiary has a contract with municipality to spend the day at the facility with all meals served and required medications to be administered. It is completely different from voluntary visitors because most of these visitors have mental deterioration or serious physical disabilities and need to be under someone’s watchful eye.
- 7) Before building a welfare state, it was the parishes that took care of the residents’ welfare instead of the state. Even today, the church actively provides social services with the tax revenue. Therefore I cited this episode from parish activities to argue the nature of the social services.

- 8) In Finland, there are various types of camps held during the summer. The most popular camp is the confirmation camp (*rippikoulu / konfirmationsläger: fin / swe*) by the evangelical Lutheran Church. 80% of the entire Finnish population participates in this camp (Niemelä 2006: 182). There are also camps held by the church for children under 10, handicapped people, young mothers, married couples, veterans, and pensioners.
- 9) She was referring to the participants of the confirmation camp who are usually 14 years old.
- 10) The social services of the church are covered by the church tax. Service recipients of both the municipality and the church have to pay a small part of the whole service costs as well.

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