



**Students as Journeymen  
Between Communities of Higher Education and Work**

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Discourse Analysis of Liberal and Professional Programmes at  
the University**

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## 1. Introduction : Critical Discourse Analysis in the Present Report

The present report is an initial attempt at a more systematic application of the methodology of discourse analysis to the interpretation of research data. The reference to *critical* discourse analysis in the title of this introduction means that through the interpretation of the linguistic material we are aiming at disclosing institutional practices and material conditions – in brief, power relations - that inform the way students construe their understanding of education and work.

The scope of analyses is limited to the institutional construction of the discourses of education and work *in the Academe*: the report is based on the data gathered from freshmen and senior students, it does not include the data from novice workers. Apart from the interview material, the interpretation of institutional conditions and power relations also employs other data accessible to the researchers (syllabi, course descriptions, etc., as well as the “hot” knowledge of the researchers as insiders).

The report is structured along the line of division between liberal and professional education. At this stage of analysis, national differences are played down so that some common features of liberal and professional education can come to the fore. At the end of the two sections, however, we will present brief comparative summaries of the national findings where similarities and differences between the countries should be visible. These comparisons may deliver insight into further interpretation as long as some of the discursive formations are visible against the background of difference.

Within both domains (liberal and professional programmes), we present national findings that have been reported along common guidelines comprising the following scheme:

**LABEL** – each discourse is identified with a descriptive label so that it can easily be referred to in later analyses

**TOPIC** -- **what** is being said; what students talk about while answering our questions.

**STRUCTURE** – **how** the topic / theme is organised. It can be a simple binary opposition (professional-academic, private-public, etc), or more complex, e.g. hierarchic structure. Here, we have also looked for inclusions and exclusions, substitutions, and other possible relations between elements.

**POWER** – **why people say** what they say and **why they organise it** into particular structures. This question implies that what and how is said is linked to some forces (power) behind the text, to something that gives the text specific construction and makes its meaning both possible and somehow restricted (limited, bordered).

Methodologically speaking, here we have to look beyond the textual “surface“.

Wherever and whenever possible, we illustrate the interpretations we make with the linguistic material, especially at the level of topic and structure of discourse. It is not always possible to do it at the level of power analysis, as at this stage we are using diverse data (including institutional rules, etc), not always represented in form of a concrete linguistic material.

We are concentrating here on the *structural* aspect of discourse, paying less attention to its *dynamic* (narrative) dimensions. While reading the report we should remember that in all the above mentioned “areas“ (topics, structures, power) we can try to see where and how discourses are “produced“, how they are “distributed“ and “re-produced“ by our informants (their utterances are *reactive* to some institutional / cultural experiences we evoke by our questions). This dimension, even though not aimed at in the process of analysis as the most important, will occasionally appear in the presentation of particular discourses.

## Discursive Construction of a Liberal Programme: Political Science

### Sweden

In the Swedish interviews we have identified the following three discourses among the students in Political Science:

- The discourse of balancing subjectivity and objectivity
- Broad entry and vague exit
- Uncertainty regarding role and mandate

#### The discourse of balancing subjectivity and objectivity

Studies in Political science is a balance between, on the one hand, an open mind towards ideas and impressions and to be engaged in political issues, and on the other hand to have a critical attitude, be objective and to distance oneself. This illustrates that there are two kinds of experts in the field of politics: the politician and the political scientist. The first one is an expert who is devoted to politics and who has decided to work for a better society through a political party. In his/her work as a politician it can be of great help to be educated in Political science but this is of course not obligatory. The other expert is the scientist; a person who is an expert in the subject and he/she is supposed to be objective and to have a distance to political issues. It is obvious that the students have to find a balance between their engagement in politics and their role as students in Political science. The discourse in Political science comprises the strong notion of learning *about* politics and not to be deeply involved *in* politics. As one student puts it,

[...] as time goes by, there are fewer and fewer who are sympathising and engaged in a political party and I think that it's so because of the critical thinking, that everything they /the politicians/ say is not entirely correct. You try to see what comes closest /to the truth/. "(Pol 13)

The teachers of Political science are interested in helping the students to learn the subject matter and to develop basic research skills. A closer look at the curricula shows that a critical approach to various political and economical theories is an important feature of the programme, and that is what one can expect to find in a higher education curriculum in the field. It is an academic discipline and it is treated accordingly by the teachers, but for the students political science is both a discipline and a field of knowledge where they get an outlet for their engagement and interest in political issues.

The teachers seem to build the study programme on the idea that students must be active and contribute in lectures and seminars, and the reasons for this could be both educational ideas as well as a preparation for the coming profession.

*„If you come to a seminar without having read the book, you have to do extra assignments“* (Pol 14).

This is also confirmed in a study where students in political science were observed in their studies, (Johansson, Fejes and Abrandt Dahlgren, 2003).

The teachers' ideas of how students in political science should learn the subject can be described as „first you learn facts about political systems and political ideologies and after approximately one year of studies you are prepared to apply your knowledge to problems that you want to investigate“. In a way this is a rather traditional way of thinking about knowledge and learning. The system/ teachers have all the answers and „give“ them to the students. In this context the staff are the owners of the learning process they only support

the students with their expertise knowledge. But in the third or fourth term something happens, the students are seen as colleagues to be and also as professionals and the knowledge/learning process becomes an important issue for both parties. The masters thesis can be seen as a turning point for the students.

**S: Now that I study on the D-level (master level) the teachers approach you in an entirely different way. One is looked upon as a member of the faculty and not as a student.**

**E: What happened, was it because of the introduction?**

**S: Yes during the first day already. „ (Pol 21)**

The intensity of the studies is increasing as well as the experienced relevance and the engagement in the studies. The students are more visible to the teachers in the latter part of the study programme mostly because of the student thesis writing and the close contact with their tutor. During this process from novice to senior the students are trained to become political scientists. They learn how to analyse political issues at a distance and „the price“ they pay for that is less engagement in political parties.

### Broad entry and vague exit

A broad entry is very important for many students of Political science. They do not want to decide already when they are freshmen what to study three or four years ahead. There seems to be at least two different reasons for choosing a broad entry. One is that it is an opportunity to postpone decisions about future studies and work, and another reason is the feeling of being free and not pushed into a track. Political science is a subject that attracts people interested in social and political issues like democracy and power. Political science students study the subject mostly as part of a *bildung* project; they want to understand the surrounding society rather than prepare for a profession.

**„I think above all that it is my academic thinking, my possibilities to formulate problems, to write, to try to think strategically and to solve problems. So I am not in the first place a political scientist, instead I am a university graduate.“(Pol 22)**

**„It is an educative and good subject, I think, but I don't know if I want to do the whole programme, if it is a profession that I really want, but it is a good course if you are looking for different kinds of things. It is broad and generally educative.“(Pol 2)**

Beneath the students' striving for freedom there is probably a wish to have the power to decide what to do and when to do it. They do not want to conform to study programmes and the teachers' suggestions about what to study and when. These students are carriers of the original idea of liberal arts studies.

It seems as if there are two different perspectives – or opinions – about Political science as a discipline. The academic staff view Political science as a discourse *about* politics and many students have the opinion that it is a part of their *bildung* project. In spite of these different opinions about Political science the teaching methods that are used suit both teachers and students. In the seminar discussions the students can argue, defend their opinions, criticise and review which is both a way

of learning the subject and to get the generic skills that are necessary components in a *bildung* project.

### Uncertainty regarding the role and mandate

The discourse is characterised by uncertainty about what role and mandate a political scientist may have as a professional. As social scientists, they are supposed to be “used“ as instruments for the political power but may also work as guides for the common people. It seems as if the students throughout the programme struggle with this opposition. When describing their professional commitment, students refer to theoretical knowledge and abilities to describe, understand and analyse political systems, ideologies and infrastructures within the political sphere and also to be mediators between different parties.

„ ... have a critical attitude and be able to evaluate things and to have an opinion that is your own, to be able to analyse things listen to what others have to say and then to compile these and form your own opinion. I think this is extremely important to know... in ministries and as a politician.“(Pol 7)

„ I think that one should be open to everybody’s opinions... and not to do your own race... to try and be as objective as possible. Then that may be very difficult because you always have your own standpoints. „(Pol 14)

The students seem to be aware of the professional territory but more uncertain about the roles they are expected to play. The future field is vague but the students know that a political scientist usually works in public administration and the work is often framed by legislation. Some students dream about working as an expert at a television station, a journalist or as an expert in Brussels.

The great variation in possible work places for a social scientist together with the lack of role models leave the students with an uncertainty regarding their role and mandate. The curriculum supports the idea of the social scientist as a person who knows a „little bit of everything“ (within the field of social science) and also is able to combine factual knowledge with deeper analyses. The students’ first two years are focused on reading books and learning as much as possible from them and the second half of the studies is focused on writing two theses that puts demands the student’s ability of deeper analyses. The uncertainty regarding the role as mediator between different parties is not supported in the curriculum. The emphasis is more on research-based abilities as methods for analysing politics. The opposition between being a tool for the power and a guide for the people can be understood as the students’ way of analysing coming demands from society/work places as professionals.

### Norway.

In the Norwegian interviews we have identified the following four discourses among the students of political science:

- The discourse of educating bureaucrats for public management
- The discourse of learning as independent although within a given text
- The discourse of the primacy of scientific knowledge

### The discourse of educating bureaucrats for public management

The public system is the main client, and the political scientist should assist the system through reporting in a neutral way. While most of the freshmen want to work in international organisations, most of the seniors see public administration (especially the ministries) as a likely place for their future jobs. The educational programme does not prepare the students for any particular type of job although some of the students underline the heavy emphasis on the public sphere in the programme. Within the institutional “saga“ (c.f Clark 1972) of Political Science at the University of Oslo one person, Knut Dahl Jacobsen, is presented as the architect behind the bureaucratic ideal of the programme. The aim was to establish an education that represented another perspective than economy and law (Mangset 2003). An important aspect of this perspective was to establish a research based theoretical education that aimed at educating reflective bureaucrats (ibid, p. 125).

While political science lacks a clearly defined professional field, the history and the curricular structure emphasis education towards public administration and the question of employability towards public sector is valued as important. Hence, when we compare political science with programmes like sociology and anthropology, the professional aspect becomes visible within political science.

### The discourse of learning as independent although within a given text

As a liberal programme, political science rests upon a tradition emphasising a culture of independent studies. Whether you participate or not in the teaching that is offered, is up to each student. The expectation held by the students underlines that whether you will be successful or not, primarily depends on your individual efforts. Implied in the rhetoric of political science being independent is being critical to how political science is to be understood. To some extent the moral order follows the traditional Humboldtian view of university, stresses the importance of internal motivation for studies, theoretical work, critical thinking and intellectual growth (c.f Ylijoki 2002 p. 343). However, when we analyse the curriculum more closely, there are strong curricular regulations when it comes to the content of the programme. There are four main units (political theory, international politics, comparative, public politics and administration) in addition to research methods and statistics that define the content of the subject. Beside the work on the thesis, the students reading is defined by the institute. Both the undergraduate level and the graduate level represent a curriculum that can be characterised by a strong classification (cf. Bernstein 1996).

Paula Ensor (2002) categories two main discourses in graduate liberal programmes; the *disciplinary discourse* and the *credit accumulation discourse*. We find her description of the disciplinary discourse helpful in order to clarify the curricular discourse in Political Science in Norway. The disciplinary discourse following Ensor is expressed by academics arguing that education should be an apprenticeship into powerful way of knowing. Mastery of conceptual structures and modes of arguments are emphasised. This discourse as Ensor (2002:74) puts it, rests on an assumption that

**.. student enters the university with sets of experiences which are other than the knowledge forms into which they are to be inducted. In this respect, the disciplinary discourse rests upon explicit, vertical pedagogic relations between adepts and novices, with the rules of selection of curriculum content and of evaluation residing in the hands of academics.**

Although the moral order in political science rhetorically emphasises academic freedom and intellectual independence, we will argue as Ensor that the pedagogic relations are vertical and certainly the content and evaluation is controlled by the academics. One example from the senior students may illustrate this point:

**..The focus has been on the syllabus. As I said before, we have had lecturers who in a way have read directly out of the textbooks, and there has not been a lot, we have not had much of a chance to be criticising the syllabus, because they have somehow said that this is your syllabus and required reading. And there has been less optional reading, you have not had the opportunity to choose your own things**

**in a way ... and almost at every exam the papers are based directly on what is required reading (PS 10f).**

Another topic that underlines this discourse is what the students value as important in order to be a good student. The seniors' journey shows that you will be awarded if you are well prepared for exams, do the reading and write the assignments. The experiences from exams, assignments and scores impact their identity as students.

### The discourse of the primacy of academic / theoretical knowledge

Imbedded in the two discourses described above is the emphasis on academic and theoretical knowledge. Academic knowledge, including general disciplinary knowledge, knowledge about the main theories, knowledge about political systems, structures and how they work, and factual knowledge, is what both freshmen and seniors conceptualise as important knowledge in order to become a professional. Within this framework, analytical competence in political science means to act in a neutral and objective way. To be critical means the ability to view problems from different perspectives and to discuss through pro contra arguments. To take a stand is not valued in the institutional discourse and ethical and moral questions (except within issues of scientific procedures and methods) are not central in the programme. The following text from the home page of the institute can be seen as an example of the institutional discourse about the importance of objectivity and the differences between being a political scientist and a politician:

**Students coming to the programme hoping to get a solid background for personal political opinions may find themselves disappointed. Many will come to realise that the more one learns, the more clearly one sees what one doesn't understand. The programme gives few clear-cut solutions to questions which politicians gladly answer. In many instances a political science analysis will expose dilemmas; situations of choice where it is impossible to achieve all good things simultaneously. The eye for dilemmas that the analysis provides, may, however, give a more valid basis for decisions. .. In the study of politics there will probably always remain an unpredictable rest that distinguishes the analysis of political mechanisms from prophecies about political outcomes. Politics may be studied scientifically even though research cannot predict political life. Political Science, consequently, is societal relevant, because it provides insight into the game and moves of politics, maps out formation of meanings and the changing conditions of politics, and it may contribute to increased rationality in political discussion, organisation and decision-making (our translation).**

When we analyse this text above it supports the disciplinary discourse. The sentence "the more one learns, the more clearly one sees what one doesn't understand" indicates that the experience you have before starting to study is not very relevant in order to develop knowledge in political science. To participate in the programme means to put the disciplinary content in the foreground and the students' needs and experiences in the background (c.f. Ensor 2002, p. 275)

The Department of Political Science has, since the end of the 1960's, seen a sharp increase in the number of students, with a total today of approximately 1500 students distributed between the various levels (grundfag-foundation subject level; mellomfag-intermediate subject level; hovedfag-main subject level; and the doctoral or Ph.D. programme). The rising number of students poses a great challenge for the department, both with regard to the expansion of fields of research and the department's academic expertise. On the other hand, due to the high enrolment there has been a lack of external pressure in order to change the programme. The high enrolment indicates that some curricular regulation has been needed in order to administrate the programme

(for instance the recent curricular reform of the fundamental level). However, it does not seem as this has altered the core of the programme and its emphasis on academic knowledge. And when it comes to the faculty members, traditionally educated researchers organised into academic disciplines, it seems as their conception of education is stable; as Abbott (2002) says “Older faculty are stuck in their ways“ (p. 225).

### Summing up the dominating discourses within the political science programme in Norway

Which are the “forces“ or “powers“ that influence most clearly the discourses in the political science programme? In very general terms there seem to be two:

#### *The power of the academy*

The disciplinary discourse underlines the importance of academic canonical knowledge and the need to socialise students into the rules and rituals of political science. Political science is located in the Faculty of Social Science which means that the institutional “behaviour“ must be understood within this frame of reference. Social scientists have often been seen as different from academics within professional schools; they are more purely intellectual, and are seen to be more resistant to the ethos of the market (Brint 2002 p. 254).

#### *The power of the professional bureaucracy*

As mentioned above, employability towards the public administration is important in order to legitimate political science. However, the perspective within the public administration and among the professionals education ought to be theoretically and analytically based. The professionals’ labour market seems to ask for candidates with a relevant background in order to analyse political processes. This perspective does not support a narrow utilitarian approach where training people to be skilled in specific task performance is the goal. Rather as Mangset (2003) argues they are asking for the *reflective bureaucrat*.

*Analytical competence* is the bridging concept between the academy and the bureaucracy. However, the Minister of Labour and Government Administration Victor Norman (from the Conservative party) has made a critical comment where he questions the legitimacy of social science. He argues that the university “produces“ bureaucrats who are not well educated for the private sphere. This, he continues will weaken the international competitiveness of national trade and industry (NRK.no 14.3 02). Whether the statement of the Ministry represents a general and increasing critique is difficult to say, but there may be signs that challenge the disciplinary discourse within political science and its alliance to the public sphere.

## Germany

In the German interviews we have identified the following four discourses among the students of political sciences:

- § The discourse of emancipation and personal maturation
- § The discourse of knowledge-based democratisation
- § The discourse of professional mediation with migrant minorities
- § The discourse of political career building in regional and European contexts

Since the relatively new diploma course of political sciences has been reformed for several times, many students try hard to develop a conception of their own focusing on special niches, incentives and approaches to political sciences – as they are expressed within the discourses mentioned above.

#### *Further appearances:*

Regarding the vague job perspective of professional political scientists it is not astonishing that some of the graduates are afraid of entering work life. The pragmatic attitudes towards professional occupations seem to support a tendency to leisure culture and a ‘laissez-faire way of living’ without political responsibilities in recent years.

## Contents of the university programme

The study course of political sciences comprises different branches of HE, e.g. a fundamental knowledge of political theories with a great accent on specific methods and techniques of social sciences. A dominant accent is given to three main subject-areas:

- § Political theory and history of ideas;
- § Political systems in Europe and international relations;
- § Management sciences

Additionally, all students have to choose one minor subject, such as history, economics, foreign languages, etc. The subject areas of political sciences as one of the post-war established disciplines are closely integrated into inter-departmental courses of study. In addition to its co-operation with the other social sciences it takes special responsibility for the "East Asian Studies (OAWI)" and "Communications and Media (KOMMEDIA)" courses. Consequently, studying political sciences can lead to a number of qualifications and academic degrees: diploma, Ph.D., teaching profession and master (with pol. sc. as secondary subject).

To complete the studies, students are offered internships in political and administrative institutions and organisations, both in Germany and abroad. Through co-operation agreements with affiliated universities (mainly through the Erasmus Socrates programme), a part of the studies can be completed in foreign countries. An early participation of students in the framework of research projects is also easily accomplished in Duisburg. Most research projects are empirical. As to the methodological functions which are applied to research projects there is a dominant accent on empirical methods including quantitative as well as qualitative approaches.

Projects are not exclusively rooted in the fields mentioned above, but also in two research facilities closely tied to political sciences: The internal *Institute for Development and Peace (INEF)*<sup>1</sup>, dealing mainly with international politics, and the external *Rhein-Ruhr-Institute for Social Research and Political Consulting (RISP e.V.)*,<sup>2</sup> with emphasis on research concerning social, intercultural, media, logistic, administrative and other issues.

## The discourse of emancipation and personal maturation (Humanistic Bildung)

Some graduates understand their envisaged profession more as an individual vocation or mission than as a normal occupation. From their point of view the biographical aspects become more and more important in terms of "*Bildung of their personality*" and of emancipation from dominant structures. They tend to a critical reflection on their society and nation and focus in particular on the civil society including NGO activities. Some students seem to relieve of repression and fear by personal experiences from studying political sciences. Hence the object of their studies is emancipation and personal maturation. In this context political science is often seen as a motor for individual development, especially concerning aspects of self-confidence and of *Bildung*. Within the discourse of emancipation and personal maturation there is less emphasis on the immediate academic knowledge offered through the programme of studies. The students express that the meaning of knowledge is secondary to them - from their point of view they don't have to become experts so far.

**I developed my personality, because I made a lot of experiences, I became more mature and more deliberate. I deepened the subject, but I didn't become a specialist, I rather see it in a greater context. (No.5 male, Political Sciences)**

## § Why do the supporters of this discourse study political sciences?

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<sup>1</sup> [Institute for Development and Peace \(INEF\)](http://www.inef.de/) : <http://www.inef.de/>

<sup>2</sup> [Rhein-Ruhr Institute for Social Research und Political Consulting \(RISP e.V.\)](http://www.uni-duisburg.de/Institute/RISP/) is affiliated to the University of Duisburg-Essen: <http://www.uni-duisburg.de/Institute/RISP/>

The understanding of the society and of political subjects is immediately connected to their individual background as they want to understand and to negotiate their social environment and the surrounding world. There is a human and a societal interest within political sciences which places great emphasis on the understanding of society, policy, and culture. According to the students' goal of personal maturity, professional competence, and self-discipline, these topics are of relevance. In many cases the respondents are rather aiming at succeeding the challenges of their life and of their profession.

**I became more mature by my studies. I got new vocational perspectives and increased my confidence for a political involvement. (No.4 male, Political Sciences)**

### § Political involvement as a matter of personality

For many students, political commitment plays an essential role in their life in order to learn self-determination and to exemplify these processes for other areas of living (privacy, family). From their point of view this emancipatory ideal is strongly connected with courage and self-awareness – thus the studies provided the maturation of their personality.

**„Finally, I studied Political Sciences to lose my fears of politics ... I increased the safeness of the future, so I can guarantee a higher standard of living. I was motivated by the lack of money and I got new perspectives from a friend: she gave me self-awareness and courage.“ (No.6 female, Sen. Political Sciences)**

### § Emancipation and personal maturation in the context of learning

This discourse operates especially in the field of learning as the respondents emphasise methods of self-directed and scientific learning including the confrontation with different opinions and foreign conceptions. The main issues for these students are individual development and emancipatory competencies. New directions of thought and own decision making are increasing confidence for political involvement. Problem-solving strategies are applied to significant political issues and to social networks.

**First: The personal maturation and the development of my personality. Second: Learning and techniques of learning, to increase my scientific approach and to learn how to do scientific work. (No.4 male, Political Sciences)**

**It was a special part of my life with a higher goal, I really enjoyed the independency and the joy of learning and of scientific work. I would do the same again. I am interested in the bad societal conditions in Germany. The reason I studied Political Sciences is my interest in societal and political connections. (No.1 female, Political Sciences)**

The vision of the transition process from their point of view is characterised by *individual maturity through humanistic Bildung in the context of political sciences*. The students recognise the side-effects of their studies and inherent experiences as crucial elements for becoming self-confident, emancipated, and successful in their later career.

### The discourse of knowledge-based democratisation

Similar to the discourse no.1; The central aspect for these students is knowledge mediacy as their main task concerning formal as well as informal areas of political sciences. The statements of junior and senior students have demonstrated their historical awareness of the inherent logic of the political programme: That is to say they envisage German and European history as basic elements for professional acting and involvement. Thus, the constructive process of acquiring historical knowledge and contemporary political issues is the basis of

their professional identity. Especially senior students have expressed that knowledge mediacy has provided them with a professional identification beyond their formal qualification represented by the academic degree.

**Not at the university, but in my job and in my social environment I felt as a good student, because I threw light on ignorant people. I was able to intermedate some background knowledge. A student is a kind of intermediator. (No.4 male, Sen. Political Sciences)**

### § Engagement in international and intercultural relations

From these respondents' point of view it seems to be logically important to analyse the dominant power structures within the democratic systems as an absolutely essential duty. This task is based on the assumption that the heritage of the German nation keeps this discourse structure coherent even in political affairs of the present time, e.g. in the field of international and intercultural relations.

**As a student you should be informed about current politics in Germany and in the rest of the world to be able to participate in discussions. Therefore you also need theoretical basics, rhetoric skills, and self-confidence. (No.3 female, Sen. Political Sciences)**

**You should have media-based knowledge to understand the international situation. Not just academic reflection, but also the current policy is of importance. A lecturer told me so and it is my personal insight. (No.4 male, Sen. Political Sciences)**

**Here are many foreign students, so you get intercultural competence, that is important for later occupation at diplomacy. (No.14, male, Jun. Political Sciences)**

The overall goal of these political scientists 'in spe' can be described as to understand "the solidity of different types of societies" according to their traditional development of norms and values on one hand and "the reasons for democracy and societal systems" on the other. (No. 4 male, Sen. Pol.Sciences)

### § Firm belief in taking political responsibility

Indeed, there has been a change from the cliché of the antagonist type of student in former West-Germany revolting against the authoritarian attitudes of the bourgeoisie to the new cliché of the adapted type of student within the political and social establishment. To play the role of active partners taking personal responsibility in political institutions has become more and more popular among these respondents.

**In comparison to other study courses we should be faster and better, always one step ahead, because we are the motor for society and we cannot afford to make mistakes. We are responsible for many different fields. That's from my experience and from self-reflection. (No.3 female, Sen. Political Sciences)**

The vision of transition HE-W means for representative students of this discourse field to become democratic reformers as well in terms of the societal norms and values as concerning their future perspectives by getting involved in international relations.

## The discourse of professional mediation for migrant minorities

For some graduates the biographical circumstances - derived from their migrant background - are significant for their high expectations on their own social integration and insofar on their political activities within the political system of Germany. They differ from other respondents regarding the evaluation of their studies. Mostly, they perceive social advancement and furthermore they express high confidence on their ability to play an essential role in their work life. They want to be respected as equal social partners in their new environment and within professional activities.

### § Perceptions of being confirmed in the opinion of affirmative advancement by the chance to study political sciences

For a lot of migrant students it seems to be a privilege to have the chance to study political sciences and moreover an affirmation of their own abilities. Studying political sciences could generate a higher standard of living and increase self-awareness.

I couldn't find myself in any profession. I wanted to have it easier in life than my parents and to overcome the conditions of the migration-status. I never wanted to watch the news on TV. My parents thought it is only about lies and intrigues. (No.6 female, Sen. Political Science)

Studying meant to me to aim at higher goals. It is a privilege to have the chance to study and I am very proud of this fact. Further it is an affirmation of my personal abilities. You have got the freedom to do everything. If I had done an industrial job, I would have had less freedom. Particularly the contents were very interesting, especially European Policy. Political Theory was an obligation. (No.5 male, Sen. Political Sciences)

### § Ideas of becoming useful partners in voluntary services for migrants' integration

Other respondents feel highly responsible for the integration process of migrants within the local community. Some of them become even reproducers of a societal discourse of professionalism inspired by the former and actual experiences of migration.

I did voluntary service for migrants organised by the church. (No.4 male, Sen. Political Sciences)

At the beginning of my studies I received many credits and later on I was always involved in voluntary services, such as: The students' parliament and further commissions, in the office for migrants' integration of the Municipality of Duisburg (No.3 female, Political Sciences)

It belongs to the essential vision of transition HE-W for this discourse that migrant students distinguish a high aspiration of social advancement. Hence, the societal appreciation of their academic career plays a dominant role in the transition process from HE to work – not only as a consequence of the personal experience of migration but also due to their responsibility in voluntary services for human relations with the migrant population.

## The discourse of political career building in regional and European contexts

A great number of younger students becomes actively involved within a political party and envisage a political career recommended by parents and other friendly connections. A positive self-estimation among these

students is rather promising for achieving a high position in the hierarchic ranking of their future occupations. The professional career and a high standard of living play a dominant role for the motivation to study political sciences. A few students concentrate their efforts on European Policy and international relationships, while others are more locally oriented regarding their political or journalistic career. Astonishingly, the discourse of political career building is seldom mentioned by the senior students. Thus, this seems to be a special issue for the younger group.

### § Ideas of becoming political experts

In the interviews one can find a close connection between this discourse and the accent on specialised knowledge. This is not astonishing as the students envisage to become political experts in the context of a political career:

**You should have a good basic knowledge what politics is about, you have to know different types of government.“ – (No.1 male, Jun. Political Sciences) “It depends on engagement and interest: For European Policy and Development Policy you need experts. A competent political scientist has to have specialised knowledge and the possibility to advance it in type of new, own theories.” – (No.10 male, Jun. Political Sciences)**

At the same time the biographical (parents’ professional) background influences the ideas on professionalism. These forms of knowledge are of importance which are directly interwoven with the occupational affairs. The 20 years old male student says that he was brought up bilingually (German and French). Being additionally enrolled in American studies enlightens some of the motivational aspects of the 20 year-old male student. He can imagine to complete his studies in order to work for the EU. “My mother deals with politics, therefore I am interested in European Policy.“ Otherwise he is also interested in the media business, especially television.

### § Sources of knowledge and professional ambitions

The active involvement in a political party is seen as an important source for increasing specialised knowledge:

**..you get knowledge by participating in a party and reading newspapers, watching news, perceiving social issues (..) you need expertise in one field. I have been politically active in the SPD since 1997. – (No.9 male, Jun. Political Sciences)**

The respondents who are representative for the discourse of political career building are highly motivated and more determined concerning their professional ideas than their peer students.

**I’ve been interested in politics since my tenth year of life. In junior high school there were political structures, too. Historical background and political theories I have learnt soundly from assistance in ‘Junge Union’ / CDU (..) I want to become a political advisor. – (No.7 male, Jun. Political Sciences)**

### § Financial motivation

While the above quoted junior students seem to be interested in the contents of political sciences in order to integrate academic knowledge in their professional reality, there are further evidences for a career orientation without an inherent political interest. In the case of the following respondent the purpose and motivation of studying is based on the financial stimulus by the occupational field of journalism. Theoretical knowledge is of secondary importance as it is not asked by professional requirements:

**Establishing knowledge is also the condition for journalism .. I want to become a journalist, for that purpose politics are important. In that way I’m interested in study for job, not for self-interest.. At university you learn in an academic way, much**

theory, but this is indispensable for later practices. – (No.11, female, Jun. Political Sciences)

Financial stimuli play also a role for senior students:

(..) Now I feel a bit disaffected, but I can plan my future. It will be hard to get along in the new part of life. There are fears, but I am open-minded for many jobs. At first, I want to find a good access in work life and earn good money. (No.5, male, sen.Political Sciences)

A positive self-estimation is promising for achieving a high position in the hierarchic ranking of future occupations. The vision of transition for these respondents seems to exist as an assimilation and predicted success in the job-market by excellent academic degrees.

## Poland

### The Discourse of the Incompleteness of Education

The meaning of 'incompleteness' used for labelling this discursive formation relates to the insufficiency of official curricula for meeting the subjects' expectations towards an adequate preparation to future professional roles. The logic of the discourse involves:

- A. Ideas on 'incompleteness' of academic education
- B. Ideas on and practices of informal learning strategies developed by the students in order to compensate for the incompleteness
- C. Relations between the issues mentioned above and the visions of future profession, mostly in the aspect of professional knowledge and skills.

Exemplary statements which reveal the logic of the discourse include:

Ad.A

- Critical opinions regarding the quality of the learning process and its content that disclose insufficiency of its orientation towards acquiring professional competence:

I got a taste of everything: a bit of psychology, a touch of sociology, something on law. A little on every subject, not much. That's why I may say: I was learning everything and I can do nothing. (Wp2;3)

- Opinions that reveal the inability of the academic institution to provide conceptual, organisational, and material conditions for education to be successful in its professional aspect:

It was called 'methods and techniques of work organisation' - a completely nonsensical subject where I learnt that a manager is a person responsible for management. (Wp2;2)

Ad.B

- Descriptions of extra-curricular strategies of learning independently developed by students

The most important thing is what we managed to do outside the institute building, beyond the official curricula: that we remained a good team of people who could get fun as well as learn together when discussing different topics.(Wp2;2)

- Depictions of extra-curricular sources of knowledge explored to acquire professional competence

My favourite way of learning is reading newspapers, watching TV, listening to the radio. I visit web-pages and I look for different definitions, interesting and special subjects. (WP1;16)

Ad.C.

- Conceptions of professional competence that require supplementing by means of extra-curricular knowledge and learning strategies

A political scientist must be familiar with current political events. Therefore you don't need to read fat books. Newspapers are good enough. (Wp2;3)

When you go to work they don't ask you what you have learnt but what you can do. They are not going to ask me for example about all the American doctrines I know but if I can negotiate. The latter one is important, not the theory of negotiations. (Wp2;1).

**The logic of this discourse** is organised accordingly to disparate visions of future professional competence seen from the *theoretical* perspective as well as generated by a pragmatic *practical* logic<sup>3</sup>. As such, it constitutes the logic of inclusion oriented towards the completion of “educational vacuum“. Such logic evokes reshaping / recontextualising the learning process and provokes changes in its content. As its **material consequence** we witness a displacement within the structure of learning process, resulting in the experience of ‘patchwork learning’ that might be characterised in terms of:

- Developing differentiated extra-curricular strategies of learning independently created by students;
- Translocation of learning from institutional to the *life world* context (media coverage, work-place culture and academic culture)
- Multiplying sources of knowledge that embrace: academic transmission, common sense knowledge, the media, practical experience acquired at the workplace.

**Power** that constitutes the discourse of education as incomplete seems to be influenced by contradictory drives:

1. The liberal construction of the curricula and the lack of tradition of liberal education (in its academic sense) in education of political scientists at the University of Gdansk, which results in a “conceptual perforation“ of academic curricula (see also: The Discourse of Jamobree Academism)
2. A misleading emphasis put on claimed professionalism as a result of academic education in political science (such visions of professionalism seem to be created by different sources: some academic teachers, the media, market forces, political culture etc.). (See also: The Discourse of Elitism)

The discourse of ‘incompleteness of education’ gives rise to the vision of transition between higher education and work that grounds in the logic of professional development through competence – oriented ‘patchwork learning’.

## The Discourse of Elitism

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<sup>3</sup> The distinction between theoretical and practical logic follows the idea of P.Bourdieu: Bourdieu P.: *Raisons pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*, Editions du Seuil, Paris 1994.

This discourse pertains to **elitist attributions ascribed to political scientists as well as to the students in political science**. Attributions related to the students' visions of a political science professional involve: omnipotent and elitist social role, high-ranking professional competence, and thorough and 'objective' knowledge. Students of political science are attributed of high intellectual competence, thorough knowledge, exceptional intelligence predestining to become the future social and intellectual elite of the country.

The statements which reveal the logic of the discourse involve:

- Conceptions of the social role of a political scientist that gives her/him power over lay people as well as the moral right to enlighten them and steer their political actions (a position of the sage):

The political scientist assumes a function of the choir in Greek tragedies, that is someone who comments the action, explains the rules, and interprets somebody's words. It's a kind of wisdom, the conscience of the nation, a man who knows everything (Wp2;1)

- Claims for high social and economic status of political scientists:

A political scientist should occupy a function of a high-rank state official. I've intentionally said 'high-rank' because lower positions don't bring social respect and financial benefits. (Wp2;1)

- Opinions on the elitist nature of professional knowledge:

What is a good political scientist good at? At everything! There is nothing he/she is bad at. A good political scientist is like an omnibus. (Wp2;4)

Political scientist should know what makes the masses tick (Wp2;4)

- Opinions on the elitist predestination of students in political science:

One of our lecturers used to say: 'you are expected to be the elite of the nation, you, the political scientists'. (Wp2;2)

The **structure** of the discourse is organised through mechanisms of positioning social elites vs. the masses. What is interesting in this respect, our respondents contrast the image of the political scientists' social role and competence with the attributes of politicians, who – in this sense – are included among the masses. Conceptions of the elitist nature of the social role result in contrasting immediate political engagement (seen as a challenge for politicians) against political counselling as an occupation of exclusive nature that is restricted to political science professionals. This involves a vision of hierarchy where moral and cognitive competence of political scientists outstrip the competence of politicians.

The claims for elitist professional status of political scientists' role, competence, and knowledge – in the light of this discourse - are legitimated by their meta-discursive position (over the discourse of politics) rather than merits. This results in the problem of 'simulated profession' that is disclosed by our respondents. Here the claimed professionalism of the political scientist (including the professional status of knowledge and competence) seems to depend on 'natural' predestination (*the logic of gift*) rather than on competence-oriented learning process involving a *Bildung* project.

The **powers** that run the discourse seem to be generated within the context of academic culture and mediated by teachers. First, we have to consider that enrolment to the Political Science programme is highly selective (for many years it was one of the most popular programmes at the university), which may have influenced the elitist beliefs. However, considering the problem of elites in a broader socio-cultural perspective, we could also refer to Polish history of the status of Polish nobles and intelligentsia during the past

centuries. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries we witnessed a political tradition within the noble class that was linked to the social role of nobles as rhetoricians and counselors and in contrast to immediate engagement in political actions<sup>4</sup>. Then this role was taken over by intellectual elites, assuming an analogous status and placing them beyond direct political actions.<sup>5</sup> Traditionally established and historically developed the elitist status of the Polish intellectual, political and social elite seems to uphold contemporary political science students. Their attitude of distance to political engagement is reinforced by a myth of political mission rather than political ethos (see: The Discourse of Coterie Professional Culture). Nowadays we could witness their aspirations to play a significant role in the process of Polish integration with EU structures as representatives of the UE bureaucracy.

The discourse of 'incompleteness of education' generates **the vision of transition between higher education and work** that could be portrayed in terms of predestination to a 'natural', primarily assigned position. Here, future occupation is seen as social role – based. **The vision of transition lays upon the logic of predestination.**

### The Discourse of 'Jamboree Academism'

The discourse of 'jamboree academism' relates to the **institutional culture described in terms of social entertainment and ease of studying/teaching**. This discourse reveals its nature when contrasted with the claims to liberal education in the curricula and to the statements on the professional and elitist nature of academic education expressed by the students.

The statements which reveal the **logic** of the discourse include:

- Depictions of carnivalisation of academic culture whose initiators are both university teachers and students:

There was an exam before which we were informed that it would be the best tie competition. They were really judged.

What about girls? How were they assessed?

The same way, though they didn't wear ties so they had no chances for grade 5 [the highest one] and none of them got one. (Wp1;7)

- Opinions on the 'laid – back' nature of academic culture that neglects the significance of effort. The unwillingness to effort is a feature shared by both students and teachers.

The lecturers who we admire revealed that they had found their studies social fun rather than collecting good grades. (Wp2;2)

-Opinions describing the period of studying as 'time for fun'

Studying should be fun and pleasure. You should learn something, but not too much. It is a five-year period of rest, the best years of my life. That's true .(Wp2;6)

- Opinions on the superficiality and common – sense nature of knowledge:

We had a course in philosophy on the first year. It was learning by heart several names and several theses. (Wp2;14)

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<sup>4</sup> Tazbir J: Szlaki kultury polskiej, PIW, Warszawa 1986.

<sup>5</sup> Davies N:Boże igrzysko. Historia Polski, przeł. E.Tabakowska, Znak: Kraków 2000.

- Conceptions of learning that display effortless strategies of coping with institutional demands (e.g. photocopying materials without reading them) as well as deploying social co-operation within the peer group (e.g. sharing notes, cheating during exams etc.). Such strategies are related to the problematic status of knowledge transmitted to, as well as demanded from the students, which embraces a large, miscellaneous, and rather loosely defined range of particular items, including the content of media coverage and common – sense ‘political experience’.

**Female colleagues lend us their notes. You have it off with them, once, before an examination term, and then you tell them how cute they are. Sorry, it’s so simple but it’s true and happens frequently. (Wp2;5)**

This quotation, apart from revealing the sexist, “macho“ dimension of the analysed culture, may also portray a more general strategy of abusing people in order to achieve particular aims which is linked to the discourse of *coterie* professional culture.

The logic of the discourse of ‘jamboree academism’ neglects traditional academic values of *theoria*, learning effort, self-discipline, and moral responsibility for the work done. Its is driven by ‘minimum effort – maximum profits’ rationale which reshapes the idea of liberal education from humanistic *Bildung project* to a ‘CV Building Project’, often created by strictly *practical logic* of quick common sense judgement:

**You know, having a master’s is significant. Looking through a newspaper you can mostly see offers addressed to university graduates. Of course I’m not talking about manual jobs. A man after graduation wants to be quite well off, so he has to have a good job. For finding one you must have a master’s. It’s crucial. (wp2,6)**

The scene of the discursive practices seems to be constructed by the two types of interests of its actors: the teachers and the students. Teachers present an attitude of resistance towards traditional values of academic education such as: thorough discipline-related knowledge, diligent studying and teaching. Such attitudes are acquired by students and create their strategies for coping within the institutional environment in the way of avoiding effort. However, neglecting the value of effort, many students still believe in the edifying significance of their academic education. The crucial role is played here by informal learning through discussion, sharing opinion and meeting interesting people. Such education seems to be rooted in the ideology of ‘natural gift’ (faith that their predestination, reinforced by talents, does not require exertion or self-discipline). This kind of certainty is supported by the experience of being successful in the highly selective process of entrance examinations, and by teachers who continuously assure their students of their unique intellectual dispositions (See: the discourse of elitism).

Questioning traditional academic values within the institution appears to resemble ‘the culture of apparent work’, typical of the Polish political reality under the Communist rule. When taking into account the logic of ‘minimum effort - maximum profit’ presented by our respondents, we could observe a phenomenon known from the recent Polish history. In the years of political transformation (80/90) it was depicted as mentality of ‘protestant ethics *a rebours*’. Additionally, regarding the history of Polish intellectual culture after the Second World War, we witnessed the anti – intellectual nature of the political science in Poland which was abused as a tool of legitimisation for the socialist regime as well as a means of indoctrinating the society. Another possible link could be made to the idea of “leisure class“ (Veblen 1998), of which many aspects of the institutional culture at political science in Gdansk strongly resemble.

There are two possible visions of transition between higher education and work implied by the discourse of ‘jamboree’ academic culture. One of them lays upon the logic of moratorium that makes a clear distinction between the periods of studying as ‘time of immaturity’ and work that is a moment of critical shift to maturity (See also: The Discourse of Vague Future). The other one is the logic of ‘gumption’ involving students’ credential approach.

## The Discourse of Vague Future

- *What is political science for?*

- For taking up another study. (Wp2;4)

The topic of that discourse concerns the visions of future regarding job prospects, which reveal senior students' problematic attitude towards the competence acquired in academic education and – as a consequence – chances of getting a job. Such visions are presented by our respondents from their personal perspective provoked by the question about their plans for the coming years<sup>6</sup>.

The discourse is composed in the field of tension between the views on the elitist position of political scientists, and the reality of the job market. Analysing the expectations and plans regarding the students' future work we could see their uncertainty, with an element of contradiction between their idealistic general expectations as to the profession and their realistic personal plans for the coming years. This tension can be interpreted in terms of a clash between *theoretical* and *practical logics* simultaneously presented by our respondents. The first one involves idealistic expectations about the exclusive nature of their future work and material profits. The *practical logic* envisages a rather accidental nature of future jobs (a teacher, an accountant, a computer technician, a painter-designer, work in a small family business, etc.) regarding poor practical qualifications of political science graduates as well as the extreme demands of the job market in the situation of extensive unemployment. Simply, the practical logic of our respondents triggers off their criticism of the claims about the academic and professional status of education in political science.

The discourse of the vague future **does not involve a clear vision of transition between higher education and work**. The clear logic of elitism breaks down when it encounters the 'real' problem of future employment. However, unable to present a convincing vision of the relation, our respondents put emphasis on the shift between periods of studying and working seen as a turning point in their lives relevant to initiation into personal maturity:

Now, willy-nilly, you have to find a job, which will be a hub of your life. It is the end of care-free period in your life. (Wp2;1)

#### The discourse of professional cynicism (coterie – culture)

The discourse of professional cynicism pertains to the visions of the work environment as a coterie-culture. Such visions, which represent and reflect a broader portrait of the Polish political scene, influence the field of discursive practices that take place within the *academia*. Here, we observe the field of practice organised accordingly to the mimetic logic of *emulation* as well as the *extensive/ecstatic* logic of *simulacrum*<sup>7</sup> which produces 'simulated professional *hyperreality*' within the *academia*, much more 'real' than the reality itself. The statements which reveal the logic of the discourse involve:

- Students' opinions on the political scene as a network of relations where ethical judgement is not applicable:

In the course of our study we had no possibility or no time to think over ethical dilemmas. Here, so, ... politics only. Reality takes over everything, what is important, true, essential, good, upright, and moral. (Wp2;3)

- Expectations towards maintaining profitable relationships (which could be partnership as well as hierarchy) that are expected to bring fruits:

It is great to have some friends who will become more important than you can be. It is good to have such friends. (Wp2;4)

<sup>6</sup> The problem of 'the vague future' was presented by subjects who did not combine studying with work. However, there are a few persons who are both more ambitious and decided about their future plans. These subjects envisage continuation of their years-long employment that had been taken up during their studies (e.g. an assistant in a MP's office, a journalist).

<sup>7</sup> Baudrillard J.: Selected Writings, edited by M. Poster, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 1988.

Many times I have been told that the easiest way to find a job, which in case of political science studies means to find backing, is to enter a political party. Lots of colleagues did so and they don't need to care about their future. Personally, I find it problematic. I can hardly agree with any political option. Joining a party I would do something against my personal ideas. [...] Sell yourself or be yourself. (Wp2;6)

-Depictions of profitable relationships with peers and teachers (which could be partnership as well as marked by domination, sexual included) which involve cynical attitude:

Female colleagues lend us their notes. You have it off with them, once, before an examination term, and then you tell them how cute they are. Sorry, it's so simple but it's true and happens frequently. (Wp2;5)

You should be a flatter driving professors home, buying their books. There are some people [teachers] who press students into that. (Wp2; 5)

The discourse involves an instrumental mean-end logic. As focused around the value of political power and social status, it contrasts humanistic values of liberal education. Therefore dehumanisation of the academic culture constitutes its most vital consequence. The discourse of professional cynicism generates machiavellian strategies of reaching personal aims related to social domination, which is accompanied by cynical attitudes assumed by its actors. Being involved in the field of that discourse means taking part in power games. Such a position demands from its players developing different skills and strategies that embrace influencing people, creating personal image, applying strategic ploys, etc.

The discourse seems to be inspired by contemporary media, portraying the clique culture of the Polish world of politics, networking representatives of politics, business, and even the world of crime. Such a picture – which is part of the critical public debate on the world of politics – inspires students' anticipations of their future working environment. Oddly enough, most of our respondents do not share the critical attitude against political networking presented by the media.

The vision of transition between higher education and work, which is exhibited by that discourse, involves the **logic of benefiting from profitable relationships established during the period of their studies.**

### **Hints for Comparative analysis: Discursive Construction of Liberal Education in Four European Countries**

Although interpretation in the four national teams was conducted along a previously discussed analytical way, the forms of presentation of the national findings differ significantly. We have decided to keep this 'national diversity' which can be important for further analyses employing social hermeneutic. This summary is the first outline of the description of the international area of political science. Consequently, the results presented below (similarities and the differences of particular discursive elements, their presence or their absence) on this level of our analyses should be interpreted as weak, preliminary hypotheses rather than definite conclusions. As analysts we are not isolated from the described reality of social practices. Our focus on specific problems (discursive elements) can therefore be based upon our 'national *doxa*' and, as a non-reflexive *condition of possibility*, it should be used as an inherent part of hermeneutic analyses realised in possibly most critical way on the international level.

In course of international comparisons it is possible to grasp the following common aspects characteristic of the identified discourses:

1. The **elitist conviction** (hidden or formulated *explicité*) of both students and academic staff focusing on the social role of political scientists. We propose to interpret this conviction, inscribed in the essence of future profession (or type of studies) of the respondents, as knowledge about potential positions of power (social prestige). Elitism as a discursive element, is, however, supported by different discursive formations:

Elitism	Poland	Sweden	Norway	Germany
Social role	described in the language of mission and vocation	-	-	language of mission, vocation used by respondent
Hierarchy: laymen (ignorant) / expert (guide)	strongly marked, supported by a simulated 'jamboree academism' (' <i>political scientists are the future of this nation</i> ' and 'coterie culture')	well hidden (as a double tension between: 1. objective distanced expert versus engaged (too close to reality) activist 2. guide for the ordinary people versus tool for power (other words: simple cog-wheel of the machine ?) such a hierarchy is inscribed in the Bildung project	1. marked as the resistance of political scientists to the market forces (as an elitist attitude) 2. hidden as a <i>pure</i> intellectual discipline (in contrast to ' <i>material</i> ' economy or sociology)	strongly marked in Bildung project (expert knowledge about the social reality) as well as the base for social action ( <i>we are the motor of the society</i> )
Emancipatory leadership				formulated from immigrants' perspective (political science as a space of struggle for empowerment [elitism mediated by immigrant position])

2. The variety of potential professional careers of political science students is broken down by vague job perspectives. This tension is strongly present in the Polish material, and observed (not so clearly) in German and Swedish ones as well. In the Polish case, this discursive complex provokes on the one hand the **immense fear** of the future (in result the elitist attitude is cancelled when respondents are facing the 'real' problem of unemployment) and the **strategy of moratorium** (we can notice some similarities in the Swedish 'illusion of freedom', when respondents postpone their decision to start the professional activity or to continue their studies). In Germany the vagueness seems to support the '**laissez-faire**' style of life, which resembled by "leisure class culture" visible in some of the Polish political science students and teachers. The identified strategies may be based upon the common ground of unemployment.

3. The described discursive formations differ significantly when analysed at the level of academic culture. In this respect we could identify an *easy*, minimum effort formation in the Polish case and the discourse of discipline (in its proper sense) - as a *solid* discipline based on individual effort (Norway, Sweden).

	Poland	Norway	Sweden	Germany
Academic culture	simulated academy, effortless studies for both: students and academic staff	Studies based on individual effort (however guided by academic staff)	active participation in lectures and seminars (close to Norwegian meaning)	?
relation: academic staff - students hierarchy	very positive; fraternisation as a dominant model of relations; hierarchy seems to be absent;	the traces of hierarchy are visible (but not clearly described)	hierarchy: students' invisibility (first part of study programme) <i>versus</i> visibility (MA level) -constructed from the perspective of academic staff	?

knowledge that counts	common -sense, media knowledge,	theoretical, canonical knowledge	theoretical, canonical knowledge	theoretical, media knowledge,
competencies reinforced by formation	common- sense criticism and analytical skills	criticism and analytical skills	criticism and analytical skills	criticism and analytical skills

4. As a separate aspect, we can also take the interplay between the students' social practices and the patterns of political activity inscribed in the professional field. In this respects Norwegian and Swedish academic cultures seem to be free from this kind of interplay (perhaps because Bildung project in these academic cultures does not necessarily mean professional preparation, or perhaps because the domain of politics is seen as "transparent" and, therefore, loosely defined), in contrast to the Polish material strongly marked by evocations of the arrogant attitude of politicians We interpret these negative patterns as a result of *mimetism*. It is possible to grasp that in the German material the patterns of social practices of the students may also be taken from the perspective of broader social activity (e.g. immigrant students and their political activities).

## Discursive construction of a Professional Programme: Psychology.

### Sweden

#### The primacy of theory

The topics that are possible to discern in the interviews comprise the relationship between theory and professional practice, the relationship between the professional and the private self and the approach to learning professional knowledge. In structural terms, the ways of describing their relationships is either as *separate* or *integrated*.

In the discourse that may be labelled the *primacy of theory* these are seen as separated, dichotomous entities. Hence, psychological theory is viewed as basically separate from clinical practise, the professional self is separate from the private and professional knowledge is rather pluralistic than *eclectic*, i.e. its task is to accomplish a repertoire of different psychological perspectives for different clinical purposes. This is the way freshmen generally anticipate their coming professional role.

#### The primacy of practice.

The topics in the discourse *primacy of practice* are identical to those above mentioned but the structure is different. Rather than conceiving of these as separated they are understood as being integrated. This is expressed in the interviews by talking about integrating theory and practice through periods of practising under supervision; about themselves being the instrument; and taking an *eclectic* approach to professional knowledge. Such an approach means constructing their own subjective body of knowledge through combining elements from different perspectives and the various contemporary schools of clinical psychology. This is the way seniors generally describe their notions of the professional role.

Since this latter discourse is dominating among seniors it may also be understood to constitute a major impact of the education. Hence, the primacy of practice appears to be superordinating the discourse of theory.

### Power

The Swedish *psychology students* are all enrolled in a problem-based learning programme that has been effective since 1996. The programme is according to its aims focussed on integrating the various parts of the programme into larger themes and to make the students well acquainted with the professional role of a psychologist. The programme comprises two main parts that are given by two separate divisions at the department. One part contains general psychology with an emphasis on learning, memory and cognition; all areas dealt with from a cognitivistic perspective. The other part comprises clinical, personality, and group psychology, areas that are dealt with from a neo-dynamic or holistic perspective.

The programme comprises five years of full time studies. Ego-therapy as well as clinical practice under tuition is a compulsory part of the program.

The study methods comprise lectures, tutorials, seminars and skills training sessions at the psychological clinic that is also physically located at the department.

The lectures are less frequent than in a traditional program. The tutorials do instead play a central role in that during these the students do formulate their learning tasks assisted by their tutor. In the tutorials they do also synthesise their knowledge after independent studies to accomplish answers to the questions posed or the problems formulated. In short one could say that the students who enter the program are encouraged to identify themselves as professional Psychologists from the very outset.

In Sweden as a whole psychology programmes are *numerous clausus* programmes and it is relatively difficult to be admitted. After graduation the novices can apply for a certificate as a registered psychologist provided that they have also passed through one year of clinical practice with a supervisor.

The professional association of psychologists in Sweden exercises a strong influence over the syllabus of psychology programs, even though this influence is indirect via the state-regulated education of psychotherapists.

The professional education for psychologists may, thus, be characterised as heavily influenced by a corporate association.

There is also an influence on the labour market and the further training and legitimisation of psychologists from the part of this corporate association.

Assumingly, this influence as regards the study programme as well as the labour market is one of the reasons why the labour market for psychologists is balanced in Sweden. In the years to come there is even a certain shortage of trained psychologists.

The fact that the study programme is subject to *numerous clausus* together with the way a psychology programme is classified in terms of resources allocated for each student has meant that the teaching is fairly intense with a lot of laboratory and group work together with ego-therapy and clinical practice under supervision. In other words the programme reminds more of the counterparts in medical or nursing education. The rather high costs of educating psychologists has also meant that the number of students admitted has been kept at a low level.

If practising clinical psychologists are active both at the labour market and have a substantial influence in matters of curricula, the academic psychologists have on the other hand been quite absent in both these arenas. The academic discipline of psychology has been long divided between basic and applied parts. This latter part was later identified as clinical psychology. Prior to that study programmes for psychologists were basically only theoretical.

To sum up, the students of Political science in Sweden appear to be students who are free to form their own professional personality. In Psychology there seems rather to take place a kind of mandatory socialisation to a certain professional personality. A possible reason for these differences is that the Psychology programme is subject to substantial influence from the professional association, whereas the Political science programme lacks a corresponding external source of influence. The programme is instead a good example of classical liberal arts studies.

## Norway

In the Norwegian interviews we have identified the following four discourses among the students of psychology:

- The discourse of the primacy of theoretical/academic knowledge.
- The discourse of “the two worlds“.
- The discourse of the therapist in service of the individual.
- The discourse of membership in the “selected and privileged“ group.

These discourses are to some extent overlapping but for the purpose of analysis we will anyway present them as separate with some cross-references in between them.

### The discourse of the primacy of theoretical / academic knowledge.

In the discourse at psychology the programme is mainly considered an academic one. It contains a lot of research-based, theoretical knowledge related to many different sub-disciplines, particularly during the first 2 ½ years of the programme. Learning to become a psychologist involves having a strong knowledge base rooted in science and research. This comes through as a quite dominating discourse supported by the way the

programme is organised, its content and the way it is taught. Although students may be critical about the dominating position this type of knowledge has, they join in the same discourse and agree that this is essential knowledge to have for a good professional. The reasons given for this are that (particularly) a discipline like psychology needs to be strong in solid scientific knowledge in order to be seen as a professional one and not be disregarded as 'common sense'. The students accept what the disciplinary discourse maintains that this is important for the discipline as well as for the individual professional psychologist to be seen as reliable. The academic "capital" that this knowledge base provides contributes also to legitimating the social status and the power of the profession.

Other factors contributing to this discourse is the selection process of the students who are accepted in the programme. It relies exclusively on the marks students get in the first introductory term, which again is linked to their ability to reproduce and reason around the research-based theory in the textbooks. Due to changes in the selection procedure<sup>8</sup>, the freshmen have been even more strongly affected by this pressure for academic excellence than the senior students. This is presumably also leading to still younger students being accepted in the programme on the basis of academic excellence, which might increase the dominance of academic knowledge.

As psychology is a relatively "new" discipline and study programme within a traditional university it has been important to be accepted as a science and the model chosen for this seems to have been inherited from natural science and particularly from medicine. The natural sciences have a modelling power within academia which it is important to follow up for aspiring disciplines. As psychology is situated within the Faculty for social sciences as the only truly professional programme among more liberal, academically oriented programmes, there has also been a pressure towards focusing on research-based knowledge and theory rather than on vocational skills.

This has been even more important as quite a number of psychologists "compete" on arenas where the medically trained psychiatrist has a traditional stronghold. The programme structure with a clear pre-clinical phase at the beginning and a clinical phase afterwards also appears to reproduce the traditional medical programme. This structure is continued even after the medical programme has abandoned it and operates according to a more integrated model of theoretical and clinical content (see below).

### The discourse of "the two worlds".

The idea of the "two worlds" or "two cultures" (Snow 1959) has been around in academia since quite a while. A dualistic idea of this kind can also be identified in a discourse within the programme of psychology. It manifests itself in different ways: in the relationship between theory and practice and in relation to the professional role of the psychologist.

The psychology programme is characterised dually as an academic study *and* as a professional education. Despite the students' acceptance of the primacy of theoretical knowledge, they also demand more extensive practical professional training. They have positive experiences from internship periods where they – as part of the programme – are placed in different "communities of practice" for shorter periods of "familiarisation" as well as in a main internship of six months in one institution. However they argue that this is not enough and that it comes too late in the programme.<sup>9</sup> The curriculum texts describe the programme as a professional education while stressing that theories and research methods in the first phase are the basis for "the *forthcoming* practically oriented study and profession".

The discourse is characterised by two different forms of logic: one representing an academic study of the scientific knowledge base and the other representing the "practical wisdom" of the profession at work. The formal teaching by the permanent staff of the department is to a large extent related to the teaching of the theoretical sub disciplines while the more or less "external" teachers to a higher degree represent the practical, professional aspects. There is, nevertheless, no doubt that theory and practice should be *integrated* but this

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<sup>8</sup> When the senior students entered the programme, there was a cut-off score for selection to the programme. Those who had better marks from the introductory course were accepted, but had to wait until there was room for them within the number starting each year. The freshmen cohort has been accepted only on the basis of the best marks with no guaranty connected to a cut-off score.

<sup>9</sup> The first – theoretical - part of the programme takes 2 ½ years and the main internship period starts after one year in the second part; 3 ½ years into the programme.

integration is conceived in different ways. On one side it is seen as the *application* of theoretical knowledge – learnt in advance of practice – in professional practice. On the other side it is seen as learning the theory directly related to (and possibly even organised in relation to) practical situations where it applies. The discourse among the students favours the second of these positions and regrets the lack of integration between the “two worlds“. They comment on the limited (or even non-existent) co-operation between the majority of individually practising teachers.

As indicated above, the “two worlds“ are even represented by two different sets of “actors“. Particularly the senior students have experienced both “worlds“ through periods of practice in institutions/organisation, as well as through being exposed to practitioners as lecturers and group leaders in courses within the programme. Although they characterise some of the faculty as very able to ‘*bridge the gap*’ between theory and practice in their teaching, the *outsiders* who are involved in the programme seem to be more highly regarded for their ability to show the relevance of their theoretical knowledge, contribute practical (procedural) knowledge and – not the least – for their enthusiasm for their work and their discipline. The *insiders* are – overall, but with exceptions – seen as less enthusiastic and more concerned with the theoretical knowledge per se.

Although the students – at both levels – talk very little explicitly about power, what is described here points to a power relationship between the “two worlds“. It is the faculty – the *insiders* – who are in power when it comes to deciding about the programme in terms of content, sequence, ways of dealing with the content as well as evaluation/exams – in short: the curriculum. The *outsiders* are only invited in to contribute *within* the established structure. In that position they may, however, challenge to some extent the power of the *insiders* by providing “stories“ about a different world, which they seem to master. Thus they become somewhat the “heroes“ of the students who are still mainly at the mercy of the *insiders*.

On the other hand the *outsiders* are in a somewhat simpler position than the faculty who are responsible for teaching the theory in all its abstractness. Inside the department the teachers will very often have to answer the students’ question of “What should we do in practice?“ with the correct – but inconclusive answer that “It depends“. In practice, the practitioner will more often know much more about what it depends on in the individual case at hand, and can consequently more easily demonstrate what works and show mastery of specific situations. Consequently the representatives of the “two worlds“ operate from different positions in relation to the students.

The dualism between “two worlds“ manifests itself also in relation to the professional role which the programme aims to educate for. The faculty themselves work in positions as researchers and have an interest in educating and recruiting excellent students for this type of work. At the same time the programme has explicit obligations for educating professionals for work as psychologists outside the university. This last aim is shared by many of the students and according to them the dualism of purpose of the programme influences its practice.

### The discourse of the therapist in service of the individual

Digging into the interview material from the freshmen and the seniors, leaves us with a prevalent discourse of the *individual*<sup>10</sup> as the chief client (Ozar 1993). As psychologists they are primarily committed to serve the *individuals* in society, and this vision is mainly linked to the role of *the therapist*. This professional model seems to remain relatively unchanged throughout the whole programme. Themes related to aspects of treatment of a patient, a therapist interacting with a patient, occur within and across several of the domains in the interviews. Valuable learning outcomes, knowledge as well as competence are mostly related to the image of this dyadic therapist – client relation. The professional commitment is linked to helping individuals to cope with their problems. One senior says “*To find ways of talking with people so that they may look a bit differently upon themselves and their situation*“ (P2f). Even the minority of students who want to become organisational psychologists or researchers, refer to treatment of individuals. Moral responsibility is strongly associated with elements in the discourse(s) of professional ethics related to the relationship between the psychologist and the client on an individual level. The rhetoric of professional secrecy, the importance of empathy, humbleness, and respecting individuality as well as the rhetoric of being aware of one’s own capabilities and limitations as a psychologist, are also mirrored in the students’ narratives. Even if these topics

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<sup>10</sup> Both freshmen and seniors vary between the concepts “client“, “patient“, “person“ and “individual“. Most, however, use “client“. When we use the “individual“ in this analysis, we want to underline the students’ emphasis on seeing the individual not merely as patients with pathological diseases, but also as persons struggling with “normal“ life problems.

are most prevalent among the seniors, some of the freshmen also refer to such a discourse of professional ethics. As one freshman says it: *“It is important that you never misuse the role you have....I think of the responsibility you have for the persons in therapy, but also the responsibility for not dealing with problems you are not qualified for“* (P1)..

The heavy emphasis on theory and science, links the qualifications of a therapist to the identification of psychology as an academic discipline (see the two first discourses). This seems to harmonise with the rhetoric in the curriculum. The text of psychology is strongly academic and theoretically oriented as well as specifically focusing the individuals' needs: *“Psychology is the **science** of human experience, thought, emotion and behaviour“* (...) *“Psychology diverges from other disciplines in social science in that it focuses the **individual**“* (Study programme 2001/2002). The rhetoric of the *professional role* in the text further associates to *clinical work* with patients. Vocational areas underlined (in the second part of the programme) to be central to the profession are: health, education, and work – rehabilitation. The “voices“ of the job market and the corporate culture are coming through.

Talking about the professional role as a therapist, the students do not relate to the discourse of a “calling“ tradition, but in “service“ for the individual by “counselling“ their clients (the “empathic, intellectual and skilled conversation partner“). Hence, it is tempting to say that the intellectual/academically orientation that forms the basic of the study programme, is reflected in the students' discourses. Simultaneously (and paradoxically?) the theoretically skilled students partly distance themselves from the values of the academic world. They want to be of direct use for individuals in the “real world“. The students to some degree seem to “ignore“ what they perceive as an active effort from academic teachers in recruiting students to research work<sup>11</sup>. One of the seniors illustrates this kind of interest conflict between teachers' wishes and students' preferences: *“It was emphasised at the concluding ceremony, when the dean held a speech and said: “I hope not all of you become clinicians, but that some of you will do research“* (P7k) -

The above quotation indicates that the academic faculty are aware of how the discourse of “practitioners“ are a “threat“ to the discourse of the “academics“ (see also the discourse of the “two worlds“). Despite the power of the academic orientation of the programme, the “forces of practice“ and “vocational/practical oriented values“ seem to most strongly influence the students' discourses in shaping their images of professional roles. This may also be seen as the influence of general “preconceptions“ and common prejudices of a psychologist.

### The discourse of membership in the “selected and privileged group“

Despite the fact that many of the students are critical about the lack of integration between theory and practice and the lack of contact between faculty teachers and the student group<sup>12</sup>, the dominating discourse is that it is good to be a psychology student. Describing themselves as a collective group, most of the students say that they are relatively hard working, socially interested and genuinely curious students. Talking about work effort, they modify the discourse of being “hard working“ by for instance comparing themselves with the group of law students. The law students are often described as being forced to spend a lot of hours in the reading hall because of the pressure to get good marks (a result of a competition culture). The psychology students want to distance themselves from a “discourse of the egocentric student“ and strongly emphasize the collective group as important to them. The discourse of peer students taking care of each other is dominating. This leaves us to some extent with the notion of a “community of practice“ (Wenger 1998) supporting each other as peer students.

Further, the students see themselves as privileged students with relatively high status as students and future professionals. An important factor contributing to this discourse is the entrance requirements to the professional programme (see the discourse of the primacy of theoretical/academic knowledge). The selection process confirms that they are “theoretically skilled“ group. Even if this discourse is present at both levels, it is most often referred to in the freshmen group probably because of their fresh experiences with this selection

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<sup>11</sup> This kind of “ignorance“ may also be linked to the fact that becoming a researcher requires higher grades than for a “practising“ psychologist (therapist). Hence, most of them do not want to strive for a research career. They rather want to combine career and family life, and the future as a practitioner consequently seems more apposite.

<sup>12</sup> Many of the students mention that they think the faculty teachers only see them through what they produce at exams. At the same time, most of them underline good relationships with individual teachers and co-operation in relation to the work with their theses. Their critique is also linked to what they observe and experience as the lack of co-operation between teachers.

procedure, but also due to intensified “entrance demands“ (see note in discourse of the primacy of theoretical academic knowledge). The students are explicitly told, by the faculty staff, that now they have “made it“. There is a remarkable shift from the “lonely wandering“ among hundreds of students at the foundation level to being somewhat “pampered“ members of the selected “class“ of only 40 students in the professional programme.

The students are also told that they belong to a kind of academic “elite“<sup>13</sup>. At the same time, some of the students emphasise that their future status as professional psychologists, is relative and relational. The power of the discipline of medicine seems to play in and influence their notion of status (see also the discourse of the primacy to the theoretical/academic knowledge). They place themselves in a hierarchy between medical doctors and groups like sociologists and pedagogues.

Psychology students are confident that the general/broad education typical of the Norwegian psychology programme, opens to a variety of jobs. They possess a unique knowledge and competence needed in order to help individuals with psychological problems. They see themselves as members of an expert group indispensable in a western society.

### Summing up the dominating discourses within the psychology programme in Norway

Which are the “forces“ or “powers“ that influence most clearly the discourses in the psychology programme? In very general terms there seem to be two:

#### *The power of the academy.*

The representatives of this power are the permanent academic staff and the department as an institution. They influence the discourse through the curriculum, their teaching and exams and defines thereby that scientific, research-based knowledge is considered the most valuable content of the programme.

#### *The power of the professional practice.*

The professional practitioner in service of the individual client is seen as the dominant image for the practicing psychologist among the students in the programme. The practitioners whom the students meet in practice periods and as part-time lecturers and group leaders are probably the ones who represent this power most strongly, influencing the role model of the students.

There is a continuous balancing and some bargaining between these discourses that might be summed up as follows: The selected, privileged student learns to appreciate the theoretical knowledge as a valuable basis for practical therapeutic work with clients.

## Germany

### University as a service provider

**Topic:** The university is seen by the students as a part of the service sector. The students’ expectations of practical orientation and their economic attitude towards higher education (Learning, knowledge, competence). Discontentment with institutional offers, organisation and personnel/staff.

#### **Locus of control (power)**

The students think that their studies should qualify them for their specific profession. There is disappointment concerning the academic offer. The expectations of learning are build on school time experiences. At school they learnt the principle ‘to learn on demand’ (according to the will of the teacher). Politicians and economists support the type of short-time students by financial sanctions punishing long-time students. The ideas of the “performance society“ have come to the students mind and entered the academic life.

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<sup>13</sup> The notion of elitism in the Norwegian context is however relatively weak. It seems as if students avoid talking about themselves as an academic elite due to the Norwegian “egalitarian attitude“.

### **Discourse field & structure**

The demand on personal efficiency control and on more feedback, the idea that the university has to offer more practical jobs and to bridge theory and its applications into working life. Behind these statements appears a more or less economical attitude: With a minimum of efforts to get the best possible outcome. Many students are conscience-stricken as they fear to be too old for the labour market after completing their studies, often expressed by the words: “*Don’t waste your time!*”.

#### *Conceptions of knowledge and competence:*

Practical orientation, technical skills, operational procedures, specialised knowledge. The idea that one should gain the capacity to act, especially, for executive competencies which the students understand as an important general qualification for their work life. Additionally, the notion of adaptation and flexibility appears in this light. Higher education should come up to the students’ expectations concerning the achievement of capacities to act. But the university underachieves many of these uttered expectations.

**Power** ( institutional, political, economical, cultural conditions involved in processes of discourse production/distribution/reconstruction)

*Economical dimension:* The increasing regional, national, and global competition influences the education policy for instance in questions of biological age. There are strong discourses on the duration and the reduction of the school-time, as there are discussions and complaints about the decreasing quality of education and its consequences for society and economy at the same time.

*Biological dimension:* The German labour market demands on the novices to be young. The age of employment plays an important role, as many people believe: The older one is the less chances there are to develop career opportunities (independent from individual qualifications).

These discourses are distributed by every form of media and in usual communication. In the light of public opinion polls, young German children are most afraid of unemployment and poverty. This issue was never stressed in such an extent before.

**Vision of transition HE-W that the discourse implies:** Higher education is being reduced to a single segment on the path to working life. One has to pass through university. The value of higher education appears to be subordinated to the value of working life. Higher education operates by order of economy and policy. Similarly to other parts of the service sector, university has to serve a certain purpose, for instance competitiveness. The dominating vision could be described as: *Transition should be delivered by the university as a service provider.*

### **Comments and exemplary statements:**

The principle of *learning on demand:* Younger students are often influenced by a *predetermined pattern* concerning their learning behaviour. From their point of view university should provide a better service on students.

(..) but it’s worse than in school, I don’t know exactly what I am learning for – I’m without orientation, here’s no concrete definition of knowledge. I need more feedback. - No.6, male (Jun. Psy)

“It worked at school, but now it is getting difficult for me.” - No.2, female (Jun.Psy)

*The economic attitude towards higher education:* The economic discourse affects the expectations and attributions on being a good student. Otherwise the economic view is influenced by more individual attitudes (e.g. personal experience, maturation) which counteract the economic position.

The university has got an economic view on being a good student: one has to be graduated as fast as possible with good marks. I know that from conversation with students of Economic Sciences. But I think that experience, knowledge, maturation and education are more important aspects.” (No.7 female, Sen. Psy)

*The lack of a good consulting service* for the academic career: In order to cope with the bad counselling, the students’ assistant jobs seem to be an important supplement to the university studies, especially for learning and for a general orientation.

My learning skills were supported by my assistant job, but altogether there was no good service to the students, the counselling was bad and I missed any advisory service for the academic career.“ (No.2 male, Sen. Psy)

*The lack of practical application:* Many students wish to have a stronger focus on practice within their studies. The strategy of students' co-operation: In order to compensate the small institutional support, the students try to help each other by different ways of interchange.

Aspects of practice are undervalued, that's the reason for college dropouts. Generally, there is only a small support. Most support comes from the interchange with fellow students. The contents of the courses were uninteresting and had no greater influence on me.“ (No.1 male, Psychology)

Further indications on the discourse of “university as a service provider“

### **The University self-portrayal**

The increasing economical approach towards higher education gets visible in the self-portrayal of the Duisburg university. Contrary to the traditional image of university studies as a rather troublesome undertaking, now the university advertises itself by key-terms and expressions, such as: effectiveness, high-demand professions, career-orientation, and the quick path to a university degree (compare with the quotation below). At the same time the university addresses students who confirm to certain requirements.

#### **Effective Study <sup>14</sup>**

The university focuses on high-demand professions. Career-oriented students desiring a quick path to a university degree will appreciate the attractive and diverse course offerings in more than 27 curricula.

### **The career office (AkZent)**

Another evidence for the changing self-conception of higher education is the implementation of a career office (AkZent, Akademisches Zentrum für Studium und Beruf), which is located on the university campus and was founded in 1996. The career office is a common institution of the Duisburg-Essen university and the employment centre. It has got the general function to intermediate between the three scopes of school, university and occupation:

- § Pupils get insight into higher education as they are invited to join special courses before they enter university.
- § During the spare time there is a 'summer university' for women who are interested in technical professions.
- § The career office helps students to find (and contact) vocational internships.
- § Students can get access to several institutions, economical business, organisations, and associations by different activities organised through the career office.
- § Students can learn how to make a job application.

### **Good or bad institutional service?**

The implementation of the service by the career office is a significant opportunity for students to get access to practical experiences. Astonishingly, there are still a lot of psychology students who criticise the institutional support, in particular they complain about the lack of practical offers.

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<sup>14</sup> [www.uni-duisburg.de](http://www.uni-duisburg.de)

**.. the counselling was bad and I missed any advisory service for the academic career. (No.2 male, Sen. Psy)**

The career office (AkZent) is highly visible to all students as it is located in front of the major library. Due to this fact it is assumable that the psychology students' criticism concerning the missing of an advisory service for the academic career is not well-founded. Are these psychology students rather lethargic and passive compared to their peer-students? The critical assessment of the institutional support appears to be focussed on the immediate communication with lecturers and tutors from their faculty.

**At Psychology the service was not so good, the lecturers didn't do more than necessary. (No.7, female, Sen. Psy)**

### The relationship between practice and theory – three faces of the practice-term

Among the psychology students there are some different 'channels' concerning *the practice discourse*. Based upon the question how the students are able to find access to the field of practice, there are three conceptions:

1. 'Practice' as a part of the programme's offer (without voluntary commitment)
2. 'Practice' as a matter of additional scientific work (e.g. students assistant job)
3. 'Practice' as a matter of external jobs (e.g. experiences in teaching)

#### 1. 'Practice' as a part of the programme's offer

Some students expect from their university or faculty to offer them practical courses and specialised internships which would enable them to have a deeper insight in the subject-matter of their envisaged profession (or the broader field of their profession). This conception of practice can be described as an irresponsible attitude. In this case it is the university which has to provide the service.

**Aspects of practice are undervalued, that's the reason for college dropouts. Generally, there is only a small support. Most support comes from the interchange with fellow-students. The contents of the courses were uninteresting and had no greater influence on me.“ (No.1 male, Sen.Psy)**

#### 2. 'Practice' as a matter of additional scientific work

Almost every second of the senior students have been working as a student assistant while studying. These respondents see practical work as a part within the framework of theoretical and methodological space. Someone who practises scientific work may build up a different theoretical understanding than others.

**The Experimental Course of Psychology was a crucial experience because I have learnt scientific work and how to work self-dependently. There was much personal confrontation within the tasks. Further, I would say presentations, I developed more and more interest in so-called boring issues by working self-dependently. And, of course, my job as a student assistant was effective to me. (No.4 female, Sen.Psy)**

#### 3. 'Practice' as a matter of external jobs

The third group of students prefer to be engaged in external jobs. They have build up a conception of practice in which the notion of practical experience is located outside the framework of university. Due to their performances in other institutions or commercial organisations they feel more or less familiar and established with working life. From a learning point of view the combination of working outside and studying inside the framework of the university is an advantageous opportunity to transfer different contents of learning in real

problem situations. The mutual processes of reflection and self-experience are being supported and take place in this learning context: The subject has to integrate different fields of knowledge from one field in another 'reality'.

Practical experiences from scientific work and its application also outside the university have been important to me, because you learn better this way than only at university.“ (No.1 male, Sen.Psy)

Only learning is not enough, you should do something additionally, e.g. practical training and self-studies, so I should always prove: Do I have the right to become a therapist? (..) medical and physiological knowledge, clinical syndromes, child's development is important, too - in principle all branches of the programme. Being nice, having empathy – No.4, female (Jun.Psy)

### The Approach to Practice at the university

#### **Discussion and contradictions:**

On the one hand the programme presents itself as a programme of high professional orientation - in this sense it places emphasis on practical training. On the other many students say that they miss practical application/offers in their programme. What does the programme understand by practical training?

*The Experimental-Psychological-Training* aims at the improvement of scientific competence. This problem-oriented training combines theory and practice relatively intensively, insofar as the students have to organise, realise and to present four different experiments in their course. Moreover, this course pertains the contents of former seminars (statistics and experimental design and theories of general psychology).

*Constructive mode of learning:* Indeed most of the students recognised this course as a special feature in their studies, as a highly rewarding situation for their learning-process.

The experimental course of psychology was a crucial experience because I have learnt scientific work and how to work self-dependently. There was much personal confrontation within the tasks. Further, I would say presentations, I developed more and more interest in so-called boring issues by working self-dependently. And, of course, my job as a student assistant was effective to me. (No.4 female, Sen.Psy)

Empathy is important, you have to learn about psychological testing. The experimental-psychological-training is helpful for methodological know how.“ – No.6, male (Jun. Psy)

*The practical courses at school (Schulpraktische Studien):* The students did not appreciate this sequence of study experiences, as they often complained about the lack of additional practical courses. The two *practical courses at school* seem to be insufficient to them. Especially the junior students want to have a better didactical education.

#### **From the programme:**

Practical courses at school, 1. as accompanying daily practice during the term. 2. As a compact practical training, that is obligatory to get access to the first state examination.

**It doesn't help yet, didactics are unrelated. - No.2, female (Jun.Psy) “.. Theories and didactics are missing.” – No.3, female (Jun.Psy)**

### The negation of learning

Contrary to this practice-oriented self-presentation of the subject 'psychology', some students perceive their programme in a different way. They think that the lack of practical exemplification is responsible for college dropouts. This thought turns into the acuminated opinion that contents of the courses do not affect the students. From this point of view learning 'per se' is challenged and even negated by the student's statement (previously quoted from int. No.1).

### Practical self-responsibility in learning processes

As an example for a rather self-responsible approach to learning, the female student (see below) considers a self-critical attitude into the practice discussion. Asking herself what she really wants to achieve, she determines the objects of learning and constitutes a more general strategy for learning.

**Only learning is not enough, you should do something additionally, e.g. practical training and self-studies, so I should always prove: Do I right to become a therapist? (..) medical and physiological knowledge, clinical syndromes, child's development is important, too - in principle all branches of the programme. Being nice, having empathy“ – No.4, female (Jun.Psy)**

Another female student (no.7) appears to be enthusiastically fond of knowledge and the academic establishment. She plans to do further studies in a foreign country - probably in Vienna, Austria - and expresses her appreciation by the following statement:

**I don't want to enter work life yet, there are still so many interesting fields to explore. (No.7, female, Sen.Psy).**

The meaning of the connection between the learning transfer and specialised knowledge can be exemplified by this statement:

**I had the opportunity to acquire, to deepen and to increase my specialised knowledge. The history of psychology and all the other subjects were important to understand further connections. (No.5, female, Sen.Psy).**

### The disappearing of clinical psychology: From subject and knowledge based to formal conceptions of transitions

The junior students are much more interested in aspects of clinical psychology than the senior students are. Generally, the students' choices and visions of their later profession are broadly-based. The junior students often hint their intentions on becoming a therapist or to be engaged in social affairs. In order to achieve these aims they are convinced that psychological knowledge is necessary to establish the basis for further acting.

**To become a therapist, to condition by talking ..Yes, being responsible for each person as well as for the function of the society(..). – No. 6, male (Jun.Psy)**

Empathy is important. You have to learn about psychological testing. The experimental-psychological-training helps. – No.6, male (Jun.Psy)

*Ideas on clinical and social commitment in the field of psychology:*

We need people who know about human behaviour, to help and to understand other people. - No.2, female (Jun.Psy)

There is a high responsibility when you work in forensic field, e.g. working with sexual offenders, towards society and also the defender. Writing the right report, reaching difficult decisions.“ – No.4, female (Jun.Psy)

Many people have psychoses and physical damages, supplement to medicine. - No.6, male (Jun. Psy)

To be responsible to clients. As a teacher I will try to change something, being a role model -No.1, female (Jun. Psy)

These two senior students described their first ideas and contacts with the discipline of psychology. They were attracted by clinical activities and motivated by potential conceptions of socio-therapeutical work. Now after studying both of them envisage a schoolteacher career and lost their interest in clinical psychology. Generally, the senior students almost did not mentioned clinical psychology within the interviews.

From my alternative community service (instead of military service) and my school-time I thought that Psychology deals with therapeutic aspects. I was interested in the clinical field. (No.2 male, Sen.Psy)

From the media, from my parents and acquaintance who work in the therapeutic field, I knew about the clinical application of Psychology. The broad spectrum was new to me.“ (No.1 male, Sen.Psy)

Summarising, the students' vision of transition seems to be no longer guided by the subject himself.

**Transition should be delivered by the university**, characterised in economical terms as a service provider. It is the role of the university mainly to function as a provider for qualifying certificates. Hence, the vision of transition is shifted from a subject and knowledge based to a formal conception of passage.

## Poland

The discourses discerned in the Polish material comprise two, mutually related, major issues: the construction of professionalism, and the construction of identity. The professional discourse works as a “master discourse“, providing for a framework within which other themes are grounded and gain their meaning. The students speak of professionalism as problematic, therefore it has been labelled as discourse of “limited professionalism“. The other issues addressed here will be: the disappearance of clinical orientation, the role of professional jargon, elitism, and professional identity.

The analysis of power relations will be appear twice in the material. First, after the presentation of each discourse, a brief section on power relations will be presented. After the presentation of the whole discursive structure discerned in the material from psychology, a joint interpretation, making a wider use of other data than the interviews, will be presented..

## Limited Professionalism

The professional discourse appears in the shape of “limited professionalism“. It comprises the perceived lack of practice and the prevalence of “pure“ theory dispersed in the programme. The distinction between theory and practice overlaps some other dimensions. The most significant one is that of professional vs. academic character of education.

Students in psychology speak of their studies with strong expectations of professional preparation, in freshmen mostly associated with clinical work. In this respect they describe the offer in the programme as limited in terms of practical preparation. The studies are mostly theoretical, and the students understand their competence as being able to *find* practical applications to what they learn theoretically. The basic ways of making theoretical knowledge practically applicable are: through contextualisation into the life-world experience, within scarcely organised field classes, and through self-organised practical work (usually voluntary). Another option is training in commercially organised schools and courses, advertised at the university billboards but not officially linked to the programme.

**There is a lot, you know, course ads, something extra, on rehabilitation or methods of psychotherapy, I don't know... But it is not a matter of the programme, just individuals who advertise them or need help. It seems that Polish universities prepare us for jobs just theoretically, and you have to find practice on your own (freshmen, female, 1600-1606)**

**There are opportunities. If you want, you can do a lot. Well, another thing is that these courses often mean some costs and that is an obstacle. [...] If I am interested in something, I take it. Well, I rather do not take this paid stuff, I cannot afford 300 or 500 zlotys for a course, and I do not think I need them now or they just do not seem interesting. (freshman, , female, 4058-4078)**

**STRUCTURE.** In the analysed discourse, theory is *opposed* to practice. It is reflected in utterances with claims of too little practice in the programme. However, the “too little practice“ does *not* necessarily imply “too much theory“ –explicit demands that theoretical knowledge is limited are rare. Theory is considered to be a *foundation* for further learning and for *practical competence*, it only needs to be properly contextualised. Practice, then, can be built *on the basis* of theory or *aside* theory. This asymmetry in theory / practice relations seems to point to the power of academic tradition that lies behind the programme. It is rooted in the history of training psychologists (in Poland it has never been done at a level lower than MA degree, and there is a visible resistance to introducing a BA+MA structure into faculties of psychology)

**POWER.** The work of power in the discourse of limited professionalism can be traced basically in two things: in the structure of supplementation seen in the way theory and practice are juxtaposed, and in direct references to the commercial character of practical training made by the respondents.

As to the first issue, the secure position of theory (“too little practice“ does not have to mean “too much theory“) seems to be “secured“ by power relations embedded in the Academia that grant theory a privileged position (the criteria of staff promotion or evaluation of academic institutions ascribe more weight to research than to education, and to “pure“ rather than to “applied“ knowledge).

The tolerated (and welcome) presence of the supplementary offer of practical training (courses run by independent companies or individuals) brings about the question of a possible “structural alliance“ between the domination of theoretical training (which postpones professional preparation to the stage of graduate apprenticeship and at the same time builds strong reasons for the university *not* to be directly engaged in a “workshop culture“ of practical psychology) and its commercial supplementation. The syllabus of the Institute of Psychology says that students are *recommended* to find themselves a placement for an internship in an institution that employs a psychologist, and that it is *recommended* for them to take external courses that would develop their skills needed in their future jobs. In the programme completed by the seniors, the offer of such courses was to large an extent just *advertised* at the university, not being affiliated with it. This issue, however,

needs further investigation (we do not have data from the teachers in the programme, nor that pertaining to the specific character of commercial courses).  
The above mentioned “power of theory“ and a supplementary character of practical training is intertwined with other *loci* and other discourses that inhabit them.

### To be or not to be a therapist

TOPIC. The initial identification of the professional role of psychologist with clinical work disappears in course of the studies. Both freshmen and seniors started their studies with an imagined professional identity of a clinical psychologist, which – at the end of the studies – seems to be atrophic. Most of them shift their interest to personnel management and education

STRUCTURE. The vision of future work in senior students is built on the *resistance* to the idea that being a psychologist means being a *clinical* psychologist. The work of clinical psychologist, at the same time, evokes real respect. The ideas associated with this opposition of clinical vs. managerial work involve, as well, those of responsibility, employment opportunities, and a negative assessment of the skills acquired during the studies.

POWER. The way this shift from therapy to other domains of practice is framed by institutional forces can be seen in direct references in the interview material and in some institutional practices. The details of such references will be given in the final part of analysis. The resistance to clinical work is, on the one hand, empowering to the students, while on the other it is consistent with the institutionally constructed framework of tracking the students into jobs other than clinical work. Such ambivalence has been identified as characteristic of many acts of educational resistance (Giroux 1983).

### Psychological jargon as the marker of professionalism

TOPIC. Students put emphasis on the development of specific communication skills. They stress the importance of the ability to use the “psychological language“. For freshmen, the first encounter with the professional jargon is a difficult experience (the function of initiation). Psychological knowledge is transmitted to students in a specific form. They need to get to know the “psycho-speak“ and practice this system of communication to be able to learn, understand lectures and read psychological books. After grasping parts of the code, they start to apply it in communication in their social environment. Senior students fluently speak and are able to manipulate the professional language.

I had to internalise the [psychological] language to be able to communicate’ (WP2:1 10)

I feel (...) that my eloquence has improved (...) That my psychological language has become professional more than before. It has brought satisfaction to me.“ (WP2:1 8)

### Language-based identity

This specific form of communication and language is a distinguishing feature of psychological professionalism. It is more than a mere technical skill, it has a strong scent of identity forming phenomenon

We [psychologists] are different in behaviour and ways of speaking’ (WP2:1 8)

### Elitism of psychological profession

The utterances of students in psychology indicate that they distance themselves from laymen. They find themselves as different from others - they place themselves “above“ the lay community. They feel that psychological knowledge gives them power over lay people which results in an elitist position.

The ability to use the professional jargon gives psychologists the power of understanding the phenomena and the power of labelling them (the “magic“ function of language).

**'When you talk to them they speak [(...) in a particular way] and thus they try solving the problems they have, situations they can't cope with. Besides, they [i.e. students in psychology] are specific in some way in general. You can tell it by the way they talk' (WP1, 6)**

STRUCTURE. Descriptions of the ways of perceiving the functions of the psychological language seem very coherent. "Psycho-speak" is considered both an instrument of mastering reality and the sign of exclusiveness. There are two ways of accentuating this issue. Juniors talk *about* professional jargon while seniors (after the process of internalisation of the rules of this system of communication) *speak* the language.

POWER. The main force supporting the discourse of 'Psychological jargon' is the professional status of psychology and psychological education (professional programme). The acquisition of fluency in using psychological language is necessary to fulfil the academic staff's requirements (institutional power) and the employers' expectations in the workplaces. Also, the strength of this phenomenon as an identity factor may relate to the troubles with acquiring professional identity in other than linguistic ways (see below).

### Personal and Professional Identity

The specific character of psychological professions demands, to some extent, that the self is "used" as an instrument in work. To say the least, it has to be "tuned" to be able to enter the professional contact. Hence the need of ego therapy in course of practical training. This aspect is widely expected by freshmen students who find the motif to "help oneself" fairly common in their peers (not so much in the respondents themselves).

**I thought it would be good to learn something on myself, why not trying, I said. And in the future I could help the others who would feel lost. Simply, the ones that would feel like I did once in my life, to help them (wp1, int. 15, female)**

As we have mentioned, later this approach seems to gradually disappear. The students are not that willing to take up clinical work, they often stress difficult demands connected to this kind of work and seem to refrain from taking the responsibility.

**I did not feel good there, when I had the practice in the psychiatric hospital. I did not feel good, the atmosphere of that place did not suit me and I would generally prefer healthy people, the ones within a psychological norm instead of the sick (wp2, int. 7, female)**

Professional identification becomes still more complex in the light of the shift from the clinical to managerial orientations, and the unclear professional status of the graduates who had not been able to gain sufficient practical experience in course of their studies.

Most students are not satisfied with their professional competence, which may be the reason why they accept the perspective of being dependent on mentors and supervisors as novices. They represent an adaptive approach to the job market's requirements because they have to start working as quickly as possible to start living on their own. At the same time they realise that to help people, they need a lot of experience in life:

**Sometimes you meet people who went through far more than you have. Being a psychologist and listening to a person who has gone through so many things, you may feel so small, young and stupid. (wp2, int.5, female)**

Perhaps this combination of uncertainties cutting through the personal and professional levels explains the more than technical role ascribed to the professional jargon: its *labelling* potential helps to master the

vagueness of the world, covers the lack of lived experience, and its *exclusiveness* helps to create links within the professional community that can help dealing with insecurity.

### Institutional Conditions, Power and Structure of the Discourse

In the following section we will try to identify the institutional conditions that – according to our understanding - shape the discourse of limited professionalism (with the stress on non-clinical work, the role of the language and the problematic professional identity) in psychology.

**Mass education.** Psychology is one of the most popular programmes at the university. The Institute enrolls ca. 100 students a year, and the number is doubled by evening classes (with paid tuition) often taken up by those candidates who failed in the competition for seats in the regular programme. Some lectures are organised for both groups of students together, which makes teaching halls crowded and course materials difficult to have access to. This feature has a lot to do with the way practical training is (not) organised in the programme. One of the felt consequences is that the university does not develop or verify the students' abilities to work in curing:

We are taught some techniques through which you can get information from the client, understand if you understand him well. But it is not practised enough, I can't test in practice how I act, if I am fit for the job. When I can't sleep at night because of a patient, perhaps I am just no good for this job. And no one will tell me. (int. 5, senior, female)

**Knowledge as commodity.** Some teachers avoid "selling" their knowledge in the academic programme, which is most probably linked to the conflicting nature of the "free" *quasi-markets*<sup>15</sup> of professional education. Universities are interested in mass enrolment, while corporations and professionals try to protect the limited access to professional knowledge and skills. When professionals are employed as part-time teachers, they are trapped in a double-bound loyalty conflict:

Once a teacher explicitly told us that she wouldn't... that she sells her knowledge very cheap, and that she is not doing this [i.e. teaching] in the way it should be done. Exactly! (int.1, senior, male)

Graduates in psychology who wish to become therapists have to take very expensive courses organised mainly by professional therapists, have to undergo individual therapy (on average 100 PLN per hour) and get adequate certificates (the university diploma is usually not sufficient). It is a professional corporation that can give licence to physiotherapist. It prefers chosen schools from the broad offer on the market.

While having graduated, I cannot be a therapist. I must get further papers; [it would be good if] it could be possible that – I don't know, it could be possible that the diploma means something, not just a pass to the next school.. (int. 9, senior, female)

**Diversification:** The university offers different specialisations. One of them is "OiZ" (*Organisation and Management*) which is very popular with the students and seems to have a pragmatic value due to the job market opportunities (see: syllabus – educational context). This is related to the job market opportunities. There are a lot of companies which provide work for HR and PR specialists, and often offer a learning environment for young apprentices.

Some of the conditions of becoming a psychologist are defined at the governmental level. Two issues come to the fore here: difficulties with passing the bill on the psychological profession, and the neo-liberal trend in educational policy making.

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<sup>15</sup> The notion of quasi-market in educational policies has been introduced by G.Whitty, 1997.

There is a strong professional lobby which demands that the profession should be clearly defined in legal terms (requirements, certification of schools and individual competencies, etc). Two issues are interesting here: why there is that demand, and what makes it ineffective. This issue needs further investigation. We might assume that there could be some conflict of interests *within* the profession as to how strong the restrictions should be, resulting from a certain “overproduction“ of psychologists.

The liberal approach to education is relevant here because of the relative easiness of setting up adult learning schools and courses. There is a growing number of such institutions that offer teaching in the broadly defined area of psychology, both at the academic level and as further education courses. At least some of them employ academic teachers on a part-time basis.

The institutional framework of the discourse of limited professionalism (with its theory / practice distinction) can also be analysed in terms of *capital* (in the meaning given to the term in the work of Pierre Bourdieu). We may notice a “triple capitalisation“ in the psychological training in Gdansk. The institution (the discourse maker) uses these “capitals“ as tools of maintaining the theory / practice distinction and its asymmetry. Below, we will illustrate these notions with fragments of the interviews.

**Cultural capital** appeals to the ethos and rhetoric of science and the academia and thus makes the distinction between theory and practice “legal“. Apart from the obvious stress on the academic quality, we can see here some more paradoxical constructions as well:

I mean, for me it is impossible anyway to “make a professional“ in such a short time. Especially if you mean professionalism in a practical, vocational way. While the Academy is something else. It is more about theory and so on. (int.13, senior, female).

What we can see here is a way of justifying theoretical education as “possible“ (in contrast to “the impossible“ professional training). This structure implies a semiotics of displaced positions: the *strength* of theory is a result of its *supplementary* (weak) character - it “would be good“ to train professionals in 5 years, but “instead“ we have Academy. It seems that this reversed structure of building the strength of the Academy on its failure to provide for professionalism is shared by some of the staff at the department:

Even if we did some Wechsler tests (...) and you could feel to be in the shoes of a psychologist, it was stressed, like, remember, you are still students, and do not try experimenting on people, you don't have the knowledge yet, and it made me into that... I tried, but I do not feel like... I will not feel to be a psychologist before I gain experience (int.8, senior, female)

What we can see here is an institutionally constructed notion of *professional incompetence*.

**Social capital**. Another dimension of the institutional power is the “social capital“ embodied in the academic hierarchy, career-oriented groups, etc.:

So, I just didn't know the mechanism, what makes it tick, what is the hierarchy at the university; and there is a strong hierarchy, and it shapes a lot of things (int.3. senior, male)

I remember my first year; I was scared. I mean, they scared us with assignments and it all seemed so strict and sharp, nobody cared or took care of us, you had to see to it all by yourself. (int.14, senior, female)

**Economic capital**: includes financial restrictions, rules of distribution of financial resources, and the economic interests of the faculty:

Definitely you have to fight for everything, arrange things for yourself, the materials [...] Even when they make them accessible, students steal them, so you have to see

to being the first in line everywhere and count on yourself solely. (int 14, senior, female)

The classes were sometimes a nightmare because of the material conditions (int. 7, senior, female)

The above mentioned “capitals“ are plaited while working as tools in the discursive practice:

I would have to be a really good clinical psychologist and have a lot of money to get trained with the best ones, so that I do not bring harm to anyone. This is why I took managerial psychology, recruitment and [personnel] selection do not harm people that much. [...] The access to the study materials is poor. Not enough books. The lady in the reading room constantly unhappy if you want to keep the book overnight [...] I avoid going upstairs in the secretary's office, there are people who are favoured, they are happy about how they are treated, and I am not. It also influences your attitude to the school in general. [...] The choice is limited, even if you want to develop, take extra courses, you can't get in anywhere. Too many persons in the list, you have to shovel..., oh, it's a rat race when you enrol to courses. (int. 8, senior, female – note the richness of obstacles to learning in one narrative<sup>16</sup>)

The approach of the university to professional training is concentrated on the issues and the methods that are available to the academics, who are weakly connected to the world of practice. As the role of therapist is from the outset the main role model, students strive to obtain their professional training outside the university. The limits of professionalism are also seen in the students' conceptions of operative knowledge:

They do not pay attention to linking theory and practice, to demonstrating to the students how to use knowledge at work. To be honest – graduates in psychology know something but can do nothing (14).

### Discourse Re-production: Strategies of Dealing with Power

The interview material shows several strategies students take up in reaction to the operation of institutional power. They are the following:

- **apotheosis** of the role of clinical therapist as a professional model (in freshmen; probably reflecting the stereotype prevailing in the society)
- **escape** to the outer world of practical experiences in search for professional training (seniors).

The studies have not prepared me to work. It is only this private company I have worded for for three years [...], I gained a lot of experience, and now I work in the centre and meet children [...] The university has not prepared me to work with children, with clients, we know theories but no therapies. So what that I can diagnose if I can't do anything else, and it is therapy that the work is about, any

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<sup>16</sup> This particular narrative may to some extent reflect “a culture of complaining“ that is fairly common in Poland and makes people happy to focus on negative aspects of things they talk about.

student can make a diagnosis. The real work goes beyond psychology. (*int. 14, senior*)

- attempts at **understanding** the world of practice, dealing with dissatisfaction with the preparation to the prospective professional challenges and fear of future work.

I will know something about the human, I will taste this and that, but it's so little, and so inadequate. A lot of things, theories that are useless. You forget them. What is it for, this approach, that approach, it will make no use. Instead of teaching those definitions they should help us understand it practically. (9)

[...] there is a lot on diagnoses, on some disorders, a lot how to identify them, what is their pathology, but nothing on what to do about them. Practically you are left like a physician who can recognise the disease but knows no medicine. It is horrible. (11)

- **resistance** to the stereotype of clinical work as a synonym for psychology, and thus to one's "immature" preconceptions of professionalism

These strategies can be analysed as part of the problem of the construction of professional identity.

## Appendix: Another Professional Programme – ICT in Gdansk

### Technocracy

TOPIC. Technocratic discourse concerns the spheres of institutional cultures dominating on the one hand within the academia educating computer scientist and on the other hand within organisations where young professionals are employed. Undoubtedly, a divergence exists between these two types of cultures within which ICT students (usually simultaneously working as computer specialists) have to function. At the same time they are participants of two different worlds with different norms and values - the world of the technical university and the world of work.

Industrial culture constructed on mechanistic rules reigns at the technical university. The dominant emphasis is on tasks rather than on interpersonal relations. The result is a concentration on things and processes management (technology). It is possible to talk about an "instrumental" or "functional" rationality. It is a culture of things (hardware) which stresses engineering and technical subjects e.g. electronics, measurement, physics (hard knowledge), especially during the first two years of studies. However, the knowledge related to information technology based on materials (equipment, hardware) becomes outdated very quickly. We can talk about a Fordist attitude to work here with pressure on productiveness, efficiency and realisation of tasks exactly on time rather than on creative activity. It is more important to make a suitable thing on time and sufficiently well than to make well an "unsuitable" thing or a perfect thing too late.

However, the world of work values "soft" knowledge highly (software in a wider sense than programming). It means that information management, analysis of clients' needs, group co-operation, communication, negotiations etc. are of great importance ("soft" is stronger than "hard") contrary to the culture of the institute of technology, where hard knowledge is cultivated. It is tempting to claim that organisations where computer scientists will take work (or already have work) are in the post-industrial culture stage focused on people management (sociotechnology) related to service rather than production.

STRUCTURE. A distinct contrast can be drawn between industrial culture (technical university) stressing and offering quickly outdated hard knowledge and post-industrial culture represented by the world of work requiring soft knowledge.

There is a conflict, high tension between the supply of the academia and the demands of the labour market. It means that the technical university has two options:

- give students “a material“ base, in order to build upon it soft knowledge, or
- transfer only soft knowledge (but in-depth) and absolve students from „hard“ knowledge because this knowledge changes very quickly, and moreover the labour market does not need highly specialised equipment professionals (the ordinary technician will be enough e.g. „*hairdresser after instructing*“, 3090, WP2:1).

Working ICT students, as participants both of these cultures simultaneously, have to cope with the divergence of norms and values found in these places. Perceiving the incoherence between what the university offers and the demands of the labour market, they perform a transfer of knowledge and abilities. The mutual integration of the influence of university and workplace experiences occurs (dual system work /school). This process takes the form of inverted transfer (inverted modelling) which means the transmission of experiences from the work place to school, rather than from university to the world of work.

Professional work, being a platform for acquiring experience, gives the possibility for gaining ‘hot’ soft knowledge (styles of work e.g. taking advantage of program units written by somebody else), which is then used in the academy’s reality.

I can't tell what I have learnt at the university and what comes out of my employment. To some point I was just a student, I grasped something, then I started to work and I saw it work, and then it is a mutual combination. You learn something at school, use it in the office, polish it, gain practice; You work on something in your job, and then you have a subject at school that goes around it somewhere, so you gain from it a lot [...] You can't separate it, what comes first or why. [7] 3527-34 WP2:1

During the studies I learnt some of this stuff [...] but in the work, it is work that made me find the way to connect these areas. (7123-5, wp2:1)

POWER. The concept of technocracy is strongly based on the tradition of the Technical University and the high status of engineering culture in this place. However, such a mechanistic organisation, where precision, a technical vision of the world and rational processes are stressed, functions effectively only in a constant and stable environment. But computer science is a very dynamic discipline and along with the changeable environment of the labour market it demands that the “product“ of educational processes within this field should be creative, innovative thinking, flexible professionals.

### Masculine culture - culture of domination

The computer studies environment is strongly masculine - a man's world where hard rules reign. The culture of organisation where ICT students learn is characterised by distant authority, strong hierarchy, depreciation of the human aspects, and the productiveness attitude. Freshmen are under permanent stress. In order to survive the first two years of studies it is necessary to be psychically strong and resistant - difficult examinations perform a sharply selective function. Hard knowledge performs the ritual function of initiation into the culture. The curriculum becomes an instrument of domination and almost violence. There is a continuous battle for survival which creates conditions for peer solidarity (competition is not displayed among students, rather they develop attitudes of opposition to the staff). This battle took dramatic shape when a student of the first year (very good in soft knowledge, weak in hard knowledge) couldn't cope with the demands of the university and murdered a lecturer who had not passed him for the course (Raskolnikov motive).

The thing is that after the first year some people from our group dropped out. It turned out that they were those who were psychically weaker. (3477-79, wp2:1)

Nowadays you have nice memories even on those worst experiences. Nice because they are gone. [...] This guy is not teaching any more, but didn't you have classes with him? You haven't gone through that drag? You are not a student then, you don't [really] study here! That's the truth. (9) 4329-32 WP2:1

POWER. The institutional culture of the Technical University is strongly "dehumanised". The mass character of education is a cause of anonymity and isolation (staff do not know students). It contributes to conforming to principles and procedures whose aim is to enforce the order of activity (intentionally it should result in efficiency and productiveness).

The next force which maintains this state is the lack of didactic abilities of lecturers. It is stressed that only research work is important, not teaching. Research work and its results are important and meaningful, not the quantity and quality of lectures.

At the academy technical knowledge and abilities are promoted, whereas the work-world of computer science values female competencies like communication, negotiations, analysis of needs, ability of co-operation etc.) more than traditionally masculine abilities.

### Elitism – the civilising mission without responsibility

TOPIC: The convictions about the penetration of information technology into all domains of life leads ICT students to perceive themselves as a professional group with a particular position in society. Computer scientists believe that they fulfil a very important role in the modern world, they have a feeling of being an essential entity because civilisation would not progress without them. Computer scientists (situated between highly advanced technology and average computer users) fulfil the role of adaptor (bridge, interface), between these two elements of the system. They are helpers who facilitates life through simplification of certain operations and actions. So, on the one hand they have to make technology "friendly" for the users, but on the other hand their purpose is "to accustom" the users to information technology. Computer scientist think about themselves as social system engineers (social change through the education of society).

Before the studies I had a vision: change the world, digitise everything, change it all. Now it seems to me that in fact you have to aim at something contrary. When you start changing things you meet resistance, even if the software is genius, revolutionary, no one will want to use it. [...] In fact you have to work hard convincing people that the system will not make things difficult but easier to them, that they won't lose their jobs when the system is in. [...] You have to make them aware that the system facilitates things, not changes them. These are similar notions, but: to facilitate – yes; to change – no. (3402-14, wp2:1)

The awareness of the possibility of modifying life, interference in it and making changes in its quality (improvement) leads to a feeling of great power over society based on civilisational supervision, however without taking responsibility for the form of social life. We can talk about a mission to change the world with exemption from ethical responsibility. The materialistic approach to social issues without taking into consideration moral values predominates in the opinions expressed by ICT students. They create a culture without moral foundations. Computer scientists only facilitate work but the whole responsibility is transferred to the client.

### Why do we have ICT engineers?

**Nowadays? Yeah... ha ha, ICT... To keep the world go round, without ICT people it will all break down and we'll be back in the stone age (4522-24, wp2:1)**

Computer scientists don't perceive any ethical responsibilities and moral dilemmas in relation to society. ICT students' sense of ethics extends only to being fair with colleagues from computer scientists group and taking responsibility for the quality of executed tasks (work ethics). They perceive no duties in the wider context.

**There are no obligations, Socrates-type or something, here. It is a job like any other one. It's production, like construction business, we build as well, just in another space, a virtual one. (6238-43, wp2:1)**

Analysing this discourse of elitism we should mention that ITC students have experienced intellectual and social maturing. During their studies they have undergone an emancipation process from low cultural capital (change of social environment: movement from small city to a big one, achievement of financial independence through taking up professional work, development of social and professional skills).

Another aspect of the discourse of elitism is the issue of climbing the professional hierarchy during the studies (departure from the computer keyboard). It manifests itself in the form of proceeding from "informatics black job" as coder, programmer or tester to the positions requiring not only familiarity with programming languages but also management skills, like negotiations, analysis of client requirements, etc. Some respondents already fulfil managerial functions in their workplaces.

**STRUCTURE.** The discourse of elitism is constructed on the basis of distance from laymen (ordinary computer users who lack proficiency in using information technology). Computer scientists believe themselves to be experts whose high market value is confirmed by a certificate (diploma) from the Technical University of Gdansk.

**POWER.** The elitism discourse connected with the feeling of belonging to a particular professional group is based on the following:

- sense of prosecution of authority over widely comprehended conditions of societal life (influence on civilisation development and progress),
- feeling of high market value in comparison with other professions, the guarantee of work in Poland as well as abroad, a well paid profession with good prospects for promotion,
- emancipation – social advancement.

## Hints for Comparative Analysis: The Discursive Construction of Professional Education in Four European Countries

The data analysed in this report in general comprise the programmes that were selected as common in all four countries involved (with the exception of ICT in Gdansk). Such reduction in this report results from the construction of the research agenda – the comparative analysis was meant to be based on commonly chosen programmes. However, at this stage we can only make tentative suggestions as to the composition of the liberal and professional academic cultures. The following juxtaposition is meant as a starting point for further analyses. It will be used, first of all, to decide on the *questions* we wish to answer to during the last stage of interpretations. These questions will make it possible to understand more deeply both the construction of the “two cultures“ within the universities and the nationally specific features.

In course of international comparisons it is possible to grasp the following common aspects characteristic of the identified discourses:

	Poland	Germany	Norway	Sweden	<i>Poland - ICT</i>
Discourse of professionalism	Limited professionalism Psychological jargon as a marker of professional identity		Two worlds – academic (theoretical) knowledge vs. Practising (therapy) Separated – no institution ritualises transition between them	Strong influence of corporate association onto the study programme and labour market Mandatory socialisation to a profession.	<i>Displaced to the world of work</i>
Elitism	Fairly strong, although in seniors giving way to more pragmatic orientation	?	Visible (membership in a selective and privileged group), moderated by generally egalitarian attitudes	?	<i>High social status without responsibility</i>
Clinical psychology	Disappearing clinics in the course of studies	Disappearing in course of studies	Forces of practice influence students' perceptions of their images of professional role The therapists in service of the individual	Clinically orientated programme and profession (numerus clausus)	---
Social and economical conditions (capital)	Bad economical conditions. “Hidden“ forces of corporation – licences for therapists.	Bad economical conditions and staff		Clear selectional forces of corporation. High cost of psychological education limits the number of	<i>University lagging behind business in technology and knowledge; Low pedagogical skills of the staff</i>

				students.	
Individual identity	Vague future and necessity of cope with demands of the labour market. Jargon as a marker of social identity of the exclusive group.	Economical and demographic dimensions shape individual identity, Anxiety of vague future	Discourse of membership in the selected and privileged group	Clear professional future; strong socialisation into professional culture	<i>Early professionalism ; personal emancipation / empowerment through education and work</i>
Academic culture	Primacy of theory as a cultural capital. Mass education	University as a service provider Missed professional practice.	Primacy of theory Psychology as a discipline is striving to be accepted as a science within a traditional university, keep the status by inheriting natural sciences and medical traditions.	Problem-based orientation, pragmatism Primacy of practice provides integration of theory and practice	<i>“Industrial“ culture of the technical university (contrast to the post-industrial culture of work)</i>
	Influence if the German tradition of the university?			Influence of the Anglo-American (pragmatic) tradition?	<i>German tradition of the university?</i>

## 4. Discussion

The dominant dimension of the analyses undertaken in this report refers to the issues of professionalism vs. Liberal arts approach to education and – which is a result of the prior analyses, performed at the level of phenomenography – the significant role of the theory / practice distinction in the construction of academic thinking. These two dimensions strongly interact in the data. However, the interaction involves some blurring of the borders. On the one hand, the professional programme of psychology – with the exception of Sweden – bears clear features of the liberal academic tradition (it is strongly influenced by theoretically oriented, tenured academics; to some extent it employs liberal curricula based on fairly free choice of subjects; practical training is given lower status); on the other, the liberal programme in political science is fairly often viewed by the students as a way to the world of professional work. The criss-crossing of the disparate criteria of evaluating the programmes that results from the juncture of professionalism with practice and liberal education with theory may be a significant problem in the analysed institutions.

The issue that seems to arise as an important aspect of further analyses is the discourse of economy. It appears in various forms: open (“performance culture“ in Duisburg, the dreams of high income in political science freshmen in Gdansk, etc.), and less visible ones (the economic rationale behind the organisation of studies). What clearly asks for close interpretation is complex relations between the “two markets“ higher education is believed to operate nowadays: the job market (and, in more general terms, the knowledge-based economy) of which it is seen as part, and the educational quasi-market itself (the competition for public and private resources between academic institutions that makes them enrol more students they can take care for). These two “markets“ pose conflicting demands on professional education programmes that can be resolved either by limiting the access to education (*numerus clausus* in Linköping, selection after the first year in Oslo), or limiting the access to work (lack of sufficient practical training in Duisburg and Gdansk that drives the students away from the highly competitive market of therapy or forces them to supplement their qualifications in commercial schools). The crucial role seems to be played here by professional corporations who, directly or indirectly, influence higher education.

Another issue that invites further discussion concerns the effects of the shift from elitist to mass education in the universities. It seems that to some extent the institutions have ignored this change in the organisation of studies at the level of curriculum planning, and that to some students this shift is still difficult to see. The traces of elitist understanding of higher education (in different ways of understanding the term – from emancipatory leadership, through social engineering to dreams of high-profit occupation) are visible in many students’ utterances, and they often clash with the judgements concerning the quality of the educational offer.

A number of issues that arise from the presented analyses seem to speak to national differences. However, these dimensions are rather difficult to interpret. National (cultural and historical) differences overlap with the specificity of the universities used as sample fields of studies (for instance, Oslo is an “old“ university, whereas the other three ones have been set up ca. 1970s), with the economic conditions in particular countries (three high GDP and one low GDP state), etc. These issues will demand a closer, hermeneutical analysis.

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