

## Professional Learning between Past Experience and Future Work

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## **Professional Learning between Past Experience and Future Work**

This paper is about learning, qualification and possible professionalization in human service work. With human services we primarily refer to work related to health care, child care, social work, and education. I present empirical findings from different phases of training and workplace experience of Danish child care pedagogues. The investigation is part of a human resource centered research program studying the development of welfare institutions and systems in Denmark. Welfare institutions have been developing since World War II as an important aspect of and precondition for the socio-economic development of Denmark from a predominantly rural, agricultural society to an entirely urban industrial and service producing society. It is an important aspect of the social welfare state of Scandinavian countries not only to provide basic material security but also to provide a wide range of services that were historically the responsibility of families or local communities (Salling Olesen 2010).

This development has required a substantial new labor force in the first place. It has drawn on “spontaneous” qualifications, primarily by recruitment of female workers with experiences of care and social competences, based on family work, and just adding a limited practical training to work in each particular institution. Gradually some of these human services have improved their level of knowledge and service quality. Instead of just learning in worklife supported by in-service instruction the development of human resources is now supported with appropriate education and systematic knowledge dissemination instead of just in-service instruction. The background of the research I present here was an upgrading of the formal education for pedagogues, forming a general basic qualification for pedagogical and social work in child care, care for handicapped and people with special needs, and elderly care (in progress reports in Danish Weber 1997, 1998c and 1998d, Hjort 1999). Education in first and foremost nursing and other health related occupations, teaching and care have assumed formats more and more similar to classical professions. Inside the occupations a classical professional status is clearly the goal for the development. On this background one set of research questions was whether the learning of students during the formal education secured an adequate qualification for professional work. In turn this led to questions about what are the (most) important aspects of professional learning.

The classical notion of profession is often just defined by prototypical examples like lawyers, medical doctors, engineers, architects, and a few others. But it is possible to distinguish a few general features which characterize all classical professions, namely the following

- monopoly on a specific occupation, protected by formal regulation or just recognized by society at large
- knowledge based set of skills and competences, based on a formal academic education
- subjective identification with the occupational role and a feeling of responsibility for the tasks it fulfills
- collective organization with a set of professional standards of quality and conduct

Each of these characteristics are necessary criteria for a profession, and they are also to some extent intrinsically connected: societal recognition is based on the assumption that professionals do not only possess the necessary skills, but can also be expected to act in an altruistic way, the identification with occupation is conditioned i.a. by its privileged status in society, etcetera. In this way you can say that the notion of profession is indirectly defined by an ensemble of characteristics. Not all aspects are of equal importance in each profession, and more importantly: They are subject to strong influences from outside: The requirements of the occupation are changing, new knowledge

and new technologies may require new competences. New professions are emerging and some of the classical professions may lose their status (Weber 1998b; Salling Olesen 2001, 2005; Weber&Salling Olesen 2002).

The empirical case is related to the possible emergence of a new profession. The material stems from the five-year applied research project on "The Pedagogue's Competencies", conducted by the Adult Education Research Group, Roskilde University for the trade unions in day care and social pedagogy. The project concerned itself with reforms and modernization of the 3 1/2-year formal education of academic and practical training, and comprised detailed analyses of learning and professionalization. Care, and primarily child care, is an occupation with a low degree of monopoly. Generally child care institutions employ fully educated pedagogues along with assistants with a limited training and unskilled assistants as well. It fulfills the other criteria to some extent. In most European countries there is a formal education based in psychological and pedagogical knowledge, childcare pedagogues form a subjective occupational group and with some differences have a collective organization. According to the definition given above you can describe it as an emerging profession, and its development is closely related to a huge transformation of societies as a result of capitalist modernization. During the larger part of the 20th century a number of jobs in caring emerged and developed without any traits of professionalism. Unskilled, short term jobs in psychiatric care, in hospitals and in care for the elderly and only late in the century day care for children drew upon the labor force available for such jobs, i.e. the working class women. The societal function of institutional childcare is developing as a result of women's employment in the formal economy and the gradual dissolution of tight communities of the extended family. In villages with traditional gendered division of labor, and in multi-generation families child care is a private task, not registered as "work". The early development of a professional child care was related to the upbringing of children in elite classes. But with increasing mobility in the labor market and increasing dominance of the "core family" of only two generations the need for organized childcare is becoming generalized. The transformation of family structure, urban settlement and employment is developing in quite different ways and at different pace in different cultural and socio-economic contexts. In Europe there are today, even between countries of similar socio-economic structure, huge differences in the gender division of labor and in the degree of institutional child care. Denmark has a quite high coverage of institutional child care, developed from the 1960'es onwards, but also here the occupation is a mix of workers of very different professional status. Most of them are female, and the occupation of course benefits from competences based in general female socialization and in the workers' life experience from their family life. In this respect child care pedagogy is similar to a few other human service occupations (nursing, elderly care), which are in the process of becoming professions in the sense defined here, and which build on skills and competences which come from female life experiences, but at the same seek to professionalize them (Weber 2007, 2008; Schmidt 2005).

The discussion about the professional development of child care is quite lively, and the child pedagogues who are trained in formal education receive a combination of formal education and practical instruction in the form of traineeships. Our research here is focused on the question in which ways different elements of the education program contribute to professionalism. We observed how different individuals developed their own professional identity on the background of their individual life experience and their way of processing the societal context of the occupation.

### **The life history approach**

On this background, and also recognizing the fact that these types of work presume a strong involvement of the individual in the content and the relations of the work the research does not only look at the a formal education and training, or the work processes per se. We have developed a

methodological approach which enable empirical studies in this theoretical framework which we call life history approach (Salling Olesen, 1996; 2004; 2007a-d; Weber 1998a; 2001; Weber & Salling Olesen 2002). A life history perspective connects the subjective dynamic of the professional learning process with the learner's practical reality by a concept of experience as defined by German sociologist Theodor W. Adorno, and developed by Negt & Kluge (1981). Taking the perspective of the learner transcends the systematic of didactic thinking, of the academic disciplines, and of the professional horizons of work life. Education, academic training and, indeed, jobs, are subjectively important arenas of experience, acquired competencies are attributed to education, and jobs are prerequisites of social existence. So educational learning and workplace practices are important, although possibly not the way we traditionally think, and we need to analyze them in the light of the learner's life history experience.

We can just give a brief introduction to the method and the theory on which it is based, and then summarize some of the observations it gives access to.

The approach implies that texts, i.e. research-produced and reproduced verbal statements from students and pedagogues, are exposed as provisional and tentative subjective thematizations of the learning trajectory and of various situations within it (Leithäuser & Volmerg 1988, Weber 1995; Salling Olesen 2004, 2007c). The life history approach is a societal one. Although the texts are produced by individuals and although their referential meaning is individual in the first place, our interpretation focuses on the historical and collective nature of subjectivity. What happens in individual lives and in the professional discourse over years in education is shaped by economic, cultural, and administrative transformations. Likewise situations placed in time and space, subjectively defined by themes and delimited by specific historical horizons, are societally composed settings with immanent conflicting interests (cf. Leithäuser (e.a.) 1977). Conversely the subjective appropriations redefine and change situations, individuals and professional groups contribute to the development of their fields. This theoretical position neither implies a mechanical influence of society on subjectivity, nor a mere human shaping of society. It approaches learning and experience as a complex process of historical change that possess subjective and objective dimensions (cf. Lorenzer 1972, Salling Olesen 2007b, 2007d). Personal interaction and primary socialization form decisive traits of subjectivity, but throughout the life course different situations form new horizons and lead to new thematizations. The explication of youth and adulthood as transforming phases of the life course, thoroughly defined by class and gender, is one currently productive elaboration of the research agenda.. Subjective response to the demands of change during a process of qualification and to contradictory or conflicting situations can be viewed in terms of progression or regression (Ziehe & Stubenrauch 1982). The progressive movement collects emotional, intellectual and social evidence to speed the individual, or the group in collective processes of the same sort, on to personal or shared goals (Bion 1961). Such processes are frequent in formalized training and education they are indeed often consciously initiated by teachers dynamizing learning or by colleges enforcing orientation towards qualification goals. The enthusiastic atmosphere well known in educational settings is the surface of this psychodynamic. The fact that however enthusiastic the educational process, the "turnout" is often smaller than expected, may be attributed to the fact that progression has been too hasty or motivated too exclusively by external factors. Progressive psychodynamics draw heavily on primary and secondary experience, and if the process is dominated by emotional energies, reality may be pushed aside. Conversely intellectual focuses may leave aside emotional orientations that will later impede the implementation of otherwise relevant knowledge and analysis (Becker-Schmidt 1987, Weber 1995). This summary may ring like a didactic afterthought, as a teacher's instrument -as if learning should just be directed and redirected to the correct appropriation of subject, object or reality in general. And actually such are badly needed, as work life and modern society is in itself changing, so that demands of qualification are forever redefined -with specific reference to the development in the

field. This dynamic historical situation should, however, rather inspire teachers and educational systems to give up didactics in the traditional sense, and instead focus on the inner dynamics of learning with a view to creating space for it to develop. Processes of learning must be approached with the humble recognition that they are a law unto themselves, complex, and often comprising pre- and unconscious dimensions as well as rational and conscious ones. Consequently scientific analyses must be presented as suggestions of ways of understanding or even as questions to the relevant populations.

### **The Pedagogues' learning and identity process - the Empirical Findings**

Within this framework we want to understand the professional learning and competence development for a number of students in childcare education. What does empirical research experience tell us about the significance of education and training in the formation of professional identity? And how does the theoretical framework presented above contribute to our understanding? I present a summary of analyses of learning and experience of students and newly educated pedagogues at various stages of their training - from the periods of practical training during the first year of education to the first year of actual work. Abundant experience and learning potential was available both in the practical training in the workplaces and in college classrooms.

Let me first present two individuals, who make maximal use of their personal life experiences in their education and occupation as pedagogues. To the best of my analysis they are valid examples of how professionals are recruited and how successes are obtained. These students, Marie and Kent, are two of 36 students interviewed twice on the impact of their practical training. Their supervisors and colleges were interviewed as well. Later in the paper I shall present different populations. The students quoted later in the paper about their encounter with the real world of the human service labor market are twelve people, interviewed twice with an interval of six to eight months. Both populations were formed with due regard to a fair - though not statistically representative - distribution of gender and generation, and they cover all of Denmark.

### **Educational Motivations are Manifold**

*"This is what I want -for now": the grownup woman*

Marie (age 33, born 1963, interviewed 1996) grew up in the countryside, on a farm, in a traditional family (Weber 1997). As a young girl she completed vocational training for office work, and she did do office work for a while which "was OK". But after that, she transformed her personal resources into a more unorthodox life-style. These are her own words, and there are no indications that her family ever objected to these decisions. Marie states that the family always supported "the sisters". So she travelled, she held jobs in farming, and she completed some extra A-Levels, making use of the Danish system of achieving A-levels by reading subjects separately over a period of time, as well as a course in welding. Finally she chose to earn her living as an unskilled human service worker in care for children and the elderly. She led a self-directed, non-pretentious life, still possible in the 80'es.

At the time we encounter Marie in the "proper" education for pedagogue, she has been a housewife for a full three years, having had and looked after three children. What to the outsider looks like an unstable and indecisive life course is, to Marie herself, simply making the best of current options. She states that she was always one to explore. This is why she has now decided to complete the formal further education for pedagogical work. Education is a good way to explore. *But why pedagogical work?* Well, actually Marie did want to do physiotherapy. But that has a reputation for being bad for your back and physically hard.

Second priority was to be a school-teacher, but that is the profession of her elder sister, and surely no grown woman would like to share a profession with such a sibling! Then you'd be sure to never grow up, wouldn't you!

So there is nothing glorious about it, no primary motivation for children, handicapped or elderly people. Education is an exploratory space, and the job is easy because of the traditional women's qualification that Marie possesses as generational and personal assets (cf. Dybbroe 1999, Dybbroe & Weber, 2010, Bjerrum Nielsen & Rudberg 1994).

Marie has chosen a day-care for severely handicapped adults as her training workplace, because its opening hours correspond with the needs of her family. She is a huge success in the work place, where she is acclaimed the "natural born social pedagogue". Likewise the college, the teachers and the supervisors of the workplace all claim to have done a good job with Marie.

*"I know what they need" - the grownup man*

Kent (aged 31, born 1995, interviewed 1996) was trained for farming, but allegedly his *knee* didn't agree with the daily physical demands (Weber 1997). So he went into military service and stayed there for eleven years training recruits. He does not himself supply us with facts of his further career options within the services. What he does state is that he always had a good hand with young people, and that his wife - herself a trained pedagogue - urged him on to college.

Kent chose an adventure playground for his practical training. Such playgrounds are designed as small villages of houses built by children. School kids perform the building and construction, they ride horses, look after rabbits, they quarrel and play in the afternoons.

The playground suffered from shortage of staff, so Kent got the building projects organized, sorted out the rivalry among the kids over houses and sites, re-schemed the tending of the horses, and finally he participated in the annual week-long camp without receiving any pay. Kent recognizes that some of the children may have perceived him as "somewhat harsh", but in general he tends to think that pedagogues and social workers fuss too much. The way he sees it children may be confused from too much understanding and empathic interpretations of their needs and actions. They are much happier being told what's right or wrong. Kent is not one for fussing; he is one for organization and action. As it appears he has been generally appreciated by the kids as well as the colleagues.

Kent's personal motivations? He'd rather have gone to university to do a degree in economy with a view to returning to agriculture with more realistic qualifications. But such a far-sighted plan collided with the needs of his own family. And anyway academics aren't everything: One can get far by common sense, Kent states. The motivation for pedagogy as a profession was actually his wife's: she attended the college, she pointed to the fact that Kent always had a good hand with young people, and it's nice that it is all in the neighborhood.

Like Marie, Kent is appraised as a natural born pedagogue. He was a godsend to the staff -and his competencies and success fall in line with a current awareness in Danish childcare: that there are too few men in these workplaces. The discourse on the need of men in the caring professions comprises an ambition to recruit male staff in order to offer children and clients a wider differentiation of potential role models as well as an intention of modifying the "feminine monoculture" of social and educational settings. A critical examination of this agenda falls without the scope of this paper -suffice it to say that the recognition of Kent's competencies fell in line (Weber 1998b).

## Adult Experience in Professionalization

The temporal success of Marie and Kent are in a way happy examples of how adult experience comes in handy and serves as a resource and a motivation in professional education. Central dimensions of personality and subjective priorities may succeed in forming the foundation of learning. It may even be argued that these mature individuals possess the competence to make the most of the training, to put it to their own use.

On the other hand: Marie and Kent have primarily learned that their *existing competencies are sufficient*, i.e. their personal success may actually limit their perception of the complexity of professional demands of the job and of the various dimensions of its tasks. This is only to be seen if one looks beyond the educational context and beyond the workplaces, into the life history of the learning subjects.

Current discourses of learning would point to a number of decisive elements in explaining the probable lack of learning in the otherwise successful stories of Marie and Kent. There is too little or too much challenge in the learning situation as compared to the established competencies of the learners. In didactic terms: This is either "too easy" or "too hard". Challenges in the different dimensions of experience counteract each other: Cognitive insights, social obligations, demands of physical activity and action, and emotional involvement are mutually contradictory. The impact of the setting, the horizon and the social situation is not understood by the agents. That applies both to the educational setting as such, its logics and the specific way it is situated -and to the workplace, the arena of wage labor as a field of learning.

These points are valid and relevant, but they do not reflect the substance of learning, they are not about the actual clashes and conflicts that define the subjective paths of learning nor do they make us understand why and how educational learning gains the impact that makes it experience.

*Simultaneously*, our research comprises ample material demonstrating that the complementary situation - life history and experience *blocking* rather than furthering professional learning - is as frequent as these two apparently lucky punches. Thus learning blocks of young women, confronted with severe handicaps, abnormal or indecent behavior, dramatic situations or simply: plain stressful everyday routines in institutional life, are plentiful in our material. And with the (relatively few) young men, we have observed a certain estrangement and learning distance towards the talkative and intimate psychological climate that is common in day care, in the women's workplaces. Indeed learning blocks or even "resistance" against learning is a common feature in Danish research on the impact of life history on learning in and motivation for adult education - perhaps most significantly so in discussing the motivations of mature men (Hansen 1998, Weber 1998a).

So many happy people cannot be wrong! Of course they can. Even if Marie and Kent have obtained personal success that they will benefit from in their further studies, and even if the relevance of their adult choice of profession has been confirmed the consistent pursuit of successes has left reflection behind. Insecurities and anxieties have been overlooked, ambivalence ignored. Closer analysis might not have proven the actual deeds of Marie or Kent wrong, but they might well have pointed to better reasons, more balanced argumentations, and a clearer view of reality, including its contradictions. So it is no arrogance to state that Marie and Kent might have gained a longer lasting strength, let alone professionalism, from more debate and criticism.

Still, the lucky punches where personal life experience become professional competence may challenge the professionalism of the colleges of education and produce some reflection of the

reduced understandings of learning in their everyday life; even in the training of professional pedagogues intentional fallacies are frequent.

### **Educational Learning through Three Years**

The harmonious experience of Marie and Kent should be supplemented by the results of analyses of other students' learning experience not only in the first, but also in the second and third years of training.

In the first year some students were enthusiastic, like Marie and Kent, but in quite a few others anger and aggression prevailed. Apart from the fact that much criticism of the colleges appeared justified the one-sidedness of the reaction may be attributed to the fact that the first year of training represents a new phase in each individual life course. Not only the mature students who know that this is probably their one and only possibility of professional qualification, but also the young students who have chosen human service, need to identify subjective meaning and benefits. The younger students are much more apt to criticize, even rage, against the formalities or the sloppiness, or both, of their colleges, than the older ones. They need the educational setting to prove meaningful and effective, for if it is not, their decision has been wrong! So the involvement the adults and the young students have in common, be it positive or negative. We have described this as the surface manifestations of subjective dynamics of learning, simply! - relativizing the factual positive or negative connotations of the learning experience (Weber 1997).

In the second year the students appear relaxed, at the same time less critical and less enthusiastic. They have established a recognized role, even an "identity" as students of pedagogy and as, maybe unruly, but still belonging, adherents of their colleges. Some allegedly make the most of this middle year: this is where experiments may take place, final exams being way ahead, but others claim the year as a relaxation period, spending time and energy on family, leisure or earning money. We characterized this phase as a subjective "midstream", where horses may still be changed in the sense that the direction of study may turn from day care to social handicap or vice versa, or where stepping stones are looked for in several directions. And whereas colleges will tend to prefer the energetic, experimenting student, we argue that the detachment, the awaiting attitude that some students offer, may constitute a most relevant and necessary phase of subjective adjustment (Weber 1998c). In the third year of training the polarized pattern has returned, but unlike the first year there is no attributing the enthusiasm to the mature and the critical attitudes to the young. Some students are downright sorry to envisage the farewell to college, and to them the prospect of getting a job is almost irrelevant. Others have regained or upheld their enthusiasm, and they work hard to qualify for specific jobs. But there is also a large group who appear, well ... grudging, sour, sad ... and when urged to elaborate it turns out that they are actually *impatient*. They want to get out of college for good or for bad. In professional terms the good means that they feel prepared to do a good job and a better one too, than their supervisors! And for bad it means that they feel it's their turn to collect the dough! In this final phase of training we do, however, trace significant signs of reflection and analysis with a number of students. They do argue their points much more explicitly than the students in first or second year. Maybe it's an achieved competence, maybe it's just that they never felt they had to do so before? (Weber 1998d).

So we have found a marked progression in the sense that the general pattern of reaction in the first, second and third years of training differ. Colleges systematically expect the first year to be one of trial and action (not error, necessarily), the second to be one of reasons and justifications, and the third to be one of reflection. The pattern is, however, much more muddled, the subjective priority of action vs. reflection depending more on the situation of the individual student, the interplay between practice and motivation, than on the didactically reflected input of the college. However, the analysis



of the students after graduation adds something to this point.

### **The Transition from Education to Workplace**

We have analysed the subjective outcome of the education by interviewing a number of newly graduated pedagogues twice within the first year of their workplace careers (Hjort 2000). This analysis is perhaps not the final one, but it exposes important turning points in the pedagogues' perception of their work. And like the analyses quoted above it covers generation, gender and geography in a plausible, if not statistically representative manner.

Firstly the recently graduated pedagogues displayed *poignant differences from college to college, i.e. from region to region*. With due reservation to the effect of research method focusing on the subjective meaning of education, the subjective orientations do come through in the material. The pedagogues of Eastern Denmark cherished a professional ethic that rang much like "Love thy Neighbor", the Western ones rang like "Know Thyself", whereas the pedagogues educated in mid-Denmark (the island of Funen) called upon communication and relations as key concepts of professionalism.

As it appears all three dimensions are relevant dimensions in professional qualification. The emphasis with which they were propagated may be attributed to the general line of educational thinking of each college, more or less rooted in progressivism, in folk enlightenment or in current modernization. But the fact that different dimensions are emphasized by pedagogues from different regions may also reflect a certain expertise in the professionalization: Hjort suggests that maybe the students got what they needed to qualify professionally. In the light of differences of modernization and culture it is plausible that the urbanized Easterners represented a degree of individualization that made the college spell out the obligations to others; and that the still rural West Denmark provided more traditional values, that called for reflection of potential confusion of the students' values with those of children, parents or clients. In educational terms it may be argued that a subjectively founded professional synthesis is still lacking with most of the pedagogues, but the effect of the 3 1/2 years in college is obvious.

Secondly the pedagogues claimed to be *temporarily happy with their jobs*, but even so they, fairly unanimously, stated further ambitions. *They did not envisage themselves in this sort of job forever*. Taken at face value it is disturbing that the acknowledged immediate job satisfaction does not settle itself as a professional life perspective. The facts of the relatively low status of the caring professions, the salaries, not to speak of working conditions, staffing, psychological stress factors, etc. are of course relevant parameters of understanding these positions at the referential level. A *life history perspective*, however, would also attribute this repeated "midstream" consciousness as a relevant phase of adaptation, where the situation is assessed and ambitions are tried out. The subjective reactions may be intuitive, but they fit well with the documentation of career patterns in American life course research, which are "If you gotta go -go now!" (or else you're gonna stay all your life) (Bee 1996, Weber 2000). And a *perspective of professionalization* would point to the fact that consciousness of specific dimensions of tasks is also developed through subjective sorting out of expertise, and that individual competence is consolidated by critically establishing what one can do and wants to do. Indeed the arguing of that may well turn out to be the very heart of the professionalization process on the individual and institutional level.

Thirdly the pedagogues claimed to be *well at ease* with the daily demands of the job, especially *with the children and clients*. They appeared relatively self-assured in this respect. Conversely they disclaimed the instrumental value of their training, but they added that actually they never expected to get specific tools. Specialized knowledge and refined competence must be found in the job, in

on-the-job training or in continuing education. College training was accepted as providing a general pedagogical or social qualification as opposed to a specific expertise, especially so when daily demands concerned disabled clients.

Even so, fourthly, the pedagogues *appraised the theoretical dimension* of their training highly - although allegedly it did not provide distinct methods, tools or answers. The theoretical dimension was *the frame of reference that made sense of the often stressful everyday routines*. But its explication was also a sorely missed dimension in the everyday life communication in the workplaces. However brilliant the theoretical training, it was of no value in the everyday life of the workplace.

Consequently -fifthly -the fresh pedagogues *missed some competence in making themselves and their professional standards explicit to colleagues and evident to administrative and political bodies*. In other words they missed a common professional vocabulary for the workplace, and a negotiating skill to represent it on an organizational level as part of the modernized public sector.

There are no traces of the harmonization of adult life experience and workplace demands demonstrated by Marie and Kent, nor of the systematic aggression of the younger students, in these interviews. Both the mature students and the young ones, the men and the women, talk of their present situation as one they have strived for, accomplished, and which they may preserve or move on from. Contradictions in the demands of the workplace are pointed out and ambivalences are acknowledged.

So altogether the analyses of a significant number of adult students' learning from the first year of training to the first year of professional practice point to a rather well functioning system of education.

This result may, however, be challenged from two positions: That of *the scope of potential individual experience* and that of *the modernized professional qualification demands* of the jobs. This analysis may form the outset of further discussion with the purpose of understanding qualification for existing jobs -at the same time opening horizons of change for all groups of agents.

### **The Demands: Human Service Qualification and Professionalism**

Private enterprise and public service alike draw heavily on the historically and culturally produced competencies of generation and gender. Likewise routines in education and training are based on cultural and social preconditions, which are often naturalized in the minds of teachers and educational planners. The classification of Marie and Kent as "natural born" pedagogues falls within this definition.

Thus subjectivity as well as society, gender and generation, are preconditions of qualification. But they are exposed only when they are challenged. As a point of departure they "look natural".

In the historical development of the human services they drew on available labor force, e.g. working class women. These women were at the same time well suited for the jobs because of their traditional gender role, and easy labor to deal with because their working life courses were interwoven with childbearing and family life. They were not wage laborers by identity. What may have been impracticalities to the individual woman was on the societal level a flexible and adaptable work force.

The social codex of possessing an institutionalized monopoly of the relevant section of the labor

market like doctors and lawyers! -to control access by means of professional education, to be a politically acknowledged partner in civil society and state affairs (to be considered "experts") and to perform one's labor on the basis of elaborate and clear professional ethics ... these dimensions of professionalism still form a political aim for the pedagogues' unions. For that to be accomplished -for good or bad -each professional must internalize and reflect on the dimensions and be capable of administering them practically in everyday life in various societal spheres.

There is a long way to go. The students of the 1990'es whom we have interviewed embody different cultural, regional, gendered and generational traditions and they hold very different opinions on what professionalism is or should be. I'll be loyal to the provisional conclusion above -that students are actually well qualified for jobs by the 3 1/2 year training, but that does not mean that they have become professionals, let alone that their complex potentials of learning has been explored and exhausted.

There are traits of traditional (over)identification with the job with some women, to whom the very term "professional" rings a warning bell. There are complementary strategies of instrumentalization with some men, who like Kent above do not like to fuss, and it is a fact that male pedagogues tend to be the ones to make use of the few existing career paths of the trade: those of becoming manager, moving into public administration or that of the shop steward moving on to full time trade unionism. Finally some younger students tend to define their professional role as one of self-realization.

The slightly more modern understanding of the double agenda of human service as wage labor, recognizing the different logics of attachment and detachment, is rare.

Eventually the demands of administrative qualification as an agent of the modernized welfare state, the responsive state, where human service must be negotiated by all agents, politicians, public servants and users/customers, is prevalent in the recently reformed curriculum, but even after 20 years of administrative modernization, the logic of human service as commodity is a foreign bird in the progressivist tradition of pedagogical education in Denmark.

### **Professional Competencies between Social Technology and Critical Reflection**

A usual model of professional competences distinguishes between three levels, each necessary in its own right. The basic competence is that of practice, of doing the job, and the next is that of justifying it, of arguing it, of making it socially recognizable. At the secondary level a historical sense of the job is developed, a professional discourse is constituted. This is where the interest of the children, the societal problems inherent in the actions becomes conscious and conceptualized. The third level of competence is that of reflection. The late modern professionalism demands that all three levels are present and interact.

The three level model can be read as an outline of the historical development of the caring jobs, stating how rationalities change and develop as care is institutionalized and specialized. As such it borders on historic harmonization, for that process has stirred up many clashing interests. But maybe the "free space" allowed by the joker-concept of reflection is well designed for initial discourses aiming at a critical professionalism, such a life history reflection of the roots of the competencies of the "natural born" talents! If, on the other hand, reflection is not rooted in such subjective experience and in the factual developments in the work life, the "the competence" will only provide a superficial technological, and so temporary, solution. If the three levels are seen as hierarchical you have a technological model where as critical reflection requires a "Hegelian loop" - from thesis to antithesis to synthesis.

Professions as societal strongholds of knowledge and practical control, and as bodies with increasing political impact, fall without the scope of this paper. Neither the formation nor consolidation of professions is substantially an educational issue. Education comes into it as one element in establishing the knowledge and the identification which are necessary conditions of professional power. Professions are no subjective issue in itself. But subjectivity comes into it because learning, professionalization, and thus the very formation of professions draw on psychodynamic resources of individuals and groups.

Our results show that the 3 ½ year training of pedagogues in DK works quite well, but the analysis also indicates that the education is insufficient inasmuch as institutionalized learning have difficulty in catching with everyday life demands in the workplaces. Our research has hopefully pointed to some possible new horizons on the basis of always raising new questions.

The motivations of students for human service, and hence there identity processes during the learning process, are empirically varied and subjectively complex. They may be interpreted in terms of social background or habitus, cultural or regional norms, gender or generation. Empirical analyses demonstrate that very "simple" subjective reactions like enthusiasm or criticism may only exhibit one side of more complex subjective experience; that withdrawal from engagement in the professional training comprises most relevant reservations towards otherwise important matters; and that enthusiasm and instrumentalism are always there as two sides of the coin.

The formation of professionalism goes through acknowledging reality as well as defensive "shyings-away". It cannot be produced by a formal education alone, neither can it emerge from life experiences alone. In the development of research methodology we explore the interplay of regression and progression, the lifelong and everyday active functions of what was named the consciousness of everyday life (Leithäuser 1976), and the role of subjectivity and life experiences within this process. The research agenda should encompass methods and methodology which can reveal this complexity with a view to strengthening professionals' critical horizons (Weber 2009).

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