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Conference

Scientific Knowledge and the Systems of Professions

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Abstract

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Social Integration as a Professional Field, the Case of Psychotherapy

In this paper we will discuss some theoretical concepts and how these could serve as theoretical tools for understanding the emergence and professionalization of occupational groups within the field of social integration, with special focus on our case, psychotherapy. The study is part of the research project “Agent of knowledge” (The Swedish Research Council 2010). The field of social integration involves professionals as the clergy, psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. The study addresses the objectives of these groups and how they are related to integrative tasks and functions. Psychotherapy is employed as a particular case study used for analysing boundaries and co-operation among these professions.

The presentation is divided into two parts. The first part is theoretical, where we discuss the concepts of social differentiation, social integration and normalization. The second part is empirical, involving analysis of the rise of psychoanalysis/psychotherapy and the emergence of professional groups in a Swedish context. The analysis is underpinned by mainly historical studies, (secondary data), departing in the late 1800's to the 2000's. Four core periods are identified. These are: 1) *The pioneer period* 1800-1920; 2) *aspiration for recognition* 1930–1960; 3) *conflict and consolidation* 1960–1980 and 4) *the individual and the diminishing welfare state*, 1980-2000. These periods correspond to 1) establishing a field 2) qualitative take-off, 3) quantitative take-off and 4) subordination to external governance. The first period is characterised by social differentiation, moving towards social integration in the next periods, or in other words, from external social control to internal psychic control.

