

ESREA 2004: BETWEEN 'OLD' AND 'NEW' WORLDS OF ADULT LEARNING
SEPTEMBER 16th – 19th 2004
WROCLAW, POLAND

Ph.d.-student Camilla Schmidt
Graduate School in Lifelong Learning
Roskilde University, Denmark

Professionalization between past and future

This paper focuses on how subjective professionalization processes can be studied by the use of narratives about educational choices, made by pedagogue students in their first year. I base my study on the notion that the subjective professionalization process of pedagogue students is reflected in their articulation of the relation between their past choice and the idea of their future professional work as pedagogues. Furthermore it is my notion that the action of choice and the processes of professionalization are the results of peoples life history, in the sense that choices and learning processes are a product of a dynamic interplay between the subjective acquisition of partly the family background and partly the structural and cultural conditions in the society of peoples past and present.

My concern with the relation between *the past* educational choices and *the future* perspectives for the work life is to be seen as an interest in knowing more about professionalization as a subjective changing process, as it is reflected during the course of an education. This means that I, in this paper, work with the subjective process of professionalization as a process, which involves the triangular relation between life history (the past choice), the current education (the present situation) and the assumed work (the future perspective). All three poles are interrelated in the sense that they are subjectively as well as culturally and socially intertwined. All three poles and the perspectives on them must be individually conceptualised in a more elaborated analysis, but in this paper I focus on the subjective perspective¹. However, I agree with Professor Henning Salling Olesen when he states, that the study of professions, whether it is the professionals or professional learning, also is a study of societal knowledge and circumstances, because professionals are individuals who 'embody' these dynamics (Salling Olesen 2004a and 2004b).

Educational choice as point of departure

I regard the educational choice both as an act of something concrete and specific, but also as an act, which is an expression of a long and complex process involving the whole life course. It both involves subjective experiences, the ideas of the future work, the perspective this work

¹ Professionalization is often regarded as a process closely linked to the modernization process within the public service sector (Hjort 2001 f.ex.). I agree with the process being closely linked to modernization, but in this paper I choose to focus on the subjective process of professionalization and therefore it lies outside the scope of this paper to discuss how modernization processes inflict on the process as a concrete discussion.

gives for the future (work) life, and the institutional and structural circumstances surrounding the professional work field.

This means that the choice of education cannot only be regarded as rational or highly reflected (though it might sometimes seem very rational and reflected). Nor is the point of time where the choice has been made important, since the act of making the choice (such as sending the envelope with an application after visiting an educational institution) is to a large extent only the consequence of structural circumstances surrounding the educational choice. Even so, I regard the act of the educational choice as a good point of departure for capturing the process of professionalization, since the actual choice can be seen as significant or as a 'spear-head' in the development of a professional identity, or as a 'peak' in the process of professionalization. This does not mean, that I see this 'peak' in making the choice as something, which takes place from one moment to the other, but rather as a 'spear-head' where what lies before is articulated – one must necessarily, when forced to make any kind of choice about the future, make it or articulate it in the light of 'something'. Consequently I basically regard a professional identity as something, which has progressed long before the matriculation of a Pedagogues College. As well as something, which points towards the future. The question is how one, as a researcher, is able to grasp this complex matter?

Life history as a theoretical frame

As I have indicated, the students' life course is central for my understanding of the process of professionalization. I see the process of professionalization as part of a subjective identity process, which involves the individuals past in the sense that it is a product of the life one has lived, and the future meaning that the process of professionalization is directed towards a specific career or the idea of a career. I understand subjectivity within the frame of socialization in a critical theoretical perspective (Adorno, Negt, Becker-Schmidt). This means that I regard the process of professionalization as both a social and a subjective process in a dynamic dialect.

This basic understanding of professionalization as a socialization process is fundamental for my understanding of life history as a concept and especially how I can use life history as a way to grasp the meaning of the life course, not only as a key to understand the past motivation, but also as a way to understand professionalization as a future potential. In my research life history is regarded as both a frame of understanding and as a method to understand the professionalization process for pedagogue students. In order to cast a light on professionalization as a relation between a past choice and a future perspective for the pedagogic work life, I turn to the understanding of life history as a concept, which incorporates professionalization (or learning) processes in an experience and everyday life consciousness oriented way.

Professor Henning Salling Olesen bases his understanding of the life history concept on the concept of experience from Negt and his understanding of the subject-object-dialectic, where consciousness is both established by and the origin of social practice (Salling Olesen 2002). The subject-object-dialectic is connected with learning in the sense that it "...both refers to and connects the potential of everyday life experiences to the individual dimension of life historic experience, and to the objectification of collective cultural experience in the form of knowledge" (Salling Olesen 2002:47). Furthermore Salling Olesen connects the concept of everyday life consciousness (Leithäuser) to the life history concept and thereby adds an understanding of

how individuals, in everyday life, handles discontinuity and ambivalence by converting them to everyday social practices. By drawing upon the concept of everyday life consciousness, the life history concept is being conveyed with a potential for change – a learning potential, which is inherent in everyday life practice, because "...the forming of the consciousness which avoids conflict is build into a preconscious 'attention' towards alternative practice opportunities, the 'un-lived lives', painful experiences in the past – everything mixed up with trivial circumstances and events, and everyday life routines. So the everyday life consciousness also inheres a potential to see things differently and to alternative social practices" (Salling Olesen 2002:48) This means that "...everyday life practice and –experience enter into a subjective life history, which is a unique version of societal socialization" (Salling Olesen 2002:49).

The interaction between individuals and institutions or social structures gives the individual the subjective readiness to develop and act differently. This subjective readiness is on the one hand unique for each individual, but at the same time an expression of the social life, which is made possible by the concrete social interactions in the frame of the contemporary historical time. This means that socialization is a subjective expression of a collective process.

With this outline of the concept of life history, I have a frame and concept, which allows me to grasp not only the past (the motive for choosing the pedagogue education), or the present (what is going on during the education), but also the future perspective of the professionalization process, professionalization as a learning potential or a potential to change.

The choice of education and narrativity

In order to capture the complexity of the process of choosing and the professionalization process, I have conducted autobiographical narrative interviews with a number of first year pedagogue students, regarding 'how it has come about, that they are now studying to become pedagogues'?

The interview method has its' roots in the american pragmatism and symbolic interactionism (Mead, Berger & Luckmann) and presents a way to understand the first year pedagogue students' subjective acquisition of the family related, social, structural and cultural circumstances, which has steered the students towards the Pedagogues College and towards an assumed professional career as pedagogues. An important researcher in biography, Fritz Schütze, regards choice as a biographical action, which exposes the dynamic between identity processes and social processes. Biographical actions are arranged in process structures, which as a whole represent the life course, and these process structures will be exposed through autobiographical narrative interviews (Schütze 1983 & 1984).

This interview method allows me to get an insight into the relation between social structures and individual action, which means that the method is useful to both get an understanding of what lies behind the act of making an educational choice, and also to understand the pedagogue students institutional frame of orientation during his/her past and present. At the same time, the interviews contain an account of the students' process of professionalization and the subjective potential of professionalization. This means, that the subjective process of professionalization is articulated in the narrative accounts of biographical choices and actions.

I do not wish to focus on individual biographies, but I do maintain the use of the narrative interview method, because the method allows us to get an understanding of subjective conflict

and ambivalence, and at the same time the method is lenient towards the interviewpersons subjective integrity. As written by Christine Morgenroth: "In order to minimize the constraints put on the subjectivity of the individuals asked by the researcher's intentions, the ethno-methodological approach developed the narrative interview, which only structures the initial situation by the impulse to tell (to narrate) and which then leaves the entire space to the story of the person interviewed; the interviewer restricts herself, primarily in the second, later part of the interview, to elaborating inquiries, where, however, the activity of establishing the story, the scene and the relation remains with the narrator" (Morgenroth 2002:2). Even if the interview method allows the narrator to maintain the story and the scene, the narrative is to be regarded as a co-production in the concrete situation between the narrator and the interviewer.

Analytical considerations

As I have already stated, I do not focus on individual biographies, but rather on subjective experiences and identifications with professional discourses and practices. The plot of the autobiographical narrative or what can be perceived as the coherent self presentation of the narrative is identified and used as a frame for the further interpretation. This does not mean that I regard the narrative as an 'authentic' story, but rather as a self interpretive account of courses of events, which inhere the frame of orientation of the lived life. I ask 'how is this plot and self understanding produced or constructed?' and more important 'where and when does the story brake?'

The 'brakes' or the discontinuity in the text are the point of departure for the next step in the analysis – the in depth hermeneutic interpretation. In social scientist Mechthild Bereswill's words, here I "...focus on the conflicts and frictions which occur in the mutual relationship between the subject's inner world, including its' unconscious wishes and anxieties, and his unique perception of reality." (Bereswill 2004:4). The method is psycho dynamically based and point the awareness towards the tensions and inconsistencies in the autobiographical text. The text is an expression of an everyday life communication where such inconsistencies are normal and which allows us to manoeuvre in the contradictory possibilities of everyday life (Weber 1995).

In the narrative interviews the choice of education and the path leading to the specific education is formulated with the individual construction of the future work field as a perspective. This means that the pedagogue work field is articulated as a horizon, and the process of professionalization is linked to the horizon in the sense that it is a subjective perception of the perspective work field and what it takes to become a 'good pedagogue'. This perception is both coherent and inconsistent at the same time.

In the following, I will illustrate how the subjective professionalization as a process and a potential is articulated in a first year student at a pedagogue college in Jutland's narrative about "how it has come about that she is now a student at the Pedagogues College?" With this case, which I call Mette, I illustrate how she in her narrative articulates her subjective orientation between her past, her present and her future perspective. Mettes narrative shows how bad academic skills and a difficult family situation becomes part of her self-awareness as a potential professional. Her biographical path through education and occupation points towards vocational training or a non-theoretical education in care, but nevertheless she is now enrolled in a theoretically oriented education.

Presentation of Mette

Mette is 26 years old and has almost finished the first year of the 3½ year education to become a pedagogue. The interview has been conducted in Mettes home in a small town in Midjatlund and lasts for approximately 1 hour. She lives in a house with 3 young, mentally retarded people as one of 3 resource persons. The house has roots in a missionary Christian environment.

Mette was born and raised in another small town, not far from where she lives today. She is the oldest of 4 siblings. She was raised in a missionary Christian environment, her family have been active in missionary Christian associations and scout associations. This activity has apparently both been a social factor in Mettes life since today Mette is actively involved in youth work in a Christian association, but at the same time it has prohibited Mette from being very involved in anything outside this fairly closed environment. Another important factor in Mettes life is that her mother has suffered from arthritis from when she gives birth to her youngest child, something, which has had a large impact on Mettes life.

The first 8 years of school Mette attends a regular community school, but goes to an after-school² during the last 2 years of compulsory school. Neither the community school nor the after-school are good experiences for Mette. She feels isolated and does not do very well. After finishing school she spends one year as an au-pair with two different Danish families, one in Jutland and one on Zealand. Mette becomes very attached to the last family, and after a year back home where she finishes a higher preparatory degree in a few single subjects (which apparently is not a great school experience either), she goes back to the family in Zealand as an au-pair for about a year. During the second half of her stay with the family, she also works part time as a pedagogues assistant in the kindergarten where the children of the house go. The family supports this by limiting her work in the house. They also help her move to Copenhagen and finding an apartment after she stops working for the family. While living in Copenhagen Mette gets a full time job as a pedagogues assistant in a nursery, where she works for approximately 1½ years. She goes back to Jutland and spends 6 months at a folk high school, which she enjoys very much. After the folk high school she is accepted at a 'basic pedagogical training programme' (PGU). The programme lasts a year, but Mette uses 1½ year to finish it, because she apparently suffers a severe depression during the programme. She recovers, finishes the programme and gets a full time job as a pedagogues assistant in a kindergarten, where she works until she is accepted at the Pedagogues College in February 2003.

A difficult path

The following excerpt is the very first part of the interview, where Mette frames her story about her path towards the pedagogue education:

"What can I tell you about my 26 years long life? (laughs) - - ehm, I was born and raised in a town 25 kilometers from here, eh which is called Appletown, eh, where I am – eh, where my parents are still living, ehm, and I am the oldest of a group of siblings of 4 (Camilla: mm) – ehm, I have a sister, who is three years younger than me, and I also have eh two brothers who are respectively 20 now and 18 – 17, yes (Camilla: mm) Ehm, well we grew up on a farm, during

² An after-school is a boarding school from 8th till 10th grade. It is a fairly common choice for the last years of school, especially in the area where Mette grew up.

the first period of time, then we moved to, in to town where we then lived, where I also went to school – ehm - - and so well, so I went to school in Appletown until, you know, I mean, until eh – I went to after-school, which I did in ninth grade, at that time I went to after-school for two years (Camilla: okay) – ehm - - something I have to tell you about my family is that, eh, I grew up with a mother who was sick, that has, eh – that has demanded a lot of me (Camilla: mm) eh also a lot, you know, eh, also in my adult life (Camilla: mm) and it sort of makes psychological traces, as the oldest who has to eh – take, take – take care of my younger siblings (Camilla: mm) – ehm not that I have been deprived of anything at all, but eh – it makes traces and scars even so (Camilla: yes) so that ehm - - yes, that has affected me a lot – and also eh – I also grew up in a Christian family (Camilla: mm), ehm, and we have, eh, attended a lot of meetings in the missionary house and so on, I have belonged to clubs for children and things like that (Camilla: yes) - - eh and we eh have been very much into the girl scouts also, eh I, yes well, things like that also, eh - - yes - - and so well, then I went to after-school for to years...”

It is remarkable how early in her narrative Mette brings forward the theme of her mother's illness. She stops her account of where she went to school and when, clearly because she finds the information about her mother very important. There is nothing left to say about how great an impact it has had and apparently still has on Mette's life, she states that very clearly, but it is also remarkable how she tells about it. She does not go into details about the disease, in fact at this point we have no clue of what kind of disease the mother suffers, and she sticks to a language where she uses psychological terms on how it has influenced her own life. This way of presenting her mother's disease and the impact it has had on her life indicates, that Mette's story thematizes a process of assimilating pedagogical professionalism, in the sense that she has assimilated the knowledge of how great an impact childhood experiences has on the future life. But at the same time Mette seems to identify with the hurtful experiences of her childhood and her Christian upbringing. You can say, that in this first excerpt she seems to be subjectively oriented towards both her past and her future.

The hurtful childhood also frames her account of her time in school. When asked to elaborate on her time in school, she says:

“Yes – eh - - now I have to think a little (Camilla: mm) a bit, a bit curious having to talk about that, but eh – I was eh, I was in a class which was very like – like, yes, there were many, like bullies in this class, ehm and, yes, I was like the quiet girl who, who preferably would, would hide myself like if I could (Camilla: yes) eh would sit way down in the back of, of the room - - eh where the teacher wouldn't see me (laughs) (Camilla: mm) ehm and also I was really good at eh, at making my mother believe that I was sick and things like that, because I didn't like to go to school, it wasn't exactly that which caught my attention, especially not, ehm - - ehm but that is, I did have eh – have eh many mates, it wasn't because I was left out or anything like that (Camilla: mm) eh in any way, it was just the actual lessons and so on, that just didn't catch my attention (Camilla: mm) - - so - -”

Mette does not only say, that she was isolated in school, she also says that her mother and her teacher apparently let her stay like this and paid no attention to it. This obviously has consequences for her ability to acquire basic academic skills during her time in school but also later when she takes subjects at a preparatory level. Her lack of academic skills is something Mette returns to several times through her narrative. She even points out, that the consequence of these lacking skills must be that she would take a short and vocational education.

This is underlined by the fact that she chooses a rather 'old fashioned' way of qualifying for a work life, namely by being an au-pair in Denmark for two years, an activity which does not qualify for a higher education. But we already know, that Mette did not take the education as a social and health care assistant, instead she took another vocational education, the basic pedagogical training programme (PGU):

"...then I went to, or I was accepted at eh, at "basic pedagogical training programme" (Camilla: yes) ehm, which is called the PGU (Camilla: yes) - - ehm and I also finished, ehm which lasted about a year and a half ehm, yes (Camilla: Where did you attend?) I attended in Midtown [larger town in mid Jutland] (Camilla: okay) ehm - I had some trouble at the time, because eh my last practice was at a place where eh, where they unfortunately (laughs) didn't endorse my practice period, for odd reasons because, you know, I mean, because I eh - - they didn't feel that I fulfilled the demands of being around the children and I thought they had very strange reasons for, for seeing it like that, because, because, because, it was a very small place, ehm and, they had only the leader and the pedagogue employed there, and the leader called all the shots in that house, and he never saw me with the kids, he sat in his office, so I don't know, maybe it was an attempt to destroy me some way - and he succeeded in it too (laughs) because eh, so I failed the practise period - ehm and that also caused me to eh go down with eh a depression (Camilla: mm) ehm, which was eh really hard to get over (laughs to herself)..."

Mette overcomes her depression after 6 months and finishes the program without any further problems. At first Mette only tells me that she was accepted in the programme and how long it lasted, and then she indicates that this is all she is going to say about it by finishing the sentence with a "yes". I only ask her where she attends, but nevertheless she decides to elaborate on why it took this long (the programme is usually only for one year). The account of this incident or this period of her life underlines the story about 'a difficult path' and her psychological difficulties, which she takes up in the beginning of her narrative. This story does not indicate that she should be able to take the education to become a pedagogue. But at the end of the excerpt she says that it was hard to get over, which tells us that she did get over it and that there is an underlying story, which holds what can be seen as the potential in her difficulties.

To overcome difficulties as a subjective professional potential

Mette first articulates the potential in the difficult path in her account of her time with the family on Zealand:

"...we really felt that eh, the things that, well they really saw a future for me becoming a pedagogue, ehm so they supported me completely and backed me up in eh trying, in trying it out before I went to pedagogues college and stuff like that - so that was really nice, ehm and it is definitely also them who, who really, I mean, I mean, yes, I , I could tell that they really felt I was good around children and something like that, and I felt that too and so on..."

Here Mette tells us that this family has formulated the idea of her going into pedagogical work. They communicate their belief in her skills with children and she cautiously starts believing it herself. She does not say that this was something she felt, instead her formulation indicates, that the family changes her own belief of her competences with children. Earlier she has stated, that she has taken care of her siblings but that has not let her to believe that she was good around children. It takes someone to see it, for her to believe it. In terms of professionalization,

one might say that Mette's ability to take care of children has changed from being something she does closely related to her family, into a competence she can use away from home – a process of professionalization.

The experience with the family on Zealand is good and seems to articulate an obvious process of professionalization. The potential is also present in the less successful experiences. Here Mette talks about her stay at the after-school:

"Well eh - - - my time at the after-school wasn't so great because that, eh that – this that you had to, well I, I had this idea that – that before I left, that it would be awesome to get away from home because then you like, the burdens you know that, that you had before with the mother being sick and siblings to be taken care of and so on, those you could just toss aside now because that, those you didn't have to, those you didn't have when you were at the after-school – but eh, they were there anyway because (laughing to herself) (Camilla: mm) that it wasn't so easy just to – to let it go (Camilla: no) so eh that was, my time at the after-school was not like incredible great to me even if it was actually great because it was sound to me to get away from home, but eh – this there about letting things at home go was hard – so eh - - so I actually isolated myself at the after-school (Camilla: okay) I had a hard time adjusting - - but eh - - - yes, I don't know if I have regretted it, I don't think so (Camilla: mm)..."

In this excerpt, Mette makes it very clear that she did not enjoy her time at the after-school. There is a part of Mette's 'younger self' that wanted to get away from home and from all the tension in the family, but by using a passive pronoun she also tells us, that she does not completely identify with this young girl, or she is not able to. On the other hand she states that she does not regret spending the time at the after-school and that it was a sound thing to do! This indicates that she in addition to drawing on the 'young girls' cautious attempt to escape, she also draws on her adult and professionalized knowledge of the need to overcome her difficulties and to reflect her bad experiences in order to become a professional.

Mette's presentation of herself as someone who has overcome her past difficulties, is also present in this excerpt where she talks about the difference between school and her education as a pedagogue:

"...ehm but but that is, that is, well that has changed a lot since eh that I have come to feel better about myself and things like that, well ehm - - so eh – but well now I have been there for about a year, so eh, and that really progresses too, really, I am very happy about it - - ehm well it has to do with that, that eh, that I really like taking care of others (Camilla: yes) and eh, ehm yes - - also, also it has to do with the notion of proving to one self that that, well I don't doubt that, well I am able to take care of people, and I am able to take care of children, and I am able to, well I am able to eh – be around the users here who also eh, the inmates who live in this house too, eh – eh I myself think that eh, you know, I mean, that I have a good influence on them eh, and that is, well, that is nice to feel, also because that then – then you also experience that you can do some things and things like that..."

Here Mette says, that in order to do well in this education, she needs to feel good about herself. This points back to her account of the different school and educational experiences where she did not feel good about herself, as well as she draws upon a past uneasy feeling of being unable to take care of children (her siblings). In this excerpt, Mette states that she likes taking care of others, as opposed to her earlier accounts of wanting to get away from the demands of having to take care of her siblings, and here she seems to believe that she is able to do it. Her

strong emphasis on what she is capable of suggests that she identifies with being a professional, something, which she earlier in her account let the family on Zealand be the carrier of.

The fact that Mette shifts between identifying with and distancing herself from her own perception of her past experiences shows that Mettes self-awareness as a pedagogue student is very much linked to her perception of how her past experiences with school and her family influences her present situation. She is highly aware of the demands of the education and her future as a professional, when she tells her story about 'how she ended up at the Pedagogues College', she clearly wants to tell the story of how she has overcome past experiences and has turned her situation around. In this way her 'traumatic' past experiences are presented as a potential as well as an obstacle.

But as I have indicated, there also seems to be small 'remains' of Mettes insecurity in her narrative. This is also very much linked to her perception of her past experiences and her future perspectives – there might be a possibility that she is not as professional as she would like us to think.

Professionalization or regression

The account of overcoming the difficult path is undoubtedly present in Mettes narrative, but the question is if this self promoted theme is being 'helped' along by the interviewer (me) with the extended theoretical background within the pedagogical field? The theme is probably 'also' a result of the immediate relation between Mette and myself, which is underlined by the presence of another story in the narrative, namely the story of Mettes professional regression.

In the following excerpt Mette talks about the future work as a pedagogue:

"...but eh, but I look forward to eh, to eh, to have a greater responsibility in the institutions, you know, the institution I come to work as a pedagogue in, eh – well, it can also be very frightening – you know, this that you face a greater responsibility, because then you can't just put this aside (Camilla: mm) things like the dialog with parents and stuff like that, that of course can be a bit (laughs) ehm difficult sometimes right, eh but, but I, I also think it's exciting to be able to participate in that now, you know to be able to, eh like before you just took care of the children, but now you get to know, you get to know a bit eh the background for, why the children might feel like they do and stuff like that (Camilla: mm) so, and that I look forward to, and then I look forward to also, to like give them something more, like professionally like, well music, I really look forward to be taught more about music, well I have used music before, eh but it hasn't been anything with instruments, it has just been singing and so on, so well (Camilla: yes) I look forward to at bit more, to be able to use a guitar and to activate a bit easier..."

Here Mette clearly states that she will, and she actually looks forward to, get more responsibility when working as a qualified pedagogue. But when she tries to elaborate on what this responsibility might imply and what her knowledge can be used for, she lacks words and regresses to saying, that she will be able to give them (the children) something 'professionally'. This indicates that Mette is not able to reflect what this 'professionality' means in terms of the pedagogic professional discourse and practice. She tries to make a distinction between what she used to do as a pedagogues assistant ('just taking care of the children') and what she expects in the future, but she ends up saying that she looks forward to being able to 'activate'

the children in a more qualified way – with music – which really means, doing the same, but with instruments!

The story of regression is closely linked to Mettes missionary Christian background. This background is something she mentions very early in her narrative, right after she has told about her mother's illness during her childhood, which indicates that there is a close connection between the missionary Christian background and the family situation. This environment and the family as a part of it seems to be enclosed, which Mette both fights and uses at the same time. Quite often through the narrative, Mette returns to the safety of the Christian environment after she has 'gone out' to try something new, she returns to 'heal her wounds' after she has been hurt by 'the outside world'.

One example is when she has tried making a leap away from the pressure at home and gone to Copenhagen, where she tries to establish a network within a Christian environment there, but fails and becomes lonely, then she returns to Jutland and decides to go to a Christian folk high school. Another time is when Mette fails the practice period during the PGU and goes down with a depression (see page 7). She quite clearly does not meet the demands of the work (regardless the reason) and she returns to live with her parent to recover, even after she has stated quite clearly that the demands and the pressure made by her mother are insurmountable. Apparently the demands of 'the outside world' are worse!

In the examples mentioned here there seems to be a resistance from Mette of being professionalized as well as a process of professionalization. She repeatedly tries to make a move away from the family oriented child care and towards a the more general qualification of care work. But at the same time she resists moving too far away from what she knows and from the closed Christian environment. In the following excerpt, Mette talks about the upcoming practice period:

"(Camilla: And then you are going to start your practice period) Yes I am - - I have chosen a kindergarten, which I'm a bit anxious about, eh – I did feel a bit like, in my last practice period I was in a SFO³, which I had never tried before, but I thought it was very exciting, eh and my counsellor actually recommended me that I tried, eh in my practice period this time, ehm that I tried a club⁴ ehm (Camilla: okay) but to me that seemed a bit like too big a step for me [the tape is turned] ...it demands a bit more something specific from you, ehm and eh and then you might also have to eh, eh, well yes, live up to their demands, there are bigger demands with big children like them (Camilla: mm) ehm – so I didn't really have the guts to leap into that, so eh I chose a kindergarten, and I'm very anxious about whether I'm going to be challenged enough..."

Earlier Mette has said:

"...but other than that eh, am I part of, I am also still a Christian and ehm, and still use the background I grew up with, ehm so I come, I often come in eh, eh Christian associations (Camilla: mm) eh, where I come in Midtown – eh where I also now participate in a drama group in there, ehm and I am probably also going to be, or (laughs) now that I'm going to start my practice period then I'm going to be teen club leader in there right (Camilla: so) so, that is going to be exciting (laughs)..."

³ A place for early grade school children where they go after school stops till the parents collect them.

⁴ A place for older school children to go after school

In these two excerpts it becomes clear that Mette on the one hand is ready to face the responsibility of working with older children (teens) within the frame of the Christian association. On the other hand she very clearly resists this task as part of her formal professional development, even if it is actually suggested by her counsellor. Though it might appear to be a regressional action by Mette, there also seems to be a potential in her action. The regression to the more familiar environment for her professional development also suggests that Mette is going through a process of professionalization, but the process is on her terms, where she uses the safe environment as a platform to make another 'move'.

A similar point is present in the living arrangement Mette has chosen while she is a student. The house she lives in is a home for mentally retarded young people and part of the agreement on her low rent is that she works somewhat in the house. This home has its' roots in the missionary Christian association and so it works as a safe base for Mette while engaging in professional development. But the house and her working experience here also seem to have a more direct impact on her professionalization process. In the excerpt on page 9 (middle), where Mette talks about how she feels about her education to become a pedagogue, her choice of words makes it clear that she feels that she is able to do things – a choice of words that seem unlike her. In the excerpt she makes clear that she is able to be around the inmates of the house she lives in and that she feels that she is good influence on them. So it seems that Mette is more comfortable with putting into words her 'professional' abilities within the frames of the safe, Christian environment, than she is when it comes to the more formal professional development. Whether this is an expression of professional regression or professionalization in another mode, or if it's both, is a question, which remains unanswered.

Conclusion

I have shown how narratives about the educational choice reflect a process of professionalization for pedagogue students, in the sense that the narrative inheres a subjective account of the individual's orientation between the past, the present and the future. The analysis of the narrative draws attention to the fact that a narrative of a biographical process, such as the process of the educational choice, brings into play the tension between the subjective acquisition of the past events and the present situation. This gives an inside to the complexity of making choices and the process of biographical actions, but by adding an attention towards the subjective acquisition of the future demands of the professional work, the narrative also gives an insight into the potential for change or a potential subjective process of professionalization.

The case presented here shows that Mette is constantly drawing on her family background, the missionary Christian environment, her school experiences, people who have been significant for her biographical actions, her present life situation as a pedagogue student and her perception of the future work life as a pedagogue – the past, the present and the future – when telling her story about 'how it has come about that she is now a student a Pedagogues College'. The process of professionalization seems to be a contradictory process of trying to make out and mediate the frame of orientation for what it takes to become a 'good' pedagogue.

Literature

Bereswill, Mechthild (2004): *From Outside To Inside And Back Again? Integration as a biographical and psycho-social process*, Paper forthcoming in: Journal of Social Work Practise, Hanover

Berger, Peter L & Thomas Luckmann (1992): *Den samfundsskabte virkelighed – En videnssociologisk afhandling*, Lindhardt og Ringhof

Hjort, Katrin (2001): *Modernisering af den offentlige sektor*, Roskilde Universitetsforlag, Roskilde

Mead, George Herbert (1967): *Mind, Self and Society – From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, Morris, Charles W. (red.), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago

Morgenroth, Christine (2002): *Method(ological) Considerations – On the necessity to link different discourses in qualitative social research with a psychoanalytic hermeneutic*, Presented at the Graduate School in Lifelong Learning 2002. Translated by Kirsten Weber.

Negt, Oskar (1981): *Sociologisk fantasi og eksemplarisk indlæring*, Kurasje

O'Connor, Brian (2000): *The Adorno Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford

Salling Olesen, Henning (2002): *Det problematiske subject*, I: Weber, Kirsten (red.), Læring på livstid?, Roskilde Universitetsforlag, Roskilde

Salling Olesen, Henning (2004a): *Har professioner en fremtid og kan de professionelle skabe den?*, I: Hjort, Katrin (red.), De Professionelle, Roskilde Universitetsforlag, Roskilde

Salling Olesen, Henning (2004b): *Regeneration Professional Identity? Knowledge, Work and Gender*, Presented at ESREA Life History and Biography Network Conference at Roskilde University 2004

Schütze, Fritz (1983): *Biographieforschung und narratives Interview*, i Neue Praxis, nr.1, Jahrgang 13

Schütze, Fritz (1984): *Kognitive Figuren der autobiographischen Stegreiferzählung*, i Kohli, Martin mfl. (eds) Biographie und soziale Wirklichkeit, neue Beiträge und Forschungsperspektiven, J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart

Weber, Kirsten (1995): *Ambivalens og erfaring – mod et kønsdifferentieret læringsbegreb*, Phd.- afhandling, Erhvervs- og voksenuddannelsesgruppen, Roskilde Universitetscenter