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## **Identity Assemblages**

*An ANT-based Analysis of Educational Practices and Modes of Ordering in a University College*

Horn, Line Helverskov

*DOI (link to publication from Publisher):*  
[10.5278/vbn.phd.hum.00070](https://doi.org/10.5278/vbn.phd.hum.00070)

*Publication date:*  
2017

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Horn, L. H. (2017). *Identity Assemblages: An ANT-based Analysis of Educational Practices and Modes of Ordering in a University College*. Aalborg Universitetsforlag. Ph.d.-serien for Det Humanistiske Fakultet, Aalborg Universitet <https://doi.org/10.5278/vbn.phd.hum.00070>

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# **IDENTITY ASSEMBLAGES**

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AND MODES OF ORDERING IN A UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**BY  
LINE HELVERSKOV HORN**

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2017**



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DENMARK

Dissertation submitted 2017



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PhD Series: Faculty of Humanities, Aalborg University

ISSN: 2246-123X  
ISBN: 978-87-7112-958-8

Published by:  
Aalborg University Press  
Skjernvej 4A, 2nd floor  
DK—9220 Aalborg Ø  
Phone: +45 99407140  
aauf@forlag.aau.dk  
forlag.aau.dk

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Printed in Denmark by Rosendahls, 2017







# PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is a story of identity. However, more than being a presentation of my work as I ventured into the field of educational research, it is also the story of my journey, professionally and personally. The story spans more than the last three and a half years pulling threads into the past and delineating new paths for the future. Thus, many people and circumstances are enrolled in my own personal identity assemblage. I would like to use this space to acknowledge these. The list is long, and I am solely to blame for anyone that I might have forgotten.

First and foremost, I owe a huge thanks to the students, staff, and management at the Service, Hospitality, and Tourism Management programme at UCN for letting me be part of your daily lives for a moment. I have always felt welcome, and I consider it an immense privilege that you have shared your thoughts and ideas with me. Without you, this would not have been possible.

My PhD project was initially part of the project DUIT, a research collaboration between UCN and Aalborg University. I am therefore grateful to both organisations for giving me the opportunity in the first place. Today, my project is part of the research programme *Educational Research and Professional Development* (Professionsudvikling og Uddannelsesforskning) at UCN, and I would like to extend my thanks to Associate Professors Preben Olund Kirkegaard and Susanne Dau for always considering me as part of the programme and including me, although my project might theoretically fall a bit outside of the current scope of the programme. My DUIT partners Torben Broe Knudsen, Maria Boel Klok Gudiksen, and Louise Landbo Larsen have, besides being talented research associates, made the journey a lot more fun and a lot less lonely.

At Aalborg University, I thank my supervisor Professor Elsebeth K. Sorensen for this opportunity for personal and professional growth and my co-supervisor Associate Professor Anja O. Thomassen for always keeping her cool. Assistant Professor Khalid Md. Saifuddin provided continuous advice and many interesting conversations, and PhD coach Mirjam Godskesen has been a source of encouragement and clever questions that enabled me to complete the process. I am also indebted to other staff, academic and administrative alike, at the Department of Learning and Philosophy for help in various forms.

At UCN, I am grateful to Ingelise Krarup Andersen, my former programme director, for letting me do it, although neither of us really knew what we had started; to my former programme director Rie Nielsen for the positive spirit in which she took over me and my project upon Ingelise's retirement; and naturally my current programme director Jørgen Sjøgaard Jakobsen. I also owe a big thanks to all my colleagues at UCN who have not forgotten about me although I admittedly have been a very rare guest on campus.

On three occasions during my PhD programme, I visited the beautiful city of Lancaster and the beautiful campus of Lancaster University. Several people were instrumental in making this happen, including Thomas Ryberg, professor with special responsibilities at Aalborg University, who generously shared his network with me, and Professor Adrian MacKenzie at Lancaster University. Mainly, my thanks go to Professor Theodore Vurdubakis at Lancaster University for our many meetings and discussions, for stretching my brain and helping me see what was there.

During the last three and a half years, I have become part of a community of PhD students through courses, networks, and informal occasions. I have met so many talented people to whom I am grateful for granting me an insight into their work and for being a forum in which we could share our frustrations. Specifically, I am grateful to Thomas Kjærgaard for his company on the journey and for invaluable feedback on this dissertation.

Doing a PhD is more than a job. It is a time-consuming, mind-bending, and core-shaking experience. In the process, I have been forced out on a ledge, sometimes unable to figure out what the purpose of it all is or who I really am. Luckily, I was never alone but have relied on the broad shoulders of friends and family for practical help, great patience, and emotional support. The most important people in my life are of course my children Gustav and Ida. Being their mother is the best and most important thing I have ever done, and in that perspective, this dissertation will be no more than a short intermezzo in my life journey. Without the support and love of my best friend, my life partner, and my husband Kristian, I could not have completed this. Life has thrown many challenges in our direction, but we grow stronger still. To you, I dedicate this dissertation.

Line Helverskov Horn, April 2017

# ABSTRACT

Research in identity in general and professional identity specifically has seen an immense increase in recent years (Bauman 2004, Lawler 2014). Due to societal and technological developments, notions of what constitutes ‘the professional’ are subject to change. Thus, this dissertation rests on an understanding of professional identity as a moving concept that must be understood through its spatial and temporal contexts (Scanlon 2011). Accepting this position necessitates a reconsideration of the role that formal education plays in the development of professional identity of students.

Researchers within the paradigm of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning have explored professional identity as a potential outcome of pedagogical efforts and designs. This perspective rests on the underlying assumption that the careful application of Information and Communication Technologies for facilitating student learning and peer interaction within educational contexts can potentially close a gap between a perceived lower level of professional identity and a desired one. A literature review suggests that ICTs might also play a different role with regard to professional identity, that is, as an active participant in what constitutes professional identity.

The dissertation introduces Bruno Latour’s ideas of sociology of associations as a possible framework within which to investigate a relational approach to identity (Latour 2005). Thereby, Actor-network theory (ANT) provides both the philosophical, methodical, and theoretical foundation of the dissertation. Philosophically, the research rests on the central ANT concepts of symmetry, associations, and enactment with an inherent value of multiplicity. The philosophical position implies that the study of identity must be understood as the study of practices. This, in turn, defines the chosen method as ‘praxiography with the application of ethnographic techniques’.

The study aims at exploring how identity is enacted within the context of a two-year programme in Service, Hospitality, and Tourism Management (SHTM). This research thus investigates how students and educators go about their daily lives in different educational contexts both on and off campus. It describes classroom practices and follows the students as they venture into internship positions. Based on a series of qualitative data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis of blog posts, the study attempts to reconstruct SHTM practices on and off campus. Hereby, the

analysis unfolds the relational understanding of identity by introducing the concept of 'identity assemblages', that is, complex actor-networks of the human/non-human and material/immaterial. Furthermore, the analysis describes how the enactment of identities is made possible or hindered by organisational patterns, that is, modes of ordering (Law 1994). This is, in essence, an argument for identities as organisational effects.

The study's main contributions may be structured in three categories. First, it explores the applicability of ANT to identity studies and thereby serves as a contribution to the body of literature of ANT-based studies. Second, it contributes to existing identity theories by exemplifying a socio-material approach to identity issues. Third, the study enables reflections upon how educational institutions as fundamentally identity-producing organisations acknowledge and bridge the gap between theory and practice, student and practitioner.

# DANSK RESUME

I de seneste år har der været en øget forskningsmæssig interesse i identitet i almindelighed og faglig identitet specifikt (Bauman 2004, Lawler 2014). Identitetsbegreber og forestillingerne om det 'professionelle' og hvad der definerer faglighed er i bevægelse på grund af den samfundsmæssige og teknologiske udvikling. Således hviler denne afhandling på en forståelse af faglig identitet som et begreb i bevægelse, der nødvendigvis må forstås i kraft af sin kontekst (Scanlon 2011). Dette udgangspunkt berettiger og nødvendiggør en genovervejelse af den rolle, som formel uddannelse spiller i udviklingen af den studerendes faglige identitet.

Forskere inden for paradigmet Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning har forsket i faglig identitet som et potentielt udkomme af en pædagogisk indsats. Dette perspektiv hviler på den underliggende antagelse, at man – gennem en omhyggelig anvendelse af Informations- og Kommunikations-Teknologi (IKT) til at understøtte og facilitere læring og interaktion – potentielt kan lukke et hul mellem et opfattet lavt niveau af faglig identitet og et højere, ønsket niveau. Et review af litteraturen indikerer dog, at IKT også kan spille en anden rolle i relation til faglig identitet, nemlig som aktivt definerende for begrebet.

Afhandlingen introducerer Bruno Latours ideer om *sociology of associations* som ramme for en relationel tilgang til identitet (Latour 2005). Således positioneres Aktør-Netværks Teori (ANT) som både det filosofiske, metodiske og teoretiske fundament for afhandlingen. Afhandlingen støttes af de centrale ANT begreber om symmetri, associationer og enactment med en iboende forståelse af multiplicitet. Denne filosofiske position indebærer, at studiet af identitet forstås som studiet af praksisser. Dermed defineres den valgte metode som en praksiografisk metode med anvendelse af etnografiske teknikker.

Undersøgelsen har til formål at undersøge, hvordan identitet udspilles inden for rammerne af den 2-årige akademiuddannelse til serviceøkonom (SØK). Studiet fokuserer således på studerendes og underviseres daglige praksis i forskellige uddannelsesmæssige sammenhænge både on- og off-campus. Den beskriver praksis i klasseværelset og følger de studerende, når de begiver sig ud på praktikophold. Baseret på en række kvalitative dataindsamlingsmetoder, såsom interviews, observationer og tekstanalyse af blogindlæg, forsøger

afhandlingen at rekonstruere SØK praksis både on- og off-campus. Herved udfolder analysen den relationelle forståelse af identitet ved at introducere begrebet 'identity assemblages', dvs. komplekse aktør-netværk bestående af både menneskelige/ikke-menneskelige og materielle/immaterielle aktører. Desuden beskriver analysen, hvordan disse identity assemblages muliggøres eller hindres af organisatoriske mønstre, dvs. Modes of Ordering (Law 1994). Dette er grundlæggende et argument for identiteter som organisatoriske effekter.

Afhandlingens vigtigste bidrag kan struktureres i tre underdelinger. For det første sætter afhandlingen fokus på anvendeligheden af ANT som grundlag for studier af identitet og bidrager hermed til eksisterende ANT litteratur. For det andet bidrager afhandlingen til feltet af identitetsteorier ved demonstrere en socio-materiel forståelse af identitet. For det tredje understøtter afhandlingen refleksioner over hvordan uddannelse som grundlæggende identitets-producerende institution anerkender og bygger bro mellem teori og praksis, mellem studerende og udøvende praktiker.







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Part One: Introduction and Field</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>Vignette</i>	21
<i>Chapter 1. Movements in Identity and Professionalism</i>	23
1.1. Introduction	23
1.2. Preliminary Considerations on Identity	25
1.3. From Professional to Competency Nomad	27
1.4. Reconsidering the Role of Education	30
<i>Chapter 2. Closing the Gap with ICT?</i>	33
2.1. Introduction	33
2.2. Method for Literature Review	34
2.3. Synthesis of Review	35
2.3.1. Access and Production	35
2.3.2. Reflection and Learning Processes	36
2.3.3. Community Building	36
2.4. Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning	37
2.5. ICT as an active participant	39
2.6. Implications of the Review	41
<i>Chapter 3. Research Question and Context</i>	43
3.1. Introduction	43
3.2. Professional Identity is the Question, not the Answer	43
3.3. Research Question	46
3.4. The Context	47
3.4.1. Service, Hospitality, and Tourism Management at UCN	48
3.4.2. Academy Professions and the Danish Educational System	49
3.5. Contribution	50
3.6. Structure and Overview of the Dissertation	51
<b>Part Two: Approaches to Research</b>	<b>55</b>
<i>Chapter 4. A Philosophical Foundation</i>	57
4.1. Introduction	57
4.2. The Difficulty of Paradigmatic Categorisation	58
4.3. My Philosophical Position	61
4.3.1. Symmetry	62
4.3.2. Associations	65
4.3.3. The Enactment of Multiple Realities	68
4.4. The Implications of the ANT Philosophy	72
<i>Chapter 5. The Practice of Praxiography</i>	77
5.1. Introduction	77
5.2. The Role of Theory	78

5.3. My Role as a Researcher	79
5.4. The Research Design	81
5.4.1. An Argument for Multisitedness	81
5.4.2. Choosing the Sites to Study	83
5.4.3. My Fieldwork at SHTM	84
5.4.4. Leaving the Field	87
5.4.5. Research Techniques	87
5.5. Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research	98
5.5.1. Credibility	99
5.5.2. Transferability	102
5.5.3. Dependability	103
5.5.4. Confirmability	103
5.6. Ethical Considerations	104
5.7. Analytical Strategies	106
5.7.1. Looking for patterns	108
5.7.2. Writing Praxiography	109
5.8. Returning to the Research Question	111
<b>Part Three: Closures</b>	<b>113</b>
<i>Chapter 6. Identity Assemblages of SHTM</i>	<i>115</i>
6.1. Introduction	115
6.2. Approaching an Understanding of Identity Assemblages	115
6.3. Not a Common Receptionist	118
6.4. Shtmx09YY	124
6.5. The On-Campus Student	128
6.6. The Hospitality Professional	132
6.7. Past, Present, Future Identities	139
6.8. Analytical Summary	146
<i>Chapter 7. SHTM and Modes of Ordering</i>	<i>149</i>
7.1. Introduction	149
7.2. Modes of Ordering	149
7.2.1. Administration	151
7.2.2. Curriculum	154
7.2.3. Specialisation	158
7.2.4. Enterprise	162
7.3. Analytical Summary	166
<i>Chapter 8. Conflicts in Identity and Modes of Ordering</i>	<i>169</i>
8.1. Introduction	169
8.2. Multiple Modes of Ordering	169
8.3. Identity Conflicts	171
8.3.1. Failing to Establish Anti-groups	171
8.3.2. When Technology Fails	174

8.3.3. Establishing an Unexpected Anti-group	176
8.3.4. Worker Or Learner?	179
8.4. Analytical Summary	181
<i>Chapter 9. Perspectives on ANT, Identity, and Education</i>	<i>183</i>
9.1. Introduction	183
9.2. Methodological Contributions	183
9.3. Theoretical Contributions	184
9.4. Practical Contributions	186
<i>Chapter 10. Conclusion</i>	<i>193</i>
10.1. Introduction	193
10.2. Addressing the Research Question	194
10.2.1. How is identity enacted in SHTM education?	194
10.2.2. How do organisational practices enable identity enactment?	195
10.2.3. What issues may lead to conflicts in identity enactment?	196
10.1. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research	196
<b>References</b>	<b>199</b>



# TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Publications on Professional Identity from 2006-2015	24
Figure 2. Search words in a boolean query	35
Figure 3. Higher Education in Denmark	49
Figure 4. Overview of observations	91
Figure 5. Overview of formal interviews	93
Figure 6. Overview of blogposts, comments, and replies	97
Figure 7. Four Aspects of Trustworthiness	99
Figure 8. An example of a theory box	110
Figure 9. The reception at the inn. Photo from Bettina's blog.	118
Figure 10. The Identity Assemblage of 'Not a Common Receptionist'	124
Figure 11. The Classroom	125
Figure 12. The Identity Assemblage of shtmx09YY	128
Figure 13. The Identity Assemblage of the On-campus Student	132
Figure 14. The Identity Assemblage of the Hospitality Professional	139
Figure 15. The Identity Assemblage of Bettina's Past, Present and Future	145
Figure 16. The Identity Assemblage of Nellie's Past, Present and Future	146
Figure 17 An Excerpt of SHTMX09YY's Schedule	152
Figure 18. The structure of the regulations	155

IDENTITY ASSEMBLAGES

# **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION AND FIELD**





## VIGNETTE

*'But why do we need to know this?'* the student asked and seemed genuinely frustrated by his question. I had noticed him during the previous two hours of my carefully planned lesson. At this point, I urged the students to work with their problem-based projects under my supervision. Before that, I had attempted various pedagogical tricks including examples, discussions, cases from the industry, group work, and presentations. I believed I had done all that was within my reach to make the topic both relevant and applicable. During those two hours, the student had participated willingly, but as the hours progressed he showed signs of increasing scepticism. Others of his classmates had given up earlier and withdrawn from the class activities. It was clear that they were now either reading the text for the next class, catching up on some overdue project work or, more likely, cruising social media. *'Well, first of all'*, I answered, *'the topic of today is an important step in fulfilling the learning objective, that I presented at the start of the lesson. The learning objective is derived from the curriculum, which has been developed by educators on a national level, the industry, and the Ministry of Education'*. I didn't know if this would resonate with him, but he quickly responded. *'So, what you're saying is that I need to know this in order to pass my exams?'* I nodded in confirmation. *'Yes, and second of all, it is important that you have knowledge and competencies in these matters once you graduate and take on a real job'*. *'But,'* he insisted, and I noticed how several of his classmates for now had abandoned their preoccupation with other matters and followed our exchange with interest—and perhaps also a tiny amount of hope that I would be able to clear up a mystery that had pursued them for a while. *'But how can you say that? Doesn't that depend on the type of job? And what kinds of jobs are we actually suited for? We're constantly told that this programme opens up to a multitude of possibilities. That we can actively shape our career according to our interests. But...I don't know...I don't think I have figured it out just yet. And I don't know how to figure it out when, according to you'*—he made a hand gesture to indicate that the 'you' extended to include the establishment, the joint lecturer staff, the programme, and not me in person—*'according to you, I can do and become almost anything I want. Then how do I choose?'*



# CHAPTER 1. MOVEMENTS IN IDENTITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The story in the vignette of a student-lecturer exchange of words is taken from my experience as a lecturer. It does not refer to any specific student on any specific day in any specific class. The student could be male or female. In many ways, the student in this story is any student and at the same time no student at all. The story is a condensation and illustration of the frustrations of students I encountered—if not daily, then monthly in the years I taught at the multimedia and design programme at the University College of Northern Denmark. It was clear to me that the students struggled with issues of identity and making sense of their future professional selves. This experience was a primary motivation for me during my PhD process. Why was this, I wondered, and what was there to do about it?

In some ways, the notion of professional identity addresses the matter of belonging to or feeling like a part of a group, but, keeping in mind my experiences as condensed in the vignette, it seemed that—to my students at least—the boundaries of that specific group were blurred and undefined. The frustrations that this created set me on a quest to explore the concept of professional identity that seemed to permeate strong student and lecturer discourses. The condensed outcome of this quest is the present dissertation in general and this chapter specifically. In a postmodern perspective, the subject of identity in general has increasingly become a matter of scholarly exploration since the late 20th century. Lawler, referring to Bauman, argues that it is not because identities have become unstable in the post-modern world. Rather, social changes such as the collapse of nation-states, changes in traditional family patterns, and globalisation have made the instability of identities more obvious and visible (Lawler 2014, Bauman 2004).

Similarly, professional identity has increasingly appeared in scholarly publications for some decades. A structured, conventional subject search following the guidelines described by Zins (2000) reveals a steady increase in the number of publications within sociological and educational research. The table below shows the search yield on a query search for peer-reviewed publications with the phrase ‘professional identity’ in the abstract. The search is delimited for each of the consecutive years from 2006-2015. Databases used are ERIC, Sociological Abstracts, Sage, and Scopus. The number of publications on professional identity has nearly tripled over 10 years, indicating an increasing academic interest in the topic. When removing

duplicates (29 in total), the search yield rises from a total of 127 in 2006 to 379 in 2015.

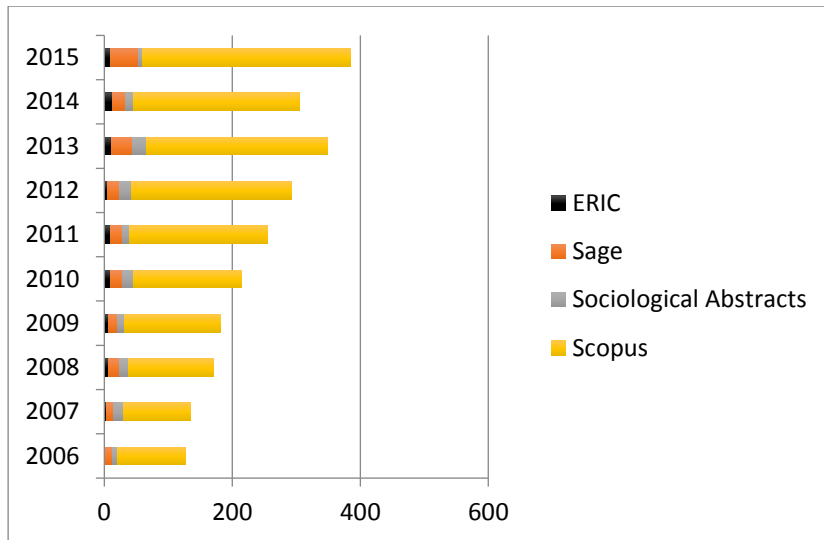


Figure 1. Publications on Professional Identity from 2006-2015

Thus, it seems there is a great academic interest in professional identity. However, one single, clear definition of professional identity cannot be derived from the literature. In an attempt to define the concept, Trede, Macklin and Bridges (2012) review 20 scholarly articles in which only one (Paterson et al. 2002) prescribed a definition of professional identity as *'the sense of being a professional'* along with elements such as *'the use of professional judgment and reasoning...critical self-evaluation and SDL [self-directed learning]'*, *'a self-image which permits feelings of personal adequacy and satisfaction in the performance of the expected role'* and *'the attitudes, beliefs and standards which support the practitioner role'*. The remaining papers in the review offer only a *'very loose description of the professional identity development concept. All point to the notion that professional identity is a way of being and a lens to evaluate, learn and make sense of practice'* (Trede, Macklin & Bridges 2012, p. 374). I will return to the notions of both 'identity' and 'professional' in sections 1.2 and 1.3.

This chapter positions the notion of professional identity as a fundamental pillar and purpose of educational practice and as a key area in educational research. At the same time, it points to difficulties regarding the definition of this same notion, in part due to societal changes. Along with Chapter 1 and

Chapter 3, this chapter constitutes Part One of the dissertation in which the foundation for further exploration is laid.

## 1.2. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS ON IDENTITY

The difficulties associated with defining professional identity lie not least in its composite nature. If we focus only on ‘identity’, I have already touched upon the postmodern perspective: that identity issues (Who am I?) become increasingly visible. Furthermore, the concept is not easy to pin down. A common trait of scholarly accounts of identity is that they begin with a section underlining the complexity of the concept, and this dissertation is no different. The complexity arises from several paradoxes associated with the concept. Identity is often referred to as something essential, true, and unchangeable, and at the same time something that one can actively create, lose, or doubt, causing an identity crisis. Identity can be both a matter of how I subjectively feel or perceive myself at the same time as it can be described in objective terms and criteria. Identity can relate to the individual or the collective in relation to matters as different as nationality, gender, religion, profession, politics, or sexuality (Frello 2012, Lawler 2014).

Lawler states that it is not possible to provide a single, overarching definition of identity, what it is, how it is developed and how it works (Lawler 2014). In fact, according to Lawler, there are various ways of theorising about identity, each leading to different definitions, because *‘what identity means depends on how it is thought about’* (Lawler 2014, p. 7, emphasis in original). Accordingly, theorising must precede any attempt to answer the question ‘what is identity’? This also suggests a possible explanation of why Trede, Maclin, and Bridges were unable to find a single definition of professional identity in their literature review (2012).

In her book, Lawler uses the term ‘identity’ *‘in a wide-ranging and inclusive way to mean both its public manifestations—which might be called “roles” or identity categories—and the more personal, ambivalent, reflective and reflexive sense that people have of who they are’* (Lawler 2014, p. 7). In this way, identity is not reduced to a matter of categories of, for instance, race, gender, or sexuality—or in this context, professional categories such as job titles or academic titles—although these are clearly of importance to both the individual and the collective. Categories do not, however, grasp the complexity of identity issues, one reason being that we all belong to more than one category. Nor do categories describe the ways people live, how they subjectively perceive themselves, or how others perceive them. Hence, part of the difficulty of defining identity rests in the fact that the term ‘identity’ can describe different phenomena (Lawler 2014). In fact, Goffman attempted to distinguish between forms of identity, that is, the personal identity defined by

the unique characteristics of a person, the social identity as a membership of social categories, and a felt identity of whom we believe ourselves to be (Goffman 1968). Lawler, however, dismisses these distinctions because distinguishing does not grasp the interrelatedness of these different forms of identity. The distinction between the personal, social, and felt refer to different identity phenomena, but they cannot be considered as entirely unrelated (Lawler 2014). For instance, a genuinely caring personality trait might be related to that person's membership in a professional group of nurses, and both will affect the person's view of him- or herself. Thus, Lawler rejects the idea that, to proceed in the study of identity, researchers should divide the complex phenomena into other terms that signify entirely different phenomena in order to derive an analytical framework. Instead, she proposes a different way: *'Rather than looking for the one, essential definition, or splitting the concept into multiple definitions, the task is to consider the different conceptualizations in terms of their relationship'* (Lawler 2014, p. 9). Identity, then, cannot be said to exist in isolation. Some identity categories or phenomena are mutually exclusive; for example, one cannot be a man and a woman at the same time. However, 'woman' is understood and defined not as an isolated concept, but only due to its opposing position to 'man', and this logic can be expanded to include all other binaries. Even for concepts that are not defined by their opposition, *'all identities are relational in this sense: all rely on not being something else'* (Lawler 2014, p. 12).

This relational approach helps us delineate a preliminary understanding of identity. According to Lawler, the Western notion of identity has to do with the ways that a person is similar or identical to others, that is, we share common identities (Lawler 2014). Moreover, at the same time that we are similar to some, there are things that set us apart. Therefore, identity is also about the ways in which we are different from others, our uniqueness. Identity categories, such as woman, European, doctor, or black are formed on the basis of similarities and differences. These categories must not, however, be seen as 'finished products'. Instead, Lawler argues for a position in which identities are viewed as on-going processes

...rather than as a sort of sociological filing system. This is not to claim that identity categories are unimportant: far from it. Such categories will inform (though they may not determine, and they cannot sum up) people's sense of themselves, and how they view one another (Lawler 2014, p. 10).

It is the similarities and the differences that define who we are. Common, Western assumptions of identity attribute this uniqueness to something that lies inside each of us: a core, an essence that is brought on by a specific combination of genes or perhaps a soul, depending on one's point of view

(Lawler 2014). Either way, these positions rest on a belief of identity as something beyond the social, something inside the person that is in some way deeper or truer than what is on the outside. According to Lawler, positions such as these permeate our perception of identity in such a way that although most Westerners will acknowledge and accept that the social, the ‘outside’, contributes to who we are, they continually refer to this notion of a ‘true’ self on the inside (Lawler 2014). This core is taken for granted to an extent that it is rarely questioned. Therefore, and with reference to Elias, Lawler argues that in these positions identity *‘becomes a ‘black box’, unknown and unknowable, and this is true for much social scientific knowledge (including sociology) as well as for literary representations and generalized ‘lay’ assumptions’* (Lawler 2014, p. 16, Elias 1994).<sup>1</sup> Lawler questions this presence of a core that exists beyond the social world. Identity, she argues, cannot be understood as something that is integral to the person. Instead, it is produced between persons and in social relations (Lawler 2014). For now, this position is also the foundation of my work, and I will elaborate on my understanding of the ‘social’ in section 3.2 and Chapter 4, ‘A Philosophical Foundation’. In the following section, I consider the second part of the composite concept, that is, the notion of ‘professional’.

### 1.3. FROM PROFESSIONAL TO COMPETENCY NOMAD

Similar to identity being something to question in ways that previous generations did not, so is the concept of ‘being a professional’. Today, we use the term quite freely to distinguish the amateurs from those who make a living from a certain trade. A quick Google search will reveal that professionals come in many shapes and sizes. Professional florists, professional traders, professional designers, professional builders, professionals in teaching, IT, communication, finance and so on flock to offer their help and services to those who are willing to pay (Scanlon 2011). So, in everyday language ‘being professional’ and carrying out ‘a professional job’ has a normative connotation. The professional is good; the unprofessional is not.

Traditionally, however, ‘professional’ refers to the classic disciplines in the universities: law, medicine, and theology. This traditional understanding of professions and professionals is based on a functionalistic perspective as represented by the works, for example, of Talcott Parsons (1968). Parsons argued that the professions are carriers of a cultural tradition, its maintenance, and development. This traditional understanding is characterised by a functionalist perspective that defines a profession as a group of people with

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<sup>1</sup> This is what Trede, Macklin, and Bridges acknowledged in the review of academic publications in which (professional) identity is used as a ‘stop-word’, with reference to van Manen (Van Manen 1999, Trede, Macklin & Bridges 2012).



documented features such as long-term training, a theoretical foundation, a common language and ethics, as well as a monopoly on the exercise hereof within a specific area (Nygren, Fauske 2010, Staugaard 2009). From this perspective, professions and professionals find their relevance within areas that have a need for public or governmental control of quality, typically by granting authorisation to certain individuals and in so doing providing them with a privileged position in society. Being a professional in this terminology includes delimitation from other professions, sometimes leading to turf wars defending one's own professional territory, such as doctors defining and establishing themselves as different from nurses and other health professionals. Hence, this perspective holds an inherent ranking of professions where some are perceived as better than others (Staugaard 2009).

The professions have since expanded to include 'half' or 'semi-professions' as they are sometimes called: teachers, nurses, and other medium-length educational programmes aimed at sectors that are often regulated by the government and, as such, related to the development of the welfare state (Staugaard 2009). In attempting to secure a special position in society, these 'semi-professions' have undergone an increasing academisation through a series of educational reforms. Whether this is appropriate and has had the desired effect is often the subject of debate within profession research (Laursen et al. 2006, Staugaard 2009).

The understanding and definition of professionals and professions are increasingly under pressure (Staugaard 2009). On a macro-level, two significant challenges present themselves to our understanding of what it means to be a professional: multiculturalism and deprofessionalisation (Scanlon 2011). The socio-political-cultural contexts within which we situate professionalism have an immense effect on what we perceive to be included in the concept. In an increasingly globalised world, attempts are being made at exporting the professions—a typically Anglo-American concept—to other cultures, societies, and political systems. Scanlon (2011) reviews several publications on this matter. For instance, developing the profession of social work in Egypt requires an in-depth knowledge of the Islamic foundations of Egyptian society, which has the consequence that the construction of treatment must include, apart from the patient, members of the extended family as well as the community. Similarly, the perception of a nurse in Chinese culture differs immensely from the professional definition of Western culture. Traditionally in China, caring for the sick is a job for women within the family, not an outsider. Also, as engineers are increasingly working globally and not just locally, the need for knowledge of culture and languages expands what is expected of an engineer's competences (Scanlon 2011).

The process of deprofessionalisation is described as the loss of the unique qualities that once defined the classic professions (Scanlon 2011). It is manifested in different ways and can be attributed to different developments. For one, the higher levels of education and knowledge in society in general make it more difficult to maintain the claim of a privileged position. Non-professionals or other professionals provide professional services that once were unique to a specific profession. For instance, nurses performing routine medical services once attributed to the doctor, or non-lawyers preparing legal documents (Scanlon 2011). In Denmark, it is a common sight to see pedagogues perform teaching tasks. Second, the rise of New Public Management in the 1980s with its focus on output and optimisation poses a challenge to the autonomy of professions (Staugaard 2009). This has caused an increase in administrative work, surveillance, and control, which is claimed by some to reduce the professionals to industrial workers by diminishing their control over their own practice (Scanlon 2011).

Krejsler (2006, 2007) suggests supplementing profession terminology. He does this by placing the professionals on a scale that ranges from the classic professions (lawyer, doctor, etc.), over the semi-professions of the welfare state to the 'competency nomad'. Inspired by Deleuze (1995), Krejsler defines the competency nomad as '*a service-minded being that is able to move to wherever his/her services are in demand*' (Krejsler, Kryger & Ravn 2007, p. 50). These competency nomads are operating in a labour market characterised by interdisciplinarity and project work. The loyalty of the competency nomads is directed towards the task, the workplace, and the employer, rather than at a university community or a vocation. The competency nomads do not have one specific professional course of training that grants them access to their job and thus identifies them as members of a specific community. Rather, their professional identity is continuously redefined during their professional career by forming alliances with various stakeholders to solve the task at hand. Thus, it is the skills that are essential, not a specific programme. This makes the boundaries to other professionals more fluid. Thus, there are fewer quarrels about professional rights and territory than in the classic professions. The typical competency nomad is employed within IT, media, and marketing (Laursen et al. 2006). Job titles will vary: consultant or project manager, for example, titles which do not refer to a specific educational background. Krejsler uses the scale from professional to competency nomad to discuss the employment terms for teachers and nurses and to equip these professional with concepts (such as that of the competency nomad) that will allow them constantly to redefine themselves. This redefinition is paramount due to deprofessionalisation, leading to parts of their tasks being diffused to other types of professionals and new interdisciplinary contexts.

I have chosen to include Krejsler's distinction in this dissertation not to discard the traditional understandings of the professional, but to underline the changing nature of what it means to be a professional. Furthermore, the distinction between the professions and the competency nomads is of value in this dissertation, as my field of study is focused on these competency nomads and their professional identity. I will return to the context of study in section 3.4. I am aware that the use of the term 'professional' as a signifier for identity could be perceived to indicate that this dissertation elaborates on the identity of the professions. This is, as described, not the case. For lack of a better word that might indicate that the nature of this identity is related specifically to the working life of the competency nomads and not, for example, their national, gender or racial identity, 'professional' will have to suffice.

In summary, we are left with an understanding of professional identity as a composite, complex concept. It is a moving object that is *'situated in temporal and spatial contexts and as these change through the impact of globalisation and multiculturalism, so do the professionals who work in these contexts'* (Scanlon 2011, p. 6). If one had expected to be able to find a clear-cut definition to measure, this must be regarded as a mission unaccomplished.

#### **1.4. RECONSIDERING THE ROLE OF EDUCATION**

Let us return to the vignette with which I opened this dissertation. It described a recurring frustration vented by the students. I saw myself and my colleagues do our best to help and support the students in their journey to become professionals in their specific field by, for instance, introducing assignments from 'real' customers and in various ways structure our teaching activities in line with various practice-based pedagogies. I saw how UCN at an organisational level made multiple strategic and practical attempts at bridging the gap between theory and practice, between classroom and workplace. Still, the students remained frustrated. Despite our efforts to close a perceived gap between education and practice through different pedagogic approaches, were we, the lecturers, failing at the task? We were in no way blind to the fact that the students seemed to have a valid point. There was no specific end goal for our students. The kinds of careers our graduates ended up pursuing depended to a large extent on their individual interests, talents, and competences, and previous graduates showed great diversity in job titles and functionalities. And yet, true to form, we—the educators—advocated a singular curriculum that in some way was an embodiment of a professional ideal.

If, as I claim in sections 1.2 and 1.3, professional identity deals with the ways that a person is similar to some and different from others and that the social categories of the professional are disrupted, what role does formal education then play in the development of the professional identity of students? Does

considering professional identity as a moving object necessitate a reconsideration of the role of education as a preparation for a professional life? These were questions that followed me throughout my PhD programme and, in the end, shaped my research question, which I return to in Chapter 3. But first, in Chapter 1, I explore the development of professional identity from the paradigm of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL).



# CHAPTER 2. CLOSING THE GAP WITH ICT?

## 2.1. INTRODUCTION

At the time of the commencement of my PhD programme, several political and strategic efforts were initiated that focused on exploring the pedagogical potential of digital technologies<sup>2</sup> in education. In 2013, for example, a common public *Strategy for Digital Welfare* was published in a collaboration between Government, Local Government Denmark, and Danish Regions. The strategy aimed to develop the use of technology in all the major areas of welfare, including education. The strategy's focus area 5, Digital Learning and Teaching, describes how ICT should be involved as a learning tool 'to gain more comprehensive and systematic knowledge of which digital tools and learning resources have the greatest impact on children and young people's learning, the quality of education, and the institutions' resource consumption'<sup>3</sup> (Digitaliseringsstyrelsen 2014, p. 16). Similarly, ICT in education was—and still is—a key contributor to strategic development in educational institutions, including those with which I am affiliated<sup>4</sup>. ICT permeates almost every aspect of educational practice from module management in learning management systems and digital hand-in and assessment of exam papers to technologies and pedagogies such as online courses, flipped classroom, file sharing, and online collaborative modes of work, as well as the administrative workload of managing student activity, enrolment, and graduation. Keeping in mind my experiences from the classrooms, as described in the vignette, I initially wondered how these digital developments relate to professional identity. Could, for instance, a well-planned application of 'digital tools and learning resources' impact and improve 'the quality of education' regarding professional identity? Based on a quick search, it was evident that the pedagogical use of ICT in general and specifically with the purpose of identity development is a significant theme in educational research and practice. Moreover, it cannot be questioned that technological development plays a

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<sup>2</sup> For the remainder of the dissertation, I will primarily use the term ICT, as this is the term often applied in educational research. ICT is short for Information and Communication Technologies and is an umbrella term often used as an extended synonym for Information Technology (IT). ICTs include communication devices and applications, both hardware and software.

<sup>3</sup> Author's translation. Original quote: 'at få mere samlet og systematisk viden om hvilke digitale redskaber og læremidler, der har størst effekt på børn og unges læring, uddannelsernes kvalitet og institutionernes ressourceforbrug' (Digitaliseringsstyrelsen 2014, p. 16)

<sup>4</sup> University College of Northern Jutland (UCN) and Aalborg University (AAU)

vital role in shaping and developing the practices that the students encounter during their studies and upon graduation.

## 2.2. METHOD FOR LITERATURE REVIEW

To investigate the relationship between ICT and professional identity formation of students in higher education, I have continually performed literature studies throughout this PhD project. Initially, the literature studies were a starting point that informed my basic and very general knowledge of the field's theories, concepts, and empirical findings. Naturally, with the development of my knowledge as well as the progression of the project, the searches for literature became more specific in order to cater to the distinctive field of which I became a part. An initial but comprehensive review was conducted in collaboration with Assistant Professor Khalid Md. Saifuddin and has been published in the *Handbook of Research on Creative Problem-Solving Skill Development in Higher Education* (Horn, Saifuddin 2016). The following description of search and review methods, as well as analysis of search results, is based on, paraphrased, and reworked from this publication.

Before the initial literature review, a comprehensive search was done to collect the most relevant literature to review. Thus, a search strategy was designed that fit the interdisciplinary nature of the field. Systematic reviews that are at the same time comprehensive, objective, and reproducible while also performed in an interdisciplinary field require careful consideration. This includes consideration regarding subject-specific databases to supplement each other, different publication media such as books, journals, peer-reviewed and grey literature, as well as challenges with terminology and indexing in databases, which are typically less rigorously controlled within social sciences and humanities. The systematic literature review was conducted by strictly adhering to the search strategy by Zins and the PRISMA statement for systematic reviews (Zins 2000, Liberati et al. 2009). The purpose of the search phase was to identify state-of-the-art literature in the form of peer-reviewed and full-text articles (Horn, Saifuddin 2016). The search was not limited in time and was conducted in Web of Science, EBSCO HOST, Ebrary, Google Scholar, Psycinfo, and Proquest and used combinations of the following search terms:

<b>'ICT' OR 'online' OR 'technology-mediated'</b>
<b>AND</b>
<b>'professional identity'</b>
<b>AND</b>
<b>'higher education' OR 'further education' OR 'tertiary education'</b>

Figure 2. Search words in a boolean query

The initial search resulted in 87 articles. The results were screened and assessed for ultimate inclusion or exclusion using the PRISMA flow diagram. In the end, 22 articles were deemed eligible for review, including a qualitative synthesis. A schematic overview of the included articles is available in the published review. The method of analysis drew on approaches inspired by Peirce's abductive reasoning and Strauss and Corbin's Grounded Theory (Peirce 1992, Strauss, Corbin 1994, Horn, Saifuddin 2016).

### 2.3. SYNTHESIS OF REVIEW

The analysis of the reviewed papers expanded my knowledge of educational ICT and provided insight into different understandings of professional identity and the combination of these two aspects. The review revealed the technical affordances of ICT to connect users, share experiences, access and produce content, simulate practice, and scaffold learning. I will expand on these matters in the following three subsections. As the publications touch upon these categories in an interrelated way, a paper might be relevant to more than one theme simultaneously.

#### 2.3.1. ACCESS AND PRODUCTION

ICT allows students at remote locations or in employment to access learning content (Gale, Wheeler & Kelly 2007, Kelly et al. 2007, Moss, Pittaway 2013, Wheeler, Kelly & Gale 2005). Furthermore, Perry suggests how, by giving students access to multicultural experiences, ICT-supported learning activities hold perspectives that analogue activities do not, stating that *'(...) this exposure would not be possible in their local geographic area and the online learning made it possible to add these multivariate experiences to the interns' professional identity'* (Perry 2012, p. 64).



Jao et al., Kalet et al., and Price focus on ICT's affordance to produce content, such as online portfolios and learning journals that enables reflection (Jao, Oztok & Zingaro 2012, Kalet et al. 2007, Price 2013), while Jamissen and Skou focus on the production of digital stories as a learning activity (Jamissen, Skou 2010). Carrington, Kervin, and Ferry describe a simulation of professional practice intended to *'better equip pre-service teachers in the transfer of knowledge and skills acquired during their pre-service training to real life classrooms and thus contribute to their developing professional identity'* (Carrington, Kervin & Ferry 2011, p. 355).

### **2.3.2. REFLECTION AND LEARNING PROCESSES**

ICTs are used to support individual students' reflections and learning processes. This is the case, for instance, in the work by Jao et al. who describe the benefits of online learning journals for student teachers as an articulation of perceptions that are shaped by the past, providing them with an opportunity to reflect on their thoughts and ideas (Jao, Oztok & Zingaro 2012). Reflection is also central to the work by Kalet et al., stating *'reflection translates the experience of clinical practice into learning and is a crucial intellectual task in professional competency'* (Kalet et al. 2007, p. 1066). Jamissen and Skou, as mentioned above, present a similar position (Jamissen, Skou 2010). Sutherland et al. perceive individual professional identity formation through cognitive processes of *'understanding of complex practice, and ethical conduct associated with effective engagement in the complex environment of the classroom'* (Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite 2010, p. 458). Carrington et. al., Sutherland et. al., and Sutherland and Markauskaite investigate how specific design features of an online environment such as prompts, discussion points, and prespecified tags scaffolded individual and collaborative learning experiences (Carrington, Kervin & Ferry 2011, Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite 2010, Sutherland, Markauskaite 2012).

### **2.3.3. COMMUNITY BUILDING**

Many of the reviewed papers touch upon ICT's role in supporting professional identity development collectively. This is evident through an application of Wenger's concept of Communities of Practice (Wenger 1998). Represented by, for example, Balatti et al., Barnes and Harmes, Duemer et. al, Kelly et al., and Sutherland and Markauskaite, this position perceives identity development through the formation of and participation by students in communities of practice (Balatti et al. 2010, Barnes, Harmes 2009, Duemer et al. 2002, Kelly et al. 2007, Sutherland, Markauskaite 2012). In these communities, students share a negotiation of meaning to achieve a better understanding of the professional practice for which they are preparing (Horn, Saifuddin 2016). For students who are scattered across vast distances in

internships, (Boulton, Hramiak 2012, Barnes, Harmes 2009, Balatti et al. 2010), ICT enables them *'to maintain a sense of community and to support and document the continued professional identity development'* (Barnes, Harmes 2009, p. 2727).

It is often the case in these social learning contexts that experienced classmates, practitioners, or upperclassmen play a vital role in sharing stories that contribute to a shared repertoire of professional practice (Hatcher 2012), 'authentic learning experiences' (Sutherland, Markauskaite 2012), and students beginning to view themselves as members of the engineering profession (Duemer et al. 2002). ICT-facilitated collective learning activities support students' ability to link theory and practice (Thoroughman et al. 2013), individual reflections in public (Boulton, Hramiak 2012), and increasing breadth and depth to the understanding of the characteristics of a profession (Perry 2012).

## **2.4. COMPUTER-SUPPORTED COLLABORATIVE LEARNING**

During the analysis, it became evident that a socio-cultural perspective on identity was predominant for most of the publications. Fully in line with, among others, Wenger and Trede, Macklin, and Bridges (1998, 2012), many of the reviewed publications studied the on-going process of identity development and the potential of ICTs in facilitating this process. The main contribution of these papers is thus to the development of pedagogic and didactic practices and models, following the tradition of research in Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL).

CSCL was introduced by Koschmann (1996) and described as a paradigm for the use of technology in teaching situations that, unlike previous paradigms such as Computer Aided Instruction (CAI), has less focus on instruction and more on collaborative learning processes. In a broad understanding, the theoretical position of CSCL within learning theory is formed or inspired by, for example, Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Dewey and Bateson (e.g. 1968, 1980, 1990, 1972, 2012). It is a pedagogical approach aimed at supporting learning through social interaction facilitated by technological devices and/or software. It can be implemented as a purely online activity or in classroom activities and can be both synchronous and asynchronous.

The underlying assumption of research efforts based on CSCL is that there is an unexploited potential in the use of ICTs in education and, specifically about identity development, that this potential can be delivered to close a gap between a perceived lower level of professional identity and a desired one. The approach holds an inherent focus on designing learning scenarios that

facilitate student learning, peer interaction, and identity development through ICT. Thus, the research would naturally focus on situations involving students, ICT, and learning, and therefore, research in learning faces a classic challenge due to this contextual nature. The challenge presents itself as a paradox between, on the one hand, the need for concrete, practical, useful knowledge about how to design specific learning activities and, on the other hand, the quest for generalisable, scientifically valid knowledge (Sandoval, Bell 2004). There is, so to speak, a paradox between experimental control and the nature of learning. It is often argued that traditional academic research in learning never reaches or affects real learning settings and practitioners, partially because the laboratory settings in which educational research sometimes is conducted differ too much from classrooms and other learning contexts (Reimann 2011).

Due to the inherent focus on design in this approach, it could be methodically approached by design-based research (DBR)<sup>5</sup>. The characteristics and implications of DBR have been described by researchers including, among others, Sandoval & Bell (2004) who describe DBR as a method that *'simultaneously pursues the goals of developing effective learning environments and using such environments as natural laboratories to study learning and teaching'* (p. 200); Collins, et. al. (2004) who describe the methodical approach of design-based research in the ideal situation, consisting of a comprehensive set of guidelines; and The Design-Based Research Collective (2003) that describes how the development of theories of learning and the design of learning models are integrated, and that research is conducted in a continuous cycle of design, staging, analysis, and redesign.

On my own and alongside research partners (Gro-Nielsen et al. 2014, Horn et al. 2014, Horn 2015), I have attempted a DBR-based research process through the design of a digital habitat (Wenger, White & Smith 2009) that would support a community of practice (Wenger 1998). Professional identity is inherent in this approach, as a fundamental part of Wenger's theory. Various attempts have been made in different educational practices. Each attempt has created opportunities for collaborative learning supported by computers/ICTs and thus provided a great many experiences for such educational designs regarding platform, content, and teacher facilitation. However, this approach also implied positioning CSCL scenarios at the centre of educational practices.

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<sup>5</sup> Brown and Collins (1992, 1992) introduced the term design experimentation in an attempt to create an approach to research in learning that was both scientifically credible and applicable in learning practices. With a scientific, laboratory-based background, Brown found that classroom-based and laboratory-based experiments were mutually enriching to the explanatory power of research, creating a progression in the development of knowledge. Other terms have been applied, such as design research and development research, and the approach was further developed to the concept of Design-Based Research (DBR).

This was far from the case and the approach constituted a centring of ICTs that did not reflect practice. Despite great efforts to adapt and design for the specific practice and users, the attempts were continually perceived by participants as an extraordinary activity and never really became a central part of their practices in everyday life. This is not to say, however, that ICT-supported practices do not matter. On the contrary, ICTs are present in numerous aspects of the daily life in educational contexts. This presence, however, was not reflected in the form of my research at the time, which focused solely on the specific construction of CSCL scenarios. Others have faced a similar paradox (Hansbøl 2010).

But let's return to the vignette for a minute. In the approach described above, student frustrations would be perceived as a lack of professional identity. However, using the phrase 'lack of' indicates that there is something specific missing as if it is something that can be mended by supplying students with the right knowledge and pedagogically supporting them in the right way. More knowledge on professional ethics, topics, repertoire, more profession-related and practice-based, digital pedagogies to help the students build communities and comprehend what they apparently are missing. But what if this is not the case, what if this logic is flawed? If professional identity is a matter of being similar to and feeling enough a part of professional group X to be able to claim 'I am an X', it is in many ways fixated, frozen, black-boxed. Similarly, job descriptions call for X, and educational programmes educate X. However, as I previously determined, professional identity cannot be reduced to social categories, and thus the statement 'I am an X' seem incomplete. Professional identity is a moving and moved object situated in contexts and not a checklist where one can check off each point and thus be considered a professional. Instead, student doubts, worries, and complaints might be symptoms of them trying to keep their balance with the ground moving underneath them.

## **2.5. ICT AS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT**

A minor number of publications in the literature review provided another perspective on the relation of ICT and professional identity. While most of the publications reviewed dealt with technology used for the pedagogical purpose of developing professional identity, such as through online forums, a few touched upon how technology changes what we define as professional. This suggested a potential for future research in this area. Two papers dealt specifically with the mental health profession, that is, counsellors and therapists (Yeh et al. 2008, Perry 2012). For the mental health professional, technologies of relevance include audio recordings, one-way mirrors, and online videoconferences and support groups. These technologies change how the profession is practiced by removing restraints on counselling to be

conducted in a certain time, place or face-to-face setting (Horn, Md. 2016). It also affects professional ethics in mental health in relation to anonymity and emergency situations. However, Perry asserts that technologies warrant neither more nor less concern about ethical issues; rather merely issues of a different nature (Perry 2012).

One PhD dissertation included in the review elaborates on the professional identity of students in retail merchandising and fashion product development—or in short: Business & Fashion (Price 2013). Price's research focuses on online portfolios as an important tool to demonstrate professionalism, suggesting that knowledge of online presence and tools are key aspects of professional identity in Business & Fashion (Horn, Saifuddin 2016). Furthermore, the technologisation of the entire supply chain in Business & Fashion contributes to an impression of technology as an active participant in delineating what it means to be a professional in this context.

The final two publications in the review that deal directly with technology's contribution to the characteristics of the professional describe the teaching profession (Alvermann et al. 2011, Moss, Pittaway 2013). Alvermann's case-based study of an online content literacy course describes, as exemplified above, the move for teachers from merely subject-based instruction to online pedagogies. This is not, however, described as deprofessionalisation like Scanlon, but as an integral part of the professional identity of, in this case, science teachers (Horn, Saifuddin 2016). Moss and Pittaway's study suggest that the increasing application of e-learning challenges traditional ideas of what it means to be a teacher, by breaking with notions of physical presence, that is, teacher-in-classroom-with-students, as defining. This point is similar to that made before about mental health professionals.

It is my contention that the technological development and the intense adoption of ICT in many, if not all, professional practices are also a part of the temporal and spatial contexts within which we must understand what it means to be professional. Professional practices are permeated using technology, as described above. Scanlon (2011) suggests that online learning technologies have contributed to deprofessionalisation for teachers, especially in the case of further education. Previously, the professional identity for teachers was subject-based, but with, for example, the displacement of student-teacher contact, teachers are turning into digital pedagogues who facilitate learning. In other professional areas, technology is making a tremendous impact on both content and practice of professional work. Examples of this include the implementation of digital patient records in the health system and technologisation of anything from production processes to booking procedures in almost any kind of professional practice. Moreover, just as the general knowledge level in society make it increasingly difficult to maintain a

privileged professional knowledge domain, the dissemination of reasonably priced high quality technological equipment such as smart phones, tablets, and laptops makes it difficult to distinguish between ‘ordinary’ people in possession of technology and professionals in graphics, web design, and image, sound and movie production.

## **2.6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE REVIEW**

This review proved to be central to the way my project evolved. It showed the predominance of CSCL-based approaches to professional identity and ICT in education. I elaborated on this position in section 2.4. However, the review also revealed a minor number of publications that suggested a different perspective on the relationship between ICT, professional identity, and education. In this perspective, as described in section 2.5, ICT is an active participant in the way professional identity is shaped and, thus, of the temporal and spatial contexts within which we must understand professional identity, as mentioned in section 1.3. The distinction between these two ways of perceiving the relationship between professional identity and ICT is paramount for the way the project evolved, as I describe in Chapter 3.



# **CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH QUESTION AND CONTEXT**

## **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 1 and Chapter 1, I have argued for an understanding of identity in general and professional identity specifically as a moving object that is situated in temporal and spatial contexts that include technology. Pursuing this position changes the object of study, as I will argue in section 3.2. Furthermore, in this chapter, I briefly introduce Actor-Network Theory and Bruno Latour's sociology of associations as an approach that embraces the key points of Chapter 1 and Chapter 1. From this position, I present the research question of the dissertation. Subsequently, I introduce the context of study; the specific educational programme of Service Hospitality and Tourism Management (SHTM), as well as touch upon the intended key contributions of the dissertation. The chapter concludes with a short overview of the structure and content.

## **3.2. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IS THE QUESTION, NOT THE ANSWER**

A CSCL approach to professional identity, as presented in the previous chapter, focuses on how to support pedagogically the development of professional identity through ICT, and takes the end goal for granted. Instead, I'm arguing for a position that focuses on this taken-for-grantedness AS the question. Lawler has made a similar argument regarding identity (Lawler 2014). Rather than asking for ways to develop professional identity, the real question then is: What may professional identity be viewed to be in these temporal and spatial contexts that are described in the previous chapters?

This argument is in line with that of Bruno Latour, who distinguishes between two different approaches in sociological research. The first is the one associated with classical sociology in which the social is a specific domain that in its essence is different from but still equal to other domains in the social sciences: economics, law, politics, and so on. Each domain, including sociology, has its own set of inherent rules that scholars within that domain try to distinguish and explain. Thus, it is the work of sociologists in the classical sense to explore the social aspects, social factors, and the specific causalities



that apply in the social domain.<sup>6</sup> The second approach to studying the social is the one which Latour provocatively associates with the notion ‘There is no society!’ This approach does not accept or take for granted the fundamental assumptions of the first. In this approach, there is no overarching society to study, any social rules or forces to explore. There is no distinct domain that can be claimed to be ‘social’ and that serves as a context in which the scholars and informants are embedded. The social is not the forces that hold us together; rather, it is what is held together. Or as Latour puts it: *‘In the meaning of the adjective, social does not designate a thing among other things, like a black sheep among other white sheep, but a type of connection between things that are not themselves social’* (Latour 2005, p. 5). To distinguish the approaches, Latour refers to the former as Sociology of the Social and the latter as Sociology of Associations<sup>7</sup> to indicate how this approach to sociology focuses on the tracing of associations between heterogeneous actors.<sup>8</sup> The two approaches are deemed to be incommensurable *‘since the second position takes as the major puzzle to be solved what the first takes as its solution, namely the existence of specific social ties revealing the hidden presence of some specific social forces’* (Latour 2005, p. 5).

For the matter at hand, the difference between the two approaches can be described as the difference in viewing ICT as a tool in the hands of men that could be manipulated to bring about an increase in professional identity, or

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<sup>6</sup> Latour admits that this grouping together of many classic sociological approaches into one is unfair and refers to other ‘excellent introductions’ to these approaches. For the specific purpose as an introduction to the sociology of associations this simplification is necessary (Latour 2005).

<sup>7</sup> I will elaborate on Latour’s sociology of associations and my philosophical, theoretical position in Chapter 4.

<sup>8</sup> Latour acknowledges Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904) as an ancestor of sociology of associations. Tarde was a French sociologist/criminologist who has remained largely unknown throughout the 20th century despite his original work at the end of the 19th century. The reason that Tarde has fallen into oblivion is commonly ascribed to his rivalry with the younger Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), in a battle of worldviews in which Durkheim was the winner. Durkheim is often referred to as the founder of modern sociology with his ideas that social structures such as church, state, and family transcend the individual and thus determines the actions and attitudes of individuals. Tarde, who based his theories on studies of innovation, on the other hand regarded society as an aggregation of individuals. Thus, society is relational processes: small psychological interactions among individuals. Tarde’s ideas are elaborated in his key works *Les lois sociales (The Social Laws)* (Tarde 1898) and *Les lois de l’imitation (The Laws of Imitation)* (Tarde 1895). Bruno Latour has taken it upon himself to restore some of Tarde’s honour in the controversy with Durkheim. On several occasions he has taken on the role of Tarde in re-enactments of a Tarde/Durkheim debate that originally took place in 1903. Latour points to Tarde as an early ancestor of ANT (Latour 2002, Latour 2005). Specifically, he points to the fact that ‘Tarde introduced into social theory the two main arguments which ANT has tried, somewhat vainly, to champion: a) the nature and society divide is irrelevant for understanding the world of human interactions; b) the micro/macro distinction stifle any attempt at understanding how society is being generated’ (Latour 2002, p. 2).

viewing ICT as an active participant in the shaping of professions and professionals. Choosing the latter is a dismissal of the CSCL approach as the central object of study and necessitates a change in theoretical and philosophical perspective. Studying CSCL scenarios implies centring theories on learning and pedagogy. As described, CSCL scenarios typically rely on a constructivist learning philosophical foundation. Deselecting this approach does not imply a total disregard of constructivist learning theory, but rather necessitates the selection of a philosophical position that allows for an inclusion of it. Constructivist learning theory still plays a major role in the practice of education at all levels, both in and out of a technological context, leaving it as much too important to ignore altogether. It is of vital importance to allow for these theories and philosophies to play a role—essentially to be an actor—in the educational practices I study, without necessarily letting them influence the shape or form of my research. Hansbøl has made a similar argument in the pursuit of an approach to the study of education that would *‘simultaneously be able to include potential learning philosophical and pedagogical approaches in its assemblages’* (Hansbøl 2010, p. 27).

As indicated by the mentioning of Bruno Latour, this dissertation has a philosophical basis in STS (science and technology studies) and ANT (actor-network theory). Applying ANT philosophy<sup>9</sup> changes the nature of research in ICT and professional identity in higher education. This change cannot least be found in the abandoning of ICT in pedagogical practices as the starting point of investigation. Instead, in an ANT philosophy, ICT is perceived as an actor in the context of education, but not the central actor, as indicated above. Thus, this change of perspective implies a decentring of ICT, which might seem paradoxical to researchers within the field of educational technology (Hansbøl 2010). However, it is my contention that through studying relationships between ICTs and other actors in education, researchers might gain a more comprehensive, holistic insight into educational practices (including, but not limited to, ICTs) and simultaneously acknowledge not only the rapid technological development but also the natural ‘messiness’ of human life. ANT, and in this case more specifically post-ANT, is a philosophical and theoretical position that allows for the study of professional identity, not as a product of the pedagogic implementation of ICTs, a nearly causal relationship, but rather as an effect of a multitude of influences from various actors, human and non-human. It is something that becomes part of the practices of higher education and, at the same time, is continuously in motion through and by its relationships in this network.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In Chapter 4, I elaborate on the understanding of ANT as a philosophy.

<sup>10</sup> Chapter 4 elaborates further on STS and ANT in general and the application in this dissertation specifically.

Acknowledging ICT as an active participant in the shaping of what constitutes the professional implies a change in the object of study as well as method. It delineates an approach in which one must engage with the (digital) practices that contribute to professional identity. From studying situations with students, ICT, and learning, this second approach (as opposed to a CSCL position) not only encourages but also necessitates the study of situations without students and even without ICT, a point also made by Hansbøl (2010). Methodically, this approach suggests a research design aimed at exploration that allows for a natural curiosity as to the implications of technological development and practices, as well as the nature and characteristics of professional identity.<sup>11</sup>

The alignment with Latour's sociology of associations seems appropriate in this dissertation, as the purpose is to explore what I have argued is a changeable concept: *professional identity*. As the boundaries of professional identity change and are affected by technological innovations, the need for other approaches to research emerge. One of the benefits associated with aligning with sociology of associations in relation to the challenges previously described is that it allows me to continue my work without further definition of identity at the outset because I perceive it to be a product of associations, rather than a category or a personality trait for instance. It is a concept that I believe to be both in motion and being moved by different actors, not least the development of technology and the implementation of ICTs in higher education. Second, the approach also allows for an exploration of the relationship of ICTs to professional identity, which, in the literature review performed by Md. Saifuddin Khalid and myself (Horn, Saifuddin 2016) is proposed as an area of research. Third, by not limiting my research to the study and design of CSCL scenarios, it makes room for exploring the role of ICTs without placing them in a privileged but unrealistic position in the research design. I have touched upon this matter above and in section 2.4, that ICT is only one of a multitude of influences that shape professional identity.

### 3.3. RESEARCH QUESTION

The intention of these first chapters of the dissertation is to provide the arguments necessary to pose the research question. In summary, I have argued for professional identity as a complex and composite concept without a finite definition. It is a relational concept, that is, professional identity is produced and situated in temporal and spatial contexts that are continuously in motion. Through a literature review, I have explored the role of ICT in relation to professional identity in the context of education. An important line of research in this matter falls within the category of Computer-Supported Collaborative

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<sup>11</sup> The methodical choices of the dissertation are elaborated in Chapter 5.

Learning in which ICT is perceived as a tool that allow for, for example, access, production, reflection, and community building. However, another approach to the research theme revealed itself in the review; namely the perception of ICT as an active participant in the shaping of professional identity. In this perception, the technological development and the intense adoption of ICT in professional practices are part of the temporal and spatial context within which professional identity must be understood. Hence, through the previous pages I have argued for the relevance of exploring a relational approach to the matter of identity within the context of education, in a way that includes but is not limited to the application, implementation, and general use of ICTs. I therefore pose the following as the main research question of this dissertation:

What is the role of education in the enactment of identity?

There are three comments that currently tie themselves to this formulation. First, the question is phrased in general terms, but the answer to the question is of course founded on my empirical data, thus providing the case study of the SHTM programme at UCN as the context, see section 3.4 for description. Second, the use of the term enactment is founded on ANT vocabulary, indicating a relational, performative definition of identity. Thus, identity is defined as something that is done, rather than, say, achieved. For an elaboration on the matter of enactment, I refer to section 4.3.3, as well as of course the analysis in chapters 6, 7, and 8. Third, the attentive reader will have noticed that the research question does not speak of *professional* identity, but simply *identity*. Throughout my analysis, it became clear to me that the identities (in the multiple, a consequence of the focus on enactment, see section 4.3.3) that were enacted in education were not necessarily *professional* in nature, that is, they did not exclusively relate to professional practices. I elaborate on this in the analysis. I also return to and elaborate on the research question with sub-questions in section 5.8.

### 3.4. THE CONTEXT

The choice of context for the research is in part practically motivated, as it is naturally a matter of having or gaining access. However, it is also and, in fact, mainly motivated by the fact that the professional identity of those professionals that we might refer to as competency nomads is inadequately elucidated (Krejsler 2006). Literature reviews on professional identity (Trede, Macklin & Bridges 2012, Horn, Saifuddin 2016) show how most scholarly work on professional identity deals with professions or ‘semi-professions’ such as doctors, nurses, and teachers, in which cases the understanding of professional identity might depend on or correlate with requirements for professional authorisation. Naturally, this is not the case for the competency

nomads; such requirements do simply not exist. This, however, does not make the matter of professional identity any less urgent or relevant. Students—and professionals—still need to define and understand their professional selves in a professional life.

### **3.4.1. SERVICE, HOSPITALITY, AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT AT UCN**

The educational context that serves as the setting for my studies is the Service Hospitality, and Tourism Management Programme at the University College in Northern Jutland (UCN).<sup>12</sup> This specific programme is a two-year, 120 ECTS-credit AP-degree that qualifies graduates to *‘independently perform work assignments relating to the development, planning, implementation and delivery of services at national and international levels in businesses and organisations operating in the fields of service, holiday and business tourism as well as hotels and restaurants.’* (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet 2009). The regulatory basis is, apart from the quoted ministerial order, a national and an institutional curriculum (UCN 2016a, UCN 2016b). Former graduates have found employment in hotel- and restaurant management, tourism management, or service management (Uddannelsesguiden 2016). Graduates have access to further education in the form of PBAs (professional bachelor degrees) in International Hospitality Management, Sport Management, and Innovation and Entrepreneurship (Uddannelsesguiden 2016). From the perspective of—and with reference to—Krejsler, the SHTM graduate can be considered as a competency nomad, due to, for example, the interdisciplinary nature of the field and the lack of public authorisation (Krejsler, Kryger & Ravn 2007, Krejsler 2006).

In accordance with UCN’s official learning approach called Reflective Practice-based Learning, the STHM programme is structured around regular classroom teaching, group work, and project work. In general, UCN aims to provide ‘real-life education’<sup>13</sup> through teaching and learning activities that are practice-oriented to provide students with practical skills and support their ability to apply theory in practical solutions. Central to the programme is also

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<sup>12</sup> UCN offers ‘more than 40 programmes and career opportunities for Danish and international students who pursue careers in a professional context’(UCN 2014). The educational programmes are AP and BA level (Academy Profession and Bachelor) within areas as diverse as health, business, technology, teaching, and pedagogy, all accredited by the Danish Accreditation Institution. Furthermore, UCN offers on-going and further education from day seminars tailored for specific organisations and professionals to diplomas at the BA level. In 2016, a total of 9200 students were enrolled at UCN, and approximately 900 teaching and administrative staffs were employed(UCN 2014, UCN 2016).

<sup>13</sup> The official tagline of UCN

the three-month internship in the third semester. The internship should be considered a full-time job regarding the working hours, effort, commitment, and flexibility that a STHM graduate can expect in his or her first job. In the internship, the student is associated with one or more companies where he or she performs discipline-specific tasks. The student, the supervisors (at UCN), and the contact persons (at the internship host) will collaborate on setting the specific goals for the learning outcomes of the internship in concordance with the curriculum.'

### 3.4.2. ACADEMY PROFESSIONS AND THE DANISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Within the field of higher education in Denmark, a distinction is typically made between three groups or types of higher education: short-term with a typical duration of two years, medium-term with a typical duration of three to four and a half years and long-term education programmes that include three-year bachelor, graduate, and PhD programmes (The Danish Accreditation Institution 2014). The criteria for access are typically an upper secondary school certificate or a vocational programme. The figure below provides an overview of the Danish educational system (Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet 2016). Adult and continuing training is omitted in the figure.

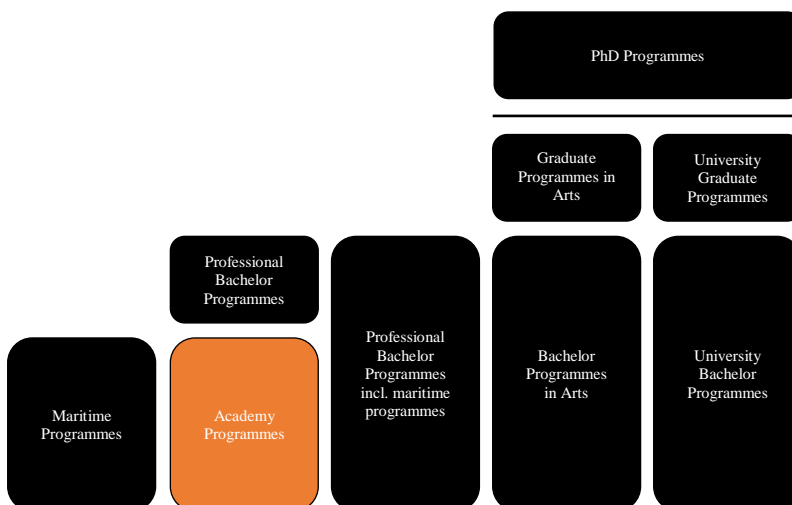


Figure 3. Higher Education in Denmark

As described above, the SHTM programme is a two-year Academy Profession Programme (marked in orange in the figure). The qualification levels for Academy Professions is described in the Qualifications Framework for Danish Higher Education (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet 2008). The qualifications framework is aligned with the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, the Bologna Framework (EHEA 2016). The regulatory basis for the Academy Programmes includes ‘Lov om erhvervsakademiuddannelser og professionsbacheloruddannelser’ (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet 2014) and the recent ‘Bekendtgørelse om tekniske og merkantile erhvervsakademiuddannelser og professionsbacheloruddannelser’ (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet 2017a). The knowledge base of the academy professions (AP) is trade- and profession-based as well as development-based, cf. §4 in ‘Bekendtgørelse om tekniske og merkantile erhvervsakademiuddannelser og professionsbacheloruddannelser’. The trade and profession basis entails a direction towards new knowledge about tendencies within the specific trade or profession. The development basis entails a foundation within research and development relevant to the core areas of the programme. Academy Profession Programmes thus aim to combine theoretical studies with a practically oriented approach in the form of mandatory work placement (internship).

The Ministry of Higher Education and Science counts approximately 27 academy profession (AP) programmes in Denmark within fields of business and economics, technology, information technology, laboratory technology, social sciences, design and health care. Most of these programmes are offered at business academies (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet 2016a). However, in the northern region of Denmark, most academy programmes are organised alongside professional bachelor programmes at University College North (UCN), thus creating a large joint organisation offering most short- and medium-term programmes in northern Jutland. This enables a structure of four main areas (i.e. faculties) of business, technology, health, and pedagogy, as well as a large centralised administration handling communication, IT, international relations, research, quality, human resources, finance, and so on. The SHTM programme at UCN is organised under the faculty of business (UCN 2017b).

### **3.5. CONTRIBUTION**

In relation to the research questions, the contribution of the dissertation is intended to be threefold. The first major contribution is to practitioners in a university college context as this dissertation allows for an exploration of professional issues that extends beyond a mere curricular or practice-based perspective. Instead, it will also consider the technological development of the industry and illuminate how this is and might be integrated into professional

education. Specifically, teaching practitioners in professional fields that might be characterised as competency nomadic might benefit from this perspective. The second contribution is to the body of knowledge on professional identity, specifically, and identity in general, by providing an understanding of professional identity as not only a functionalistic, cognitive, or social capacity, but also something that is practiced in a socio-technical context. Third, this dissertation is a contribution to the research environment of STS and (post-)ANT, as an explication of a theoretical/methodical approach to the study of identity, which is not commonly found in STS/ANT-based studies. As such, it is meant to ‘contribute to a living “vessel” of intellectual resources’ (Gad, Jensen 2010, p. 76). In Chapter 9, I return to the contributions of this dissertation, based on my analysis.

### **3.6. STRUCTURE AND OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION**

The dissertation is structured in three main parts. Each part engages in various ways with identity. The dissertation can be read as a straightforward piece of academic writing, beginning with an introduction and problematisation (Part One), over philosophical, theoretical, and methodical approaches (Part Two), and concluding with analysis, discussion, and conclusion (Part Three). However, during my research in general and this dissertation specifically, I have attempted to make my philosophical position engage with the practices I see. By doing so, I try to distance myself from a research position that is nothing more than a mere application of theory to practice, or the other way around. It is my intention that each chapter will tell a unique story of identity, and in so doing, unfold, move, enrich, and transform the concept. Below is a short explication of content and purpose of each of the chapters in the dissertation. This overview also serves as a reading guide for the dissertation, which is why I have included the chapters that come before this point.

#### **Part One: Introduction and Field**

- Chapter 1, *Movements in Identity and Professionalism*, presents the background for the dissertation and initial considerations on the concepts of identity and professionalism. It argues for an understanding of professional identity as a moving concept that must be understood through its spatial and temporal contexts.
- In Chapter 2, *Closing the Gap with ICT?* I describe my initial approach to the matter of professional identity and students’ lack thereof. The approach was characterised by a focus on ICT-based pedagogies and a theoretical foundation in Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning. Through a comprehensive literature review, I argue that the use of ICT in education aims to develop professional identity by providing a platform on which to connect users, share experiences, access and produce content, simulate practice, and



scaffold learning. However, the literature also suggested a different approach in which ICT was rather a component in what defines identity than a pedagogical tool.

- The present Chapter 3, Research Question and Context, pursues the alternative position indicated in Chapter 2 and introduces Bruno Latour's ideas of sociology of associations as a possible framework within which to investigate a relational approach to identity. The chapter concludes by phrasing the research question and the educational context of research.

## **Part Two: Approaches to Research**

- Chapter 4, A Philosophical Foundation, introduces the worldview that forms the basis on which to understand this dissertation. The chapter briefly elaborates on the historical development of STS and ANT studies and the paradigmatic characterisation of ANT, before introducing my philosophical position. This position rests on three pillars that stems from central ANT publications and outlines my research. The main pillars upon which my research relies are the concepts of *symmetry*, *associations*, and *enactment* with an inherent value of *multiplicity*.
- Chapter 5, The Practice of Praxiography, describes the methodical choices of the dissertation. The main point of this chapter is, based on my philosophical position, that the study of identity must be understood as the study of practices. This, in turn, defines the chosen method as 'praxiography with the application of ethnographic techniques'. I describe the techniques I have applied for data collection, as well as my considerations on trustworthiness and ethics. Furthermore, I describe my approach to the interaction with my empirical data and the considerations regarding the presentation of data. In the chapter, I argue that engaging with and describing practices take the form of empirical-methodological-theoretical gatherings. Thereby, theory, empirics, and methodology become intertwined in the analytical chapters. The chapter also revisits the research question that is operationalised in three sub-questions.

## **Part Three: Closures**

- Chapter 6, Identity Assemblages of SHTM, unfolds the relational understanding of identity by introducing the concept of 'identity assemblages': complex actor-networks of the human/non-human and material/immaterial. Based on my empirical data, I describe five identity assemblages of SHTM.
- In Chapter 7, SHTM and Modes of Ordering, I describe how the enactment of identities is made possible by organisational patterns, that is, modes of ordering. It is an argument for identities as

organisational effects, an argument for the contextualisation of identity enactment.

- Chapter 8, Conflicts in Identity and Modes of Ordering, describes how modes of ordering coexist in educational practice and argues that in some instances the logic of a mode of ordering may be in opposition to another, resulting in identity conflicts.
- In Chapter 9, Perspectives on ANT, Identity, and Education, I summarise the main contributions of the dissertation and reflect upon the perspectives of the work heretofore for educational practice.
- Chapter 10, Conclusion, provides a recapture and a conclusion of the dissertation with special emphasis on answering the research questions. Furthermore, I touch upon the limitations of this study, as well as provide suggestions for future research.



## **PART TWO: APPROACHES TO RESEARCH**



# CHAPTER 4. A PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

## 4.1. INTRODUCTION

Along with Chapter 5, this Chapter 4 constitutes the second part of the dissertation. The title of this second part, *Approaches to Research*, indicates how this part of the dissertation seeks to describe the aspects that were considered in the preparation, execution, and description of this research project. In the present Chapter 4, I introduce and discuss the worldview and methodology of the dissertation, which serves as an anchor for the research design. As indicated in section 3.2, I position my research in the tradition of STS (Science and Technology Studies) and more specifically within Actor-Network Theory (ANT). Positioning the research and the researcher paradigmatically and philosophically serve as a backdrop against which to assess the validity and reach of the research's conclusions (Nygaard 2013). It is the intention of Part Two to show how the philosophical assumptions of the worldview affect the methodical considerations, including the implications for data collection and analytical strategies (Chapter 5). It is my hope that upon reading this second part of the dissertation the reader will have gained an understanding of the choices I have made, as well as the reasoning behind those choices.

Gaining a full and comprehensive overview of the body of ANT literature is nearly impossible. However, I have attempted to provide a very condensed overview of ANT publications below. Next, I discuss some of the paradigmatic affiliations that are often claimed on behalf of ANT. In framing the philosophical position of this dissertation, Latour's ideas of the sociology of associations and Law and Mol's work on enactments are pinpointed as the philosophical pillars upon which my understanding of ANT rests. I then elaborate on my philosophical position as characterised by three key concepts: *symmetry*, *associations*, and *enactment* with an inherent value of *multiplicity*. Through the concepts of symmetry and associations, ANT is positioned in two of the classical debates in sociological research, those of technological determinism and agency/structure. The concept of enactment (and hence multiplicity) indicates an ethnographic—or *praxiographic*—approach to research that is carried out in multiple sites (the more specific methodical considerations of this approach are elaborated in Chapter 5). Finally, I conclude this chapter by explicating the methodical implications of the ANT philosophy, as well as returning to the notion of 'professional identity', elaborating on how ANT philosophy has changed or, perhaps, expanded the concept.

Comprehending ANT and its philosophical and methodological implications is, at best, difficult. In attempting to gain an overview of the many publications associated with ANT, one must first acknowledge that ANT cannot be perceived as an actual unified theory, but rather as a philosophy.<sup>14</sup> Authors typically associated with ANT and perceived as fundamental are Callon, Latour, and Law. Early empirical work includes the laboratory studies by Latour & Woolgar as well as Callon (1979, 1981) and, through the early 1980s, some precursors of ANT were published (Callon, Latour 1981, Callon, Law 1982, Latour 1983). The mid- and late-1980s hold Latour's landmark publication *Science in Action* (Latour 1987), and other major contributions at this time include Callon's study of the scallops of St. Brieuc Bay (1986), Law's analysis of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Portuguese trade dominance (1986), and Latour's political biography of scientist Louis Pasteur and his discovery of microbes (1988). Obviously, the subject matter of these publications is quite diverse. The term Actor Network Theory (with or without the hyphen) at this time was mentioned only sparsely. Throughout the 1990s and onwards, ANT develops into what is sometimes referred to as 'After-ANT' or 'Post-ANT' approaches through publications by, for example, Latour (1999b), Law and Hassard (1999), and Mol (2001). Recent years have brought on important publications, such as *Reassembling the Social* by Bruno Latour (2005) and *Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics* by John Law (2009), that have contributed to consolidating ANT as a philosophy.

## 4.2. THE DIFFICULTY OF PARADIGMATIC CATEGORISATION

The worldview (or the paradigm, if one prefers that term) is a component of a research approach that serves as a foundation and informs the decisions on design and methods (Creswell 2014, Denzin, Lincoln 2005). The paradigm is perceived as a field of inquiry, a way to perceive that pays attention to method as a realisation of philosophy (Brinkmann, Tanggaard 2010). Thus, the worldview also serves to distinguish one approach to research from others and, accordingly, numerous paradigms and isms today characterise the fragmented—and perhaps confusing—world of qualitative research. Attempting to categorise ANT as affiliated to a specific paradigm is equally

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<sup>14</sup> It is often debated whether ANT is a theory, a method, or a philosophy. Indeed, many advocates of Actor Network Theory are reluctant to consider it as a coherent, unified theory, and both Law and Latour question the suitability of this (2004, 1999b). Although it is named a 'theory', it is not a theory of how or why things are related in networks. Neither is it a method, in the case method is taken to signify a recipe to follow to acknowledge 'truth' or 'reality'. It is rather an understanding that allows for the exploration of practices. ANT might be classified as an empirical philosophy (Blok, Jensen 2009, Mol 2002). As indicated in the section below, I've chosen to refer to ANT as a philosophy throughout the dissertation to avoid the connotations of other terms. Later in the chapter, I touch briefly upon Latour's hesitations towards the term theory.

confusing. On the one hand, ANT can be described as a form of constructivism in which all things, all actors, are constructed or performed in their associations with other actors. On the other hand, it can be perceived as a form of post-structuralism that rejects all a priori structures as transcending the individual actors. Turning to literature in the hopes of deriving a specific position from primary or secondary sources does not reduce the complexity. Latour himself has been classified as a social constructivist, postmodernist, and relativist, but Blok and Jensen (2009, p. 8) argue that it would be more correct to characterise the work of Latour as constructivist, amodernist and relationalist. Law, on the other hand, suggests that ANT can be understood as a form of empirical post-structuralism (Law 2009). Determining a paradigmatic position appears to be a genuine matter of philosophical name-calling. In the following, I will explore and elaborate some of these ‘names’, attempting to unravel an ANT position.

The notion of ANT being related to a constructivist philosophy can in part be attributed to the early anthropological studies of scientific work, that is, the laboratory studies of Latour and Woolgar in *Laboratory Life* (Latour, Woolgar 1979, 1986), the historical analysis in *The Pasteurization of France* (Latour 1988), and the theorisation presented in *Science in Action* (Latour 1987). The studies are based on the idea that scientific facts are not universal figures that exist independently of human discovery. Rather, they are created; scientists fabricate facts. Indeed, facts are constructed. Facts come to be through a process in which scientists, laboratories, equipment, matter, and test results coexist. This viewpoint, as presented by early STS and ANT scholars, was perceived by the scientists in the laboratories to be in direct opposition to hundreds of years of scientific endeavour to uncover the ‘true’ knowledge of the natural world and distinguish scientific progress from superstition and common sense (Blok, Jensen 2009). The studies of science were perceived as removing reality from science, as decreasing the truths obtained, and even as a negation of the effort of scientists (Latour 1999b). However, Latour claims that nothing could be further from the intention. Rather, the studies of science add credibility and reality to the processes of science. According to Latour, there is no ‘real’, objective world out there and of which true knowledge is a depiction. Thus, contrary to scientific realists, Latour takes the position that ‘truth’ or ‘realism’ is laboriously constructed. The original version of *Laboratory Life* was subtitled *The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (Latour, Woolgar 1979). Accordingly, Latour’s work has, on occasion, been referred to as a form of social constructivism. The term originates from Berger and Luckman’s *The Social Construction of Knowledge* (Berger, Luckmann 1966) and assumes that knowledge is constructed in the social interactions of humans or groups of humans. What exists are the meanings that are attributed by humans, and the role of the researcher in exploring the social is to achieve understanding through, for example, interviews and thus to interpret these



meanings. Thus, social constructivism is, on occasion, called interpretivism. However, the construction of facts as described by Latour and Woolgar is not a form of social constructivism. There is nothing specifically social to which a layer of ‘meaning’ is added (Blok, Jensen 2009). There are only processes of connections and associations between human and non-human entities. In the 1986 edition, the word *social* was removed from the title, further indicating the segregation from social constructivism.

Latour has been labelled a postmodernist due to his rejection of the modernist dichotomy of nature and culture. This position, as exemplified by Giddens (2013), effectively establishes a divide between nature and culture in the belief that nature is objective, transcendent to human beings, and that culture or society is subjective, constructed and immanent. From an ANT perspective, the laboratory studies mentioned above show how nature (in the form of facts) is the effect, not the cause of scientific practice. Thus, nature and culture have never been separate concepts of a dichotomy. They are interwoven in nature. Rather than viewing this position as a second version, a continuation of modernity—as a *postmodern* position—it should be perceived as a rejection of one of the fundamental assumptions in modernism, that is, an amodern position; thus paraphrasing the title of Latour’s philosophical magnum opus *Nous n’avons jamais été modernes* (Latour 1991), in English, We have never been modern (Latour 1993).

Understanding ANT as a form of post-structuralism relates to the work of Foucault (e.g. Foucault 1970, 1980). Post-structuralism emerges as a development of or break away from classic sociological structuralism and functionalism, like that of Durkheim, and the notion that the social structures of society transcend and affect individual agency. Rather than believing in and focusing on the stability and objectivity of social structures, post-structuralism explores the discontinuity and construction of the structures. Foucault’s writings focus on power and ordering, and his argument is that power is not just a matter of asymmetry between actors, but a matter of construction and making it possible through discourses. Thus, the focus of social studies should be on investigating how agents come to be the way they are (Foucault 1970, Law 1994). In the book *Organizing Modernity* (Law 1994), Law attempts to describe the differences between a Foucauldian and an ANT version of post-structuralism. Law claims that Foucault’s notion of discourses is ‘*ubiquitously and distributively generative—it performs itself everywhere*’ (Law 1994, p. 21). This performativity is repetitive; the discourses reproduce themselves and, according to Law, pay little attention to how discourses might interact and come to be reshaped. At this point, Law finds it necessary to part ways with Foucault, thus allowing a focus on change in relation to interaction:

Agents, decisions, machines, organizations, interactions between organizations and their environments, speech, actions, texts—I want to say that all of these change because they are recursive interordering or interdiscursive effects (Law 1994, p. 22).

What, then, can be concluded regarding a paradigmatic characterisation of ANT? Probably one cannot be described in terms of classical philosophical phrases. It seems of little interest to attempt to position ANT in well-defined boxes of philosophical traditions; certainly, it would be contrary to the original intention. ANT must be considered on its own terms. It contributes to the development of philosophy of science with its own ontology, its own philosophy, not least represented by Latour's *Reassembling the Social* (2005) with its sociology of associations and Law's *Material Semiotics* (2009). Thus, the ontology of ANT can be described as a socio-material approach that:

...describes the enactment of materially and discursively heterogeneous relations that produce and reshuffle all kinds of actors including objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, 'nature,' ideas, organizations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements(Law 2009, p. 141).

The quote embodies the philosophical position of ANT. In the following, I unfold this position through the three keywords of choice: *symmetry*, *associations*, and *enactment*.

### 4.3. MY PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION

The presentation of ANT in this chapter revolves around Latour's *sociology of associations* (2005) and Law and Mol's work on *enactments* (2009, 2002). Rather than merely present the massive catalogue of ANT publications, I have chosen to base my presentation of ANT on three concepts that can be derived from ANT literature. These three concepts characterise my philosophical position by serving as guiding values for methodical choices. It is at the same time the filter that determines the relevance of the many, many publications that are considered part of the ANT canon. Thus, this presentation is not a chronological, linear dissemination of a coherent theoretical framework. Rather, it is thematic and designed as a stepping stone towards the development of a methodical approach. This approach to a presentation of ANT simultaneously constitutes a deselection of other important concepts associated with ANT. What happened, for instance, to 'translation' or 'black box'? To understand my reasons for selection, it is important to remember that ANT cannot be perceived as a theory or as a method. It is not a fixed recipe for understanding or perceiving the world. In fact, it is not possible to describe

ANT in the singular or as an ‘it’. Rather, it might be considered as a philosophy—indeed as an empirical philosophy, a term Latour himself once used (Latour in Crease et al. 2003, p. 15). The rejection of a singular understanding of ANT simultaneously opens up for multiple understandings. Other ANT researchers might have chosen otherwise than what is demonstrated here. Through my selection of key concepts and implicit deselection of others, this dissertation finds a solid foundation in central and acknowledged ANT works, as I will argue in the following sections. But it is indeed a choice. As John Law puts it, ‘*All the world is relational, then so too are texts. They come from somewhere and tell particular stories about particular relations*’ (Law 2009, p. 142). So too does Law’s own account of ANT, and this present dissertation as well, I might humbly add without claiming any further similarity. It, that is, Law’s text as well as my own, tells a particular story of ANT. Mine is characterised by a focus on associations and enactments, and takes place in the context of higher education in the study of professional identity.

#### **4.3.1. SYMMETRY**

Actor-Network Theory is often associated with the notion of instilling agency in non-human actors and has suffered much criticism on this account. Indeed, the principle of symmetry *is* a fundamental pillar of much ANT literature, but as is the case with many other ANT concepts, one must take great care in understanding and applying ANT nomenclature. To expand on the particular concept of symmetry, I choose to return to the soil out of which ANT grew, that is, the tradition of sociology of scientific knowledge. Sociology of scientific knowledge as a discipline developed with the appearance of Kuhn’s much-celebrated publication *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1962). In this book, Kuhn distances himself from the illustrious rationality and positivism of science, making the argument that science cannot acknowledge nature as an objectivistic fact, but only from the perspective of its own rules, logics, and methodologies. Through these tools, scientists make attempts at comprehending and handling reality by puzzle solving. Thus, scientific knowledge is not simply a matter of nature, but just as much a matter of a culture shaped by social and economic interests—and this should not necessarily be perceived as problematic (Law 2004). Kuhn introduced the notion of paradigm for such a perspective as a form of culture that defines not only the puzzles but also what constitutes successful puzzle solving (Law 2004). From this basic argument, Kuhn makes the claim of incommensurability, that scientific results from different paradigms cannot be compared. While Kuhn’s explanation of these scientific cultures, these paradigms, is essentially focused on internal social conditions, the work of Barnes (1977) and Bloor (1976) introduce the notion that also external social factors may influence scientific cultures and paradigms (Law 2004).

Sociology of scientific knowledge is thus essentially the study of the social shaping of scientific culture. Kuhn's publication gave rise to scientific work in the field of theory of science throughout the 1970s, where the work of scientists in laboratories was studied to understand how scientific knowledge came to be. Early Actor-Network Theory studies were based on an endeavour to understand the practices of natural scientists, that is, the practices that form our understanding of the natural world. These studies introduce the notion that Actor-Network Theory is built on: the denial of a divide between science, technology, and the social world. A central question is the nature of the methodological approach: How do you study the social shaping of a scientific culture? Bloor and Barnes (1976, 1977) emphasise the principle of symmetry. In the study of scientific work, they say, the sociologist of scientific knowledge must approach the object of study on its own terms, thus avoiding what could be called a 'Whig' history (Law 2004). In this way, past scientific ways of thinking or sets of scientific results must not be explained through their contribution to the present. In older civilisations, for instance, it was a scientific fact that the earth was the centre of the universe. It was a fact that had been acknowledged through the scientific methodologies of the time: mathematical calculation, astronomical observation, and religious dogma. Today, modern scientific methodologies of mathematical calculation, astronomical observation, and space travel has left little doubt that the sun is the centre of our solar system. We accept scientific results that are consistent with what we believe to be the truth without questioning them or explaining them further. Results that are perceived to be false require explanation. This is, Bloor and Barnes state, an asymmetrical treatment of scientific results because we tend to what is true and what is false in different ways. For the sociologist of knowledge, this is a methodological problem because our judgements of what is true and what is false are irrelevant. We need to judge the scientific culture on its own terms.

Several writers have expanded the methodological notion of symmetry. Most notoriously, Michel Callon elaborated on symmetry in his work on the scallops of St. Brieuc Bay, which is perceived as a canonical work in ANT tradition. Based on three general, methodological principles—agnosticism (impartiality between actors engaged in controversy), generalised symmetry (the commitment to explain conflicting viewpoints in the same terms), and free association (the abandonment of all a priori distinctions between the natural and the social)—Callon describes a study of French fishermen, three marine biologists, and an effort to maintain a population of scallops. Whereas the principle of symmetry of Bloor and Barnes (1976, 1977) can be perceived to address an epistemological level, Callon extends the notion of symmetry to an ontological level (Law 2004). Since both nature and culture are being constructed in the same process, it would be asymmetrical to assume that nature has a particular form that should be explained in different terms than

the social. Rather than imposing pre-established analytical categories, we should follow the associations of the entities *'in order to identify the manner in which these define and associate the different elements by which they build and explain their world, whether it be social or natural'* (Callon 1986, p. 4).

It follows from the principle of symmetry that we cannot a priori determine what is and how it relates, nor can we describe non-human and human, natural and social actors in different terms. In this understanding, an actor is simply an entity that acts, human or otherwise. In fact, Callon and Latour define an actor as *'any element which bends space around itself makes other elements dependent upon itself and translates their will into a language of its own'* (Callon, Latour 1981, p. 286). Thus, the ANT understanding of actor does not exclude non-human actors but embraces actors as both humans, non-humans, the material and the immaterial. Accordingly, ANT offers an inherent sensibility towards the non-human that other approaches lack by recognising that assemblages are compositions of both human/non-human, material/immaterial actors. In traditional ANT resources, the term actor is occasionally replaced with the term actant or entity to consolidate the move away from how the word is used in traditional sociology, designating only human actors, that either act within societal structures or shape them to their will. Applying the principle of symmetry ontologically to actors, thus acknowledging both human and non-human entities, has been the subject of controversy and the centre of many debates. Most renowned is the debate in the early 1990s in which Collins and Yearley raised their concerns (Collins, Yearley 1992). In a reply to Collins and Yearley, Latour and Callon (1992) determined that the intension is not to extend intentionality to things. According to Latour and Callon, humans and non-humans are different, but they must analytically be treated the same way as, for example, artefacts. Therefore, the notion of instilling agency in non-human actors, such as technological devices, must be handled and understood with great care. Thus, it must not be interpreted in such a way that people and things are the same. The fundamental idea is that people and things are not and cannot be separated (Nespor 2012) and thus that humans must not be treated any differently from non-humans in ANT analyses. One reason for the faulty association of ANT to the notion that people and things are equal might be that ANT is not a great tool for differentiating associations, admitted by Latour himself (Latour 1996, p. 380). Associations have different ways of forming, changing, and being accomplished, and ANT is a tool for studying this but is, in a lesser way, a theory of these associations and processes.

This dissertation is fundamentally a story of the associations of humans and technology. By aligning with the principle of symmetry, it tells the story by bypassing the classic debate on technological determinism versus a purely social constructivist approach. Instead, the dissertation contributes to the

debate from an intermediate position on the scale, which on the one end assumes the technological deterministic idea *'that technology and its impact are given and defined'* and on the other holds a constructivist position assuming *'that technology does not matter, because it is always and inescapably socially constructed'* (Cordella, Shaikh 2006, p. 6). Instead, it considers the social and technical to be interrelated networks and focuses on the processes through which they are performed.

### 4.3.2. ASSOCIATIONS

As the principle of symmetry extends the notion of actors farther than we are used to in traditional sociology, it is equally important to understand that an actor is not simply an actor by him/her/itself. No actor is anything by its own accord. Actors can be understood and defined only by their many associations with and relations to other actors in networks. Thus, the principle of symmetry relates closely to the focus on associations, which is the second pin that defines my philosophical position.

The notion of associations is central to the understanding of the actor-network. This is inspired by classic semiotics, represented by Saussure (1916). In this perspective, any word is given its meaning only by its relation to other words. For instance, darkness can be understood only through—as in the absence of—light. The word 'man' has meaning only through its opposed position to 'woman' and so on. The network notion of ANT is a quite open one: The number and size of actors determines the size and strength of the network, but there is no delimitation to what size (whether small or large) that constitutes a network (Law 1999). Law introduced the idea of the network in his work on long-distance control in the vital Indian spice trade in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (Law 1986). Here, Law proposed an analytical strategy of exploring the network of all aspects—social, technological, and natural alike (in alignment with the principle of symmetry)—considering them to be part of a heterogeneous network. In such a heterogeneous network, we cannot differentiate between the actor and the network. It is not a matter of actors in a network or of a network with a number of actors. It is one unit: an actor-network.

The composite concept of the actor-network that named the ANT philosophy has been a subject of critique. In fact, Latour himself raised the matter with the oft-cited quote: *'(...) there are four things that do not work with actor-network theory; the word actor, the word network, the word theory and the hyphen!'* (Latour 1999b, p. 15).<sup>15</sup> Latour bases his critique of the term network on the evolution in the popular understanding of the word. When introduced,

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<sup>15</sup> In *Reassembling the Social* (2005), Latour changes his position on the name Actor-Network Theory, embracing it in full, including the hyphen!

he says, the word network meant a series of transformations or translations, similar to Deleuze's and Guattari's use of the word rhizome.<sup>16</sup> However, technological developments have changed the meaning of network in everyday language into '*an instantaneous, unmediated access to every piece of information*' (Latour 1999b, p. 15). The exact opposite of the intended, he claims, suggesting terminating the use of the word.

The problem with the hyphen, he said, is the connection of the word actor to the word network, as this suggests a link to the classic sociological discussion of the primacy of agency or structure in the shaping of human behaviour, as mentioned above. At the heart of this debate is, on the one side, structural functionalists such as Durkheim (1953), who argued that major structures such as laws and religions are essential in shaping society. Marx (1867, 1885, 1894), as well, emphasised the importance of structures as an impediment for individual freedom. The other side of the debate is represented by theoretical ideas such as methodological individualism, represented by Weber (2002) and interactionists such as Goffman (1959). An attempt to find a balance between these two opposite points of view is seen in the work of many modern sociologists, such as Bourdieu (1977).<sup>17</sup> According to Latour, the point of Actor-Network Theory was never to take a position in the debate, neither to overcome it, but rather to bypass it. Thus, ANT is a way '*to try to explore the very conditions that make these two opposite disappointments possible*' (Latour 1999b, p. 17). This bypassing allows for an understanding of the network notion that is not aimed at a big, over-arching society that shapes the lives of individuals. Within an ANT understanding,

Big does not mean 'really' big or 'overall', or 'overarching', but connected, blind, local, mediated, related. This is already an important contribution of ANT since it means that when one explores the structures of the social, one is not led away from the local sites (...) but closer to them (Latour 1999b, p. 18).

Hence, there is no reason to distinguish and alternate between conceptions of the social as made up of a society and its structures and one in which it is

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<sup>16</sup> Both Latour and Law have acknowledged the kinship of ANT to Deleuze's thoughts on planes of immanence and rhizomes, and it is not difficult to see how the thoughts of Deleuze have inspired ANT-terminology and ontology. The relations and connections of entities are in a Deleuzian terminology described by the concept of rhizome. Originating in biology, the word rhizome describes a specific stem of plants that differ from, e.g., a tree's roots in that it has no centre, no order, and that any point of a rhizome can form horizontal connections to others. Thus, the rhizome constitutes a multiplicity and exists furthermore only by its relations (Deleuze, Guattari 1988). In Deleuze and Guattari's use of the word, the rhizome describes a way of being.

<sup>17</sup> This short recapture of the agency/structure debate is in no way an adequate account of the work of these major profiles in sociology. At this point, it serves as a stepping stone to progress in the argument of Latour. A comprehensive and detailed account is not the purpose here.

made up of the individual. These two are interlinked, making the social a *circulating entity* (Latour 1999b, p. 17).

The term *theory* is also problematic according to Latour(1999b). Rather, he states, Actor-Network Theory should be named actant-rhizome ontology,<sup>18</sup> simultaneously acknowledging this impossibly horrible combination of words.<sup>19</sup> It was never intended to be a theory of the social in the classical sense of the word, although it is often given credit as such. Rather, it was conceived to perceive the social, without a priori theoretical assumptions or categories. In a later publication, Latour refers to such an ontology as a sociology of associations (Latour 2005), as mentioned in chapter 3.2. He begins his argument by focusing on the perceived dilution of the word ‘social’. Latour rejects the common use of the word, meaning a type of material of which society is made up. As such, it is reduced to an adjective, not very different from ‘terms like “wooden”, “steely”, “biological”, “economical”, “mental”, “organizational”, or “linguistic”’(Latour 2005, p. 1). Rather than referring to a property of the object of study, ‘social’ refers to the processes with which society is held together.

The approach is the cause of a common line of critique of ANT: that it pays little attention to broader social structures as influencing the local (Walsham 1997). Walsham quotes Reed (1995) who argues how ANT ‘engages in a form of analysis that concentrates on how things “get done” to the virtual exclusion of the various ways in which institutionalised structures shape and modify the process of social interaction’(Reed 1995, p. 332). Proponents of ANT will respond to this criticism by claiming that it is not a matter of focusing on the local rather than broader social structures. Neither is it a disregard of the existence of a micro- and macro-level. It is, as mentioned above, a bypassing of the agency/structure debate. As Callon and Latour states:

There are of course macro-actors and micro-actors, but the difference between them is brought about by power relations and the constructions of networks that will elude analysis if we presume a priori that macro-actors are bigger than or superior to micro-actors(Callon, Latour 1981, p. 280).

At the outset, there is no way to determine the relative size of the actors, as size is dependent on the relations of each actor. This is what Latour had in mind when he defined *big* not as equal to *really big* or *overall*, but *connected*

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<sup>18</sup> Latour credits this term to Mike Lynch, but a specific reference for the origin of the term cannot be found.

<sup>19</sup> For the remainder of the dissertation, I will primarily refer to Actor-Network Theory by the acronym ANT to avoid further discussion of concepts and rather focus on how to transfer the philosophical position to research practice.



and *related* (Latour 1999b). This focus on associations, referred to as *sociology of associations* by Latour (2005) as described above, changes the nature of sociological studies. In classical sociology, Callon and Latour claim, sociologists use different frameworks of analysis depending on whether they are studying a macro-actor or a micro-actor, as these are thought to be inherently different in nature. This naturally poses a problem when reconciling the micro and macro level in broad synthesis, as sociologists often do, as it follows logically that these are incommensurable (Callon, Latour 1981). Instead, ANT methodology allows the sociologist (of associations) to move between the levels of analysis, investigating them with the same methodological tools. Indeed, Fenwick and Edwards make the point that *'the local is all there is'* (2010, p. 146). Thus, it is not the intention to define social patterns or to locate the local in larger social systems.

Latour's argument for a sociology of associations is not a headstrong rejection of all classical sociology (Latour 2005). Indeed, he admits that in many situations it is not only reasonable but also indispensable to resort to social concepts that are already collectively accepted. Examples of such concepts are *"IBM", "France", "Maori culture", "upward mobility", "totalitarianism", "socialization", "lower-middle class", "political context", "social capital", "downsizing", "social construction", "individual agent", "unconscious drives", "peer pressure", etc.'* (Latour 2005, p. 11) However, in situations that are subject to insecurities and instabilities—due, for example, to major innovations—classical sociology falls short. By conveniently applying well-established social theories to these situations, we run the risk of limiting our understanding. By reintroducing a slogan from classical ANT, Latour urges scholars to *'follow the actors'*, allowing the actors to make up their own theories of the social. Only by learning from them, can we come to understand *'what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish'* (Latour 2005, p. 12). Thus, Latour points to the kinship of ANT to ethnomethodology in which the purpose is not to explain why actors do what they do, but for scientists to comprehend and learn from the actors themselves, as it is the scientists, not the actors, who lack understanding. The purpose is to explore and describe practices, which I will elaborate in the next section.

#### **4.3.3. THE ENACTMENT OF MULTIPLE REALITIES**

Enactment is a central sensibility of ANT studies and is the third pin that defines my philosophical position. John Law (2009) elaborates the concept of enactment through a case study of the strawberry auctions in the French region of Sologne (Garcia 1986). The study was not initially characterised as an ANT study, as its author was a student of Bourdieu. However, Callon (1998) has assimilated the study to material semiotics and, thus, ANT. The

study is the story of the constitution of the perfect market based on characteristics described in political economic theory. In material-semiotic terms, the market is created through a process of configuration. It is not a state of nature, but '*will take different forms in different places*' (Law 2009, p. 151). Economic theory is one thing, but economics in practice another. To truly understand markets, the theory must be enacted. In so doing, we can trace the heterogeneous webs and social practices that produce the markets. Through the process of configuration, it is enacted into being (MacKenzie, Muniesa & Siu 2007). This is a move away from (social) construction. There is no one or nothing constructing anything; everyone and everything plays its part through their relations. All actors, human and non-human, come together and enact a set of practices of economic theory.

Similarly, Annemarie Mol's study of atherosclerosis in a Dutch hospital is founded on the notion of enactment (Mol 2002). Atherosclerosis is a quite common condition; it can be painful and sometimes deadly, causing blood clots in the brain or heart. In this case, Mol sets out to explore lower-limb atherosclerosis and asks: What is it, lower-limb atherosclerosis? To do this, Mol takes us to different sites in a hospital. In the clinic, the doctor and the patient, Mrs. Tilstra, have a conversation about pains the patient has been experiencing when walking. The patient describes the pain: where it is, when it appears, and when it stops. The pain is caused by what is known as 'intermittent claudication' in medical terms. Following Latour and Woolgar, Mol argues that the patient does not have intermittent claudication until she enters the clinic (Law 2004). However, Mol expands:

This does not imply that the doctor brings Mrs. Tilstra's disease into being. For when a surgeon is all alone in his office he may explain to the visiting ethnographer what a clinical diagnosis entails, but without a patient he isn't able to make a diagnosis. In order for 'intermittent claudication' to be practised, two people are required. A doctor and a patient (Mol 2002, p. 23).

Intermittent claudication is a symptom of atherosclerosis, and it requires a doctor with pre-established diagnostic skills and a patient who tells the story of the symptoms to be practiced. Often, the patient's body corroborates in the practice of intermittent claudication too. It provides further evidence, as the vascular surgeon examines the patient's leg and feels a temperature difference and weak pulsation in the limbs, suggesting limited blood flow.

The focus on *enactment* holds as one of its consequences that we must acknowledge *multiple realities*. Mol's study shows how atherosclerosis exists in many ways. It is enacted in different ways at different sites in the hospital. As is explained above, in the clinic, atherosclerosis is enacted by the doctor,

the patient, and the patient's body through the symptoms of intermittent claudication: a pain when walking, temperature difference, weak pulsation, combined with the doctor's medical knowledge. Moving to another site, however, atherosclerosis is enacted differently. Mol observes the pathologist as he examines thin cut pieces of artery from an amputated leg, allowing him to see and assess the blood vessels microscopically. As Mol looks at the sample with him, the pathologist explains:

'You see, there's a vessel, this here, it's not quite a circle, but almost. It's pink, that's from the colourant. And that purple, here, that's the calcification, in the media. . . . Look, all this, this messiness here, that's an artefact from that.' He shifted the pointer to the middle of the circle. 'That's the lumen. There's blood cells inside it, you see. . . . And here, around the lumen, this first layer of cells, that's the intima. It's thick. Oh wow, isn't it thick! It goes all the way from here, to there. Look. Now there's your atherosclerosis. That's it. A thickening of the intima. That's really what it is.' . . . And then he adds, after a little pause: 'Under a microscope.' (Mol 2002, p. 30)

The description is an image of how atherosclerosis is produced in the pathology lab; for the pathologist, through the examination of an amputated leg, atherosclerosis is a thickening of the intima, which is the innermost coating of the vein. Mol moves on to other sites: In the radiology department, atherosclerosis is a lumen loss viewable on angiographic pictures. In the operating theatre, it has a different form. Each site produces, performs, or enacts its own version of atherosclerosis: for example, as pains, x-rays, ultrasounds, and biological material. What could be perceived as different perspectives on one disease in other approaches, Mol argues '*that each practice generates its own material reality*' (Law 2009, p. 152). Thus, for atherosclerosis, there are four (probably more) realities—or actor-networks—rather than one. According to Mol, atherosclerosis cannot be considered at an ontological level as one, singular object that is represented and perceived in different ways. It is a matter of multiple realities that are enacted: '*Ontologies are brought into being, sustained or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices*' (Mol 2002, p. 6).

Recognising the idea that realities are multiple, the question naturally arises: How do these multiple realities relate to each other? In the hospital case, all realities, that is, the patient's pain when walking, clinical examination, angiography, and so on, all join in the production of a single coordinated reality, enabling medical professionals to determine a course of treatment.

However, sometimes, this is not the case. Sometimes, the multiple realities cannot be coordinated into a single reality, as in the case of Mr. Iljaz:

‘Here, look at this. Have you seen the pressure measurements of Mr. Iljaz? It’s unbelievable. I can’t believe it. If you look at these numbers he can hardly have any blood in his feet at all. And he came to the outpatient clinic all alone, on his motorbike. Said he had some pain. I can’t believe it. Some pain. On these figures alone I’d say here’s someone who can’t walk at all. Who’s screaming.’ (Mol 2002, p. 64)

Here, the symptoms of the patient contradict the clinical measurements. How, then, do medical practitioners, who’s main concern is figuring out what to do, decide on what is ‘right’? Law (2004) points to judgements based on experience, research, conversation, and reading as the answer, which suggest a ‘gold standard’ to be preferred as the better guide to reality. These judgements often resort to ‘explaining it away’—the inconsistencies, that is. In the case of Mr. Iljaz, different explanations are voiced, for instance that it is only an *apparent inconsistency*, it is not an inconsistency at all, rather Mr. Iljaz just adapted to the pain. Other explanations suggest that Mr. Iljaz’s diabetes has caused a degeneration of the nerves, impairing his ability to feel pain, while a third explanation points to language issues as a possibility, that Mr. Iljaz’s inadequate Dutch skills did not enable him to explain his pains properly. Mol suggests that these explanations sustain the idea of a single reality that exists out there that medical professionals urge to verify. Thus, the contradicting realities are being reduced to mere representations of atherosclerosis. Instead, Mol maintains the focus on multiplicity; that it is not a matter of different versions, of different representations of atherosclerosis. Sometimes different atheroscleroses overlap, and sometimes they do not. However, they are not one and the same object. As they are continually being produced, enacted in a combination of people, phenomena, and equipment (remember that for the pathologist, atherosclerosis is a thickening of the intima *under the microscope*), there are sometimes practical closures (the diagnosis of Mr. Iljaz as suffering from lower-limb atherosclerosis being one), but no closures in general. For research matters, this has the consequence that we may not be able to pin down an object as something solid. Rather, Law suggests, *‘If things seem solid, prior, independent, definite and single then perhaps this is because they are being enacted, and re-enacted, and re-enacted, in practices. Practices that continue. And practices that are also multiple’* (Law 2004, p. 56).

#### 4.4. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ANT PHILOSOPHY

The philosophical position of this dissertation sets a direction for the research design and outlines the research strategies or methodical choices of the dissertation. This outline designates an ethnographic approach that is carried out at multiple sites and focuses on describing the practices of the actors—human as well as non-human—and their associations without imposing pre-established categories of analysis. In the following, I describe the main methodological consequences of aligning with ANT philosophy. The methodical considerations of this approach are elaborated in Chapter 5: The Practice of Praxiography.

For this dissertation, applying the principle of symmetry holds mainly two consequences. First, I as a researcher must acknowledge actors not only as humans, but be willing to extend the notion of actors to non-human entities. In the study of professional identity, actors could be students, graduates, educators, experienced professionals, and practitioners, but also the curriculum, the tools that the professionals use (including ICT), employment statistics, and legislations regarding professional practice. Second, it directs us towards a focus on associations, as no actor, human or nonhuman can be understood in seclusion. These associations cannot be predefined, or as Latour puts it, we cannot limit *'in advance the shape, size, heterogeneity and combination of associations'* (Latour 2005, p. 11). From this perspective, Latour finds it odd that the starting point for most social inquiry is a question of defining a specific grouping as the level of inquiry. It is not possible a priori to determine the actors to follow in my research, that is, there is no pre-established grid of analysis. If actors are *'made to fit'* (Latour 2005, p. 28) in a group, and often in more groups at the same time, how can we choose one group over another as the entity for analysis? Why would an inquiry in micro-level interaction be more relevant than a macro-level point of view—or vice versa? These arguments are as much a criticism of classic approaches within *sociology of the social* as it is a wish to approach the worlds of the actors without predefined social categories, allowing the actors to make up their own sociology; to define their own associations.<sup>20</sup> Thus, with regard to the uncertainty of the nature of groups, that is, their identity, a classic sociological uncertainty (Latour 2005) that I will return to in Chapter 6, there is no relevant group to use as a starting point for inquiry, Latour states and rejects the tendency of sociologists to argue for 'limitation of scope' and 'the right to define one's object', which he claims to be merely arbitrary. In this study of identity, the concept is thus initially not defined as constituted by, for example, professional standards, the self-image, or the personality traits of

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<sup>20</sup> As previously mentioned, Latour acknowledges that certain social categories can be relevant in the study of well-established associations in which the abandonment of previously defined categories seem obscure.

professionals. However, as Latour states, the choice lies not ‘*between certainty and confusion, between the arbitrariness of some a priori decision and the morass of endless differences. What we have lost—a fixed list of groups—we have regained because groupings have constantly to be made, or remade, and during this creation or recreation the group-makers leave behind many traces that can be used as data by the informer*’ (Latour 2005, p. 34). Hence, it is not the purpose of the dissertation to prove or disprove how reality fits with a hypothesis. Rather, Latour’s point is to move from an ostensive definition to a performative one, as I will elaborate in section 6.6. Not defining an analytical grid a priori also has the rather practical consequence that I have chosen to place this part 2 on philosophy and method directly before presenting my empirical results in part 3. There is no description of a horizon of understanding in a theoretical chapter in between the two. Instead, I have argued in section 3.2 how this dissertation is positioned in a tradition of research and theoretical perspective, by moving away from CSCL and into STS and ANT. This theoretical move is also a philosophical move from sociology of the social to sociology of associations.

The focus on enactments sets the direction for my appreciation of the world, as it is not a matter of *explaining* reality through practices, through enactments. Rather, reality is produced by the practices in relations, or associations (Law 2004). Mol argues for the shift from an epistemological to a praxiographic<sup>21</sup> appreciation of reality that allows us to explore the continued enactment of reality—rather than what it once was or is perceived to be (Mol 2002). The praxiographic approach does away with the distinction between ontology and epistemology as presented by Kant in his epistemological masterpiece *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Kant 2013), a distinction that has continuously presented a challenge for ANT. One of Kant’s main points was that humans are not *tabula rasa* in their perception of the world, that is, we are not passive recipients of sensory inputs of the world. According to Kant, we perceive the world as it is presented to us (*das Ding für Uns*), while the world in itself (*das Ding an Sich*) will never be available to us. This divide between the object and the subject is one that ANT purposely has attempted to

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<sup>21</sup> The use of the term praxiography indicates the close kinship with ethnography. The suffix –graphy denotes that the purpose is to record or reconstruct, but rather than focusing on culture (ethno-), practice (praxi-) is what is being recorded or reconstructed (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). Law and Latour (2004, 2005) tend to use the word ethnography, when describing the method of ANT. The term ethnography, however, is reminiscent of the researcher who embeds him- or herself in native cultures, living and working alongside the people under study for periods as long as 2-3 years. Today, this is often not the case, and it would probably be more accurate to describe the preferred method of ANT as one that applies ethnographic techniques, rather than conducting ethnography (Fetterman 2010). This is also the case in this dissertation and therefore I prefer the term ‘praxiography with the application of ethnographic techniques’ and will use both terms where appropriate. I elaborate on praxiography and ethnomethodology in Chapter 5.

dissolve. Indeed, ANT might be anti-epistemological (Latour 1988). The ontology of ANT designates that all things are real in the same way. Thus, it does not make sense to speak of what we know of a thing and how the thing ‘really’ is. Furthermore, one does not correspond to the other. It naturally follows, then, that from an ANT position *theoretical* is not in opposition to *empirical*. The terms indicate that these two are separate entities which, according to Latour, is utterly absurd. In fact, Latour states, to indicate that a theoretical universe exists that can be comprehended in isolation from what the theories are actually about only adds mystery to the term theory (Latour 1987, p. 242). Considering the disregard of theory and the inherent focus on empirical studies, ANT finds its true value in its application, and less in an abstract, theoretical description. This stresses the need for empirical engagement—a foundation in empirical studies—since an abstract description of ANT ‘misses the point’ (Law 2009). Through empirical studies, ANT itself is translated,<sup>22</sup> challenging the use of the theory (Nespor 2012). With each new empirical study, ANT is developed, elaborated, and revised, and therefore this dissertation is a contribution to the development of ANT.

Mol’s attention to multiplicity and rejection of perspectivism is also a rejection of the ‘out-there-ness’ that characterises much Euro-American thinking, according to Law (2004). This mindset is built on the notion that a reality exists ‘out-there’, beyond us. The mindset is closely linked to other ‘common sense’ notions of reality as being independent of our perception and preceding us (Law 2004). However, the idea of a reality that exists out-there rests on a distinction between the observer and the observed. It follows from this distinction that in the explanation of reality the observer or analyst holds a privileged position that is denied others, that is, a problem of reflexivity. Latour, however, argues that the problem disappears with the *epistemological myth* (Latour 1996, p. 377) of the outside observer that provides an explanation in addition to a mere description. In the tradition of ANT, there is no *outside* observer. Basically, there is no outside/inside. There are only associations, and the observer is *on par* with all other actors. Thus, an ANT-based appreciation of reality abandons the subtracting of knowledge from the things themselves. It does not search for ‘true’ knowledge and explanations based on an interpretivist stance. Rather, ANT could be defined as an exploratory approach that attempts to map associations, seeking mediating points between elements (Latour 1996).

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<sup>22</sup> Early publications referred to ANT as a sociology of translation. The first notions of the term translation are derived from the work by Serres (1974). Latour (1987) describes translation as what happens when entities come together and connect and, in so doing, change each other to form links. As such, that translation is a process of change (Fenwick, Edwards 2012).

Besides being a study that contributes to the body of ANT literature and, thus, to ANT itself, this dissertation is a study of professional identity and the research strategies devised must enable this based on the paradigmatic perspectives presented above. This is central to bear in mind as I develop my methodical approach, which must be designed to study the practices of the actors, that is, a praxiographic approach. Furthermore, it holds the consequence that my approach to analysis should not be explanatory regarding establishing causal relations. Instead, the main priority must be to describe the enactment of professional identity. This description is initiated in empirical chapters 6, 7, and 8.





# CHAPTER 5. THE PRACTICE OF PRAXIOGRAPHY

## 5.1. INTRODUCTION

As suggested in Chapter 4, the philosophical foundation in ANT suggests a praxiographic way forward regarding method. ANT-based empirical research often takes its starting point in Latour's fundamental tenet: *follow the actors* (Latour 2005) which results in meticulous accounts of '*specific, material everyday details of a situation, site, sets of activities, practice, and so forth*' (Fenwick, Edwards 2010, p. 145). Latour himself has acknowledged the work by Garfinkel (e.g. Garfinkel 1967, 1984) on ethnomethodology as a source of inspiration (Latour 2013, Blok, Jensen 2009). The focus on description, rather than explanation as presented above, lies well with ethnomethodological approaches. The focal point of ethnomethodology is on the ways in which people make sense of their daily activities and their accounts thereof and thus, also 'follows the actors' (although an ANT notion of actors is somewhat different from a classic ethnomethodological one). The present purpose (and bearing in mind the paradigmatic guidelines presented above, that is, the focus on enactment) necessitates a method that allows for the study of activities. Rouncefield suggests an *ethnomethodologically informed ethnographic* approach, which naturally centres on observational studies and acknowledges the situated character of the activities and phenomena under study (Rouncefield 2011). The application of ethnographic techniques is particularly relevant in the present context where the purpose is to explore how the notion of professional identity is enacted in practice.

Subscribing to an ethnographic—or praxiographic—method naturally holds several implications for how one does research. From a praxiographic point of view, doing research is also a practice and, in consequence, there is no universal recipe for how to research practice (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). On the contrary, attempting to devise a set of standards is useless, or perhaps even problematic, according to Pouliot (2013). Instead, by acknowledging research as a practice, one must rely on a set of skills that can be developed through training and experience. Bueger and Gadinger (2014) underline this by quoting Seale (1999, p. ix): '*Intense methodological awareness, if engaged in too seriously, can create anxieties that hinder practice, but if taken in small doses it can help guard against the most obvious errors.*' Parallel to the idea of enactment of reality in ANT is the practice of research continuously enacted, that is, used in research projects through observing, interpreting, and writing up (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). In this chapter, I elaborate in detail on the steps involved in doing praxiography, including the role of theory, my role

as a researcher, the choice of sites for fieldwork, as well as specific techniques for data collection. Furthermore, I touch upon matters regarding validity and ethics and my considerations on analysis and presentation hereof. Finally, I return to the research question that I defined in section 3.3, defining three sub-questions that structure the presentation of the analysis in chapters 6, 7, and 8.

## 5.2. THE ROLE OF THEORY

As mentioned in Chapter 4, there is no decidedly theoretical chapter in this dissertation. One might say, that by assuming an ANT-based position, ANT IS the main theory. However, I have been consistently mindful not to refer to ANT as a theory, and touched upon this matter in text and footnotes above. Instead, I perceive ANT as a founding philosophy with an inherent atheoreticity. Assuming this atheoreticity does not equate a position that is without rules or guidelines. However, it means that my understanding of the setting is derived from the study of that setting, rather than from, say, a theoretical model. It is ‘data-driven’ and allows for recognition of *‘the inherent “messiness” of the world and the inadequacy of any theory to deal with this’* (Rouncefield 2011, p. 46). Thus, it is basically an atheoretic approach to the study of a context, mimicking the paradigmatic position as explicated in Chapter 4, denying a priori structures and categories. Instead, the focus is on routine activities:

What kinds of things do they take for granted or presuppose in going about their work, what kinds of things do they routinely notice, what kinds of things are they ‘on the lookout’ for, how do they ‘tune themselves in’ to the state of being ‘at work’, what are the constituents of their ‘serious frame of mind’, how do they react to the things that occur within their sphere of attention, what objectives are they seeking to attain in their reactions to whatever occurs, and by what means through what operations—will they seek to accomplish those objectives in adaptation to these unfolding circumstances’ (Rouncefield 2011, p. 47).

Studying (professional) practices or activities as indicated in the quote by Rouncefield may serve as a collection of ‘sensitising concepts’ as introduced by Blumer (1954). In contrast to ‘definite concepts’ with clearly defined attributes, sensitising concepts suggest directions in which to look and *‘rest on a general sense of what is relevant’* (Blumer 1954, p. 7). Mol, too, suggests the role of theory as a sensitising framework: *‘A theory is something that helps scholars to attune to the world, to see and hear and feel and taste it. Indeed, to appreciate it’* (Mol 2010, p. 262) By studying professional identity as practices, I—as previously stated—move away from any fixed system of

reference. Thus, it is not the purpose to ‘fill a gap’ in a pre-existing body of knowledge (Sandberg, Alvesson 2011), such as for instance the pedagogical potential of ICTs for professional identity development. Instead, the research *‘problematizes phenomena, it adds new perspectives and interpretations, demonstrates how things play out in different contexts, and it enriches’* (Bueger, Gadinger 2014, p. 79).

For ANT practitioners, it has been the intention to create a framework for understanding that would not replace the rich vocabulary of the actors’ practice with the vocabulary of the scientists. However, the sparse vocabulary of ANT has in some ways contaminated ANT practices, contrary to the original intention (Latour 1999b). According to Latour, this is rather a sign that the vocabulary has not been poor enough, than the other way around. It is a methodical challenge for ANT researchers to create a vocabulary that allows the actors to define the world in their own terms (Latour 1999b). Gad and Jensen (2010), however, claim that striving for a ‘neutral’ vocabulary does not do justice to the sensibilities of Post-ANT philosophy; it is possible to make strong ontological claims without a fixed theoretical framework. Rather than striving for an altogether meaningless research vocabulary, Gad and Jensen suggest that *‘one would do well to see ANT as allowing for the coexistence of several infralanguages, including the researchers’, which may change and transform precisely because of their partial connection’* (Gad, Jensen 2010, p. 64).

### **5.3. MY ROLE AS A RESEARCHER**

The empiricity of the approach underlines the importance of acknowledging the researcher as part of the field. Thus, even if the researcher claims to be ‘following the actor’, the researcher does this with an inherent hope to describe, pursue, and understand certain conditions or events. For the present purpose, I acknowledge this by attempting to develop a methodical approach that is sensible towards the everyday activities of the actors, while remaining open and honest as to my role in the research and the underlying assumptions and purpose of my research, as it is described throughout the dissertation, but specifically in this section.

This research project is grounded in educational practice, regarding both the context that I explore and my background. In section 3.5, I elaborated on the different areas that this project contributes to, that is, the educational practice of university colleges (UC), identity research, and the field of educational research, specifically ANT-based research. Of these three, the practitioners of the UC community are the main audience. As such, this dissertation falls into the category of applied research. The focus on application holds certain

consequences for me as a researcher, regarding the length of the fieldwork, the dissemination and the language used (Fetterman 2010).

While long-term continuous fieldwork might be considered invaluable when attempting to describe and make sense of a foreign culture, I was already immersed in UC practice, due to my employment at the Multimedia and Design programme. I chose to study a different programme than the one where I was a lecturer, to avoid confusing my teaching tasks with my research tasks. I wanted to maintain a distinction between these two worlds, as I feared that I would not be able to maintain a focus on research when confronted with more mundane tasks of teaching and teaching administration. Furthermore, I was worried that by studying my own practice I would be blind to certain elements of taken-for-grantedness. However, my employment in an educational programme that in many ways resembled the one that I was studying enabled a basic understanding of UC practices, while it still allowed me enough distance to maintain a non-judgemental orientation (Fetterman 2010). Therefore, a long-term involvement might be an overstatement in this case, a viewpoint also supported by Fetterman (2010). In section 5.4.3, I describe the specific circumstances regarding my fieldwork, including the extent, a matter that is naturally also shaped by the resources available.

My role as a researcher cannot be kept separate from the purpose and goal of doing ethnography. The quality of an ethnographically inspired work depends on the extent '*to which it rings true to natives and colleagues in the field*' (Fetterman 2010, p. 11). Although the recipients of this piece of academic writing might disagree with my analysis and the conclusions based thereupon, the goal is that they recognise and find the descriptions accurate. Thus, I am placed in a central position—or to use ANT vocabulary—I am a node in the network, not only to collect information from the informants' point of view but also to make sense of it. Hence, the emics (the insider position) and etics (the outsider position) are not in conflict but viewed as complementary. This position as a researcher is made explicit in my accounts of practices. I attempt this explication consciously through a style of writing that centres me as an explorer of the field, with thick descriptions of situations and my position, while I simultaneously attempt to contextualise and make sense of those observations.

The present dissertation is the primary output of my research project. Being a PhD dissertation, I must acknowledge its inherent purpose of proving my abilities as a researcher and thereby granting me access to a community of researchers. This purpose defines the form and to some extent the content of the dissertation. However, as noted above, the purpose of my research is also to inform and contribute to UC practices (the natives and colleagues in the field). With this dual purpose in mind, some sections of the dissertation such

as the present on method are likely of most interest to the research community, while it is likely that any practitioners who might read this dissertation will primarily read the descriptions and analysis of practice in Part Three. Especially in that part of the dissertation (although I hope it is more or less the case for the dissertation in its entirety), I therefore attempt a clear, easy-to-read writing style that non-academics also find interesting, thus following the advice of Fetterman who urges the researcher to adapt the language of dissemination to the recipients (Fetterman 2010). With the goal of application in mind, this is invaluable; if my work is to have any impact on practices, it must be accessible to practitioners.

## 5.4. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Fieldwork is *'the most characteristic element of any ethnographic research design'* (Fetterman 2010, p. 8). Being there, observing, and asking questions about seemingly simple things is the most important thing, but many questions arise for the ethnographer before, during, and after venturing into the field: Where to go? What to do? How long to stay? These are some of the questions that I attempt to answer in the following section.

### 5.4.1. AN ARGUMENT FOR MULTISITEDNESS

Ethnomethodologically informed research is not new in terms of ANT studies. Classic ethnographic approaches are typically characterised by an in-depth study of a specific context and aims at a thorough understanding of local practices. This is attempted through extensive stays in local contexts, adapting macro theories as a contextualisation of the local (Marcus 1995). In STS and ANT research, however, there is a tendency, perhaps even a preference, for multisited ethnography that allows the researcher to link data obtained across different geographic space and time (Marcus 1995, Fenwick, Edwards 2010). According to Marcus (1995) the multisited approach arose out of a need to study an object *'that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation'* (Marcus 1995, p. 96). Falzon similarly argues for multisitedness through methodological reasons: that traditional ethnographic methods of inquiry have been challenged by paradigms of modernity, which have destabilised the embeddedness of social relations in specific communities and places (Falzon 2012). That is, in modern society, it is rarely sufficient to study social life in a confined space or a confined context. This is, however, not an attempt to relate micro relations to macro contexts, remembering Latour's argument against a sociology of the social and for a sociology of associations. Instead, by turning the attention to multiple sites of activity, the approach dissolves the distinction between macro and micro levels, still acknowledging macro-theoretical concepts but not relying on them as a contextual frame for the local context—remember: the

local is all there is. Hansbøl makes a similar point in the search for an approach that would allow for the study of contexts in which CSCL scenarios were a part without having them serve as a starting point and thus a frame for the investigation (Hansbøl 2010).

As previously defined, studying identity is studying practices. From defining this as the object of study, it naturally follows that it cannot be done in a single site of investigation, as these practices in education take place at multiple sites. For instance, practices in the classroom are one reality and practices in internship are another, although both can be considered as part of an educational context. Although other multisited studies cross great distances (Falzon 2012), mine is mainly centred (like Mol's) within a rather confined space, that is, the campus, which holds different sites such as classrooms, library, teacher offices, administrative offices, the cafeteria. The exception is the site of internship, which I conceptually define as one site (i.e., one context: the internship), but includes several geographical sites, mainly in the northern parts of Denmark, but stretching all the way to the United Arab Emirates as I follow the actors in their internships.

Furthermore, one might argue for multisitedness using logistical reasons (Falzon 2012). The conventional approach to ethnographic studies is based on long-term fieldwork where the researcher immerses him- or herself in the society of study, attempting to become part of it. Practically, and quite simply, it is difficult to free that amount of time in most researchers' daily work practices. Like most other researchers, I have other obligations to fulfil involving teaching and administrative tasks. These require my presence in a way that makes complete and long-term involvement impossible, but suggest an approach based on touch points of shorter-term involvement.

Multisited ethnography has not been left uncriticised. In fact, some have claimed that the very idea of combining the term multisited with ethnography is self-contradictory (Falzon 2012). As mentioned, the roots of ethnography are found in anthropology, which traditionally studies urban, rural, or primitive societies and produces rich descriptions and insights into, for example, gender, race, and sexuality that even today are considered fundamental. This tradition for rich description leads to the most commonly mentioned criticism of the multisited approach. As the researcher abandons the exploration of a single site to explore something in multiple sites, the apparent sacrifice is depth in exchange for breadth. Falzon (2012) suggests at least three ways out of this predicament. One might argue for substituting long-term studies with *very* long-term studies to be able to ensure depth in each site. But referring to the practical issues mentioned before, this doesn't seem like a viable solution in the present context. Another argument suggests that the multiple sites make up for any inadequacies regarding depth in a

single site. The argument rests on the notion that a line of short durations makes a long one. That is a clearly flawed argument, according to Falzon, as *'two or more shallownesses do not make a depth'* (2012, p. 8). The third solution rests on the sense of time and space as being 'methodologically interchangeable', that is, possessing similar characteristics. Just as time can provide a distance that enables the production of knowledge—so can space, an idea that has always been part of the ethnographic paradigm (Falzon 2012). Thus, using space(s), sites, as part of the methodical approach to achieve an insight into the native's point of view is not contradictory. Indeed, I'd like to argue that for this dissertation, multisitedness is not a choice that I need to defend. In fact, it is the only viable option based on the philosophical position outlined in Chapter 4. Neglecting to follow the object of study, that is, professional identity as it is practiced in multiple sites, would constitute a methodological error. In the end, making the case for multisitedness is as simple as following the object, and when the object is multiple—the methodical approach needs to be as well. This argument simultaneously dismisses another critique that Falzon refers to, that is, that of 'latter-day holism'. The line of critique rests on the idea that in some cases multisitedness is a road taken by researchers claiming that *'as originally planned, my fieldwork was to be conventionally single-sited; after some time on site, however, an epiphanic moment revealed to me that this was inadequate; I therefore chose to move around'* (Falzon 2012, p. 12). The choice of multisitedness for this dissertation is not based on a post facto justification. It is a methodological position that I intend to explore. This is not to say that I will not later be forced to rationalise other decisions in afterthought, but this specific choice is made a priori.

In summary, deriving the notion of multiplicity from the focus on enactments contributes not only the ontological position that reality is not single; it provides the very practical methodical guideline that the study of professional identity in education happens at multiple sites.

#### **5.4.2. CHOOSING THE SITES TO STUDY**

Studying the multiple practices of professional identity in SHTM requires studying multiple sites, as previously stated. How, then, do I choose which sites to study? Critics often voice that ethnographers appear to assume a pre-existing field and ignore that in so doing they, the ethnographers, must take responsibility for their production of field sites (Falzon 2012). In the approach for which I argue here, it is fundamental that the researcher (myself) cannot be viewed as an 'objective' observer—standing on the outside looking in. I am 'on par' with the other actors and serve for the written account, the dissertation, as a turning point around which the other actors bend, as I have also mentioned previously. I acknowledge that, based on my philosophical



stance, the choices I make regarding sites to study and my mere presence at the sites are part of the associations I study. This offers even more reason to be specific about my methodical choices—and this present Chapter 5 is my attempt to do so. However, returning to the initial question, how to choose the sites to study, Falzon, adopting a term from economics first introduced by Simon, suggests that the principle of ‘satisficing’ might prove helpful with regard to this specific question (Simon 1997, Falzon 2012). Combing the verbs satisfy (meaning to fulfil a need) and suffice (meaning to provide as much as needed), satisfice directs us onto a course of action that is ‘good enough’. Falzon argues that satisficing allows us to compromise between wanting to study the whole, that is, maximising, and ‘making the cut’. In other words, the number and types of sites to study must be just good enough. Determining what is good enough is not an arbitrary and autocratic decision. It is guided ‘*by the scholarly literature on a particular topic, the current state of methodology, and one’s unfolding ethnographic insights on the ground*’ (Falzon 2012, p. 12).

Beginning with the last, the researcher’s unfolding ethnographic insights, mine are initially shaped by my background as a lecturer, my knowledge of the organisation UCN and the practices of the Service Hospitality & Tourism Management Programme. From this point of view, I can determine several that are central in an educational context: *the classroom, the internship, and teacher-to-teacher interactions*. However, one might object, what about enactments outside the official, planned contexts, interactions during lunch breaks or informal study groups, for instance? The answer to this is that based on my initial insight into the field, my knowledge extends primarily to the official sites, with which I must start. When unofficial sites in the context of education appeared during my studies, I have attempted to gain access. Another objection would possibly point to the practices outside education, that is, after graduation, in practice where ‘the real professional identity’ applies. Indeed, one might study how professional identity is enacted in the workplace—and many others have done so. However, the short answer is that this is not the research question that I have chosen to ask. Going outside of the contexts of education would constitute a break in my methodological position and a lack of rigour, not meeting the definition of satisficing as quoted above. The site of internship is, however, closely linked to workplace sites, as these two sites overlap for a moment with the distinct pedagogical purpose of internship.

#### **5.4.3. MY FIELDWORK AT SHTM**

As I have already argued, the extent of the fieldwork that I have carried out is influenced by my own position at UCN, the applied nature of the research, and logistical and practical considerations. Not counting my prior knowledge of

the organisation for a moment, my involvement with the SHTM programme began in the spring of 2015 and continued until the autumn of 2016. It has not been a continuous stay as is customary in traditional ethnography, but rather non-continuous and spread out over an extended time as Fetterman argues is often the case for applied ethnography (Fetterman 2010). This non-continuous involvement allowed me to retreat to outside the field (i.e., my office) to make sense of what I had seen, heard, and experienced.

In the beginning, I did not consider my fieldwork in the SHTM context as, in fact, fieldwork. I was still in the phase of doing CSCL-based research (a problematic experience as described in section 2.4). I had approached the programme director at SHTM as gatekeeper with the suggestion of conducting an experiment with the purpose of testing the applicability and potential of having students do weblogs (blogs) during their internships with the purpose of developing professional identity. I had known the programme director for a couple of years as colleagues and occasionally we had carpooled to work, as we do not live far from each other. However, since he took the position as programme director, we rarely met daily because the SHTM campus is at a different location than the one where I primarily work. Nonetheless, due to our prior acquaintance, I felt comfortable contacting him without prior introductions.

He responded positively to my inquiry and suggested that I should attend a meeting with the participation of some of the lecturers and coordinators in which part of the purpose was to plan the coming semester's activities. During this meeting and subsequent interactions with the internship coordinator, we decided on a form for the experiment that served my research purpose (as it was defined at that time) and was adapted to the specific context. We had decided to offer the experiment to the students as a privilege in which they would be free from using other platforms and have increased supervisor contact (which was part of the pedagogical design); we hoped for twenty volunteers. The number was decided in part for administrative reasons, as a larger group of students would require involving more supervisors, and with the experimental nature of the design in mind, this would cause a massive amount of preparation both for the supervisors and me. Furthermore, I had one eye on the expected results. If each student prepared a minimum one blog post a week for a minimum of 12 weeks, this would produce 240 posts. Then came comments and discussions on posts, which would perhaps double the number of posts that were to be analysed, coded, and discussed. I needed to keep the output at a level I could realistically handle. All worries were cast aside when only 10 students volunteered; the experiment continued with this group of students. Of these 10, two were students of the top-up BA degree. This was not a problem in the research design at that time, as I investigated the pedagogical potential of ICT. However, as my focus shifted to practice

descriptions of SHTM practices (not BA practices), I had to leave those two bloggers out of the data set. Since my change in focus, I have thus worked with only the remaining eight bloggers—which turned into seven, as one student quit the programme entirely. To my knowledge, this was not because of the blogs. I met and corresponded with the students (and the supervisor involved) to introduce and start up the blogs. In the summer of 2015, the students started their internship and began to post on their blog. They continued to do so during the autumn until their internship was completed. Seven students blogged for a minimum of 12 weeks of internship (plus some pre- and post-reflections). In Figure 6, I provide an overview of the outcome. I then evaluated the experiment with the students and the supervisor through interviews. All was as planned and framed in this CSCL-based intervention.

During the winter of 2015-2016, my mindset changed, as described in Part One. I began to contemplate the role of ICT in professional identity, not as a pedagogical tool, but as something that shaped and was being shaped by professional identity. The methodological implications of this are described in Chapter 4.

Turning instead to an ethnographic approach that focused on describing practices, the role of the blogs and the blog posts changed. I had had my eye on the blogs as a tool that would allow collaborative learning; that the students would learn and develop professional identity from connecting, sharing, and discussing their experiences online. With the changed mindset, the blog posts gave me a unique insight into the practices of seven different internships. If I were to have acquired this knowledge by doing observations myself, it would have been a very lengthy ordeal that would require long stays in various parts of Denmark as well as the United Arab Emirates. Instead, the students served as self-ethnographers producing ego-documents. I return to the notion of ego-documents in section 5.4.5, where I elaborate on the different research techniques applied, including textual analysis.

As I have argued above, the focus on practices in education necessitates a study that extends beyond the conceptual single site of internship and into the various sites on-campus. Therefore, in the late spring and early summer of 2016, I once again turned to the programme director, inquiring about the possibility of doing observations on-campus. Not only was I granted access; I also had the opportunity to interview him. However, now further progress was hindered as exams and the summer holiday approached, and we agreed that at the start of the next academic year in August and September, I would observe the SHTM practices on campus. My on-campus observations include classroom practices both with and without the lecturer and general observations on the campus, including the cafeteria, hallways, staff areas and so forth. Furthermore, during the observations, I had the opportunity to

interact with staff members and students, conducting small informal interviews, which I return to in section 5.4.5.

#### **5.4.4. LEAVING THE FIELD**

The decision to leave the field and terminating the fieldwork, in general and for me specifically, depends on a number reasons. One reason is the rather trivial matter of having only a limited amount of resources available. The contractual foundation of this research project establishes a time frame within which the research must be concluded. Moreover, by mid-October, there was a halt in the observable teaching sessions, as the students participated in other learning activities, such as group work and individual preparation. These learning activities took place outside of the classroom, as the students spread to different locations on and off campus. Moreover, although these activities would be relevant to observe, it was difficult for me to ‘follow the actors’, as I felt that I was not in a position to ask the students for access. Furthermore, I felt that I would be intruding in activities that were in many ways ‘lecturer-less’, and now the students had positioned me as part of the lecturer community.<sup>23</sup> I decided to leave the matter alone, although it was frustrating. Naturally, the best reason to leave the field is, of course, when one believes that enough data has been gathered to describe the practices under study, which is to a large extent a subjective matter:

No one can be completely sure about the validity of research conclusions, but the ethnographer needs to gather sufficient and sufficiently accurate data to feel confident about research findings and to convince others of their accuracy’(Fetterman 2010, p. 9).

The researcher may choose to conclude the fieldwork, when he/she reaches a level of saturation in which the same patterns keep emerging. After six weeks of observations, the daily life on campus had settled into its own routines, leaving little variation in practices. Thus, by combining these reasons, I concluded my observations in the field after six weeks of non-continuous but focused involvement. Along with my pre-existing knowledge as a UC lecturer, the blogposts, various interviews, and textual analysis, this seemed sufficient to grant me an insight into SHTM practices in UCN.

#### **5.4.5. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES**

In doing praxiography, some basic research techniques are available. Each must be adapted to the practices studied. Praxiographic research techniques

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<sup>23</sup> I elaborate on this position below in section 5.4.5.2.

include fieldwork (including participant observation, event observation, and shadowing), interviewing, and textual analysis. These techniques are not to be considered as exclusive (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). As each technique is different, I will use the following sections to elaborate on specific considerations, decisions, and design that will allow me to describe and reconstruct the profession-related practices in the context of SHTM at UCN. Below the techniques of event observations and interviewing are described in separate sections. In practice (the practice of praxiography, that is) they often overlap. My observations are occasions to do informal interviews, and while I interview, I observe. This is how it must be, and in the end the outcome of the different techniques applied synthesise in descriptions and analysis anyway. The outcome of the techniques is embodied in the data that is the foundation of empirical chapters 6, 7, and 8. The analytical strategies for this are described in section 5.7.

#### **5.4.5.1 Observations**

Observations are the backbone of ethnographic methods. Traditionally, observations took the form of participant observations in which the researcher embeds him/herself in a culture, living and working alongside its other inhabitants. This form of observation requires a high level of commitment and personal investment as the researcher engages in ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ (Lave, Wenger 2004) attempting to understand practices by participating on equal footing with other newcomers, and eventually the boundaries between the role of the researcher and the new role as inhabitant become blurred (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). This form of observation is resource intensive, both regarding time and personal investment.

Bueger and Gadinger point to event observations such as of meetings as a technique to record practices in real time that are increasingly used in praxiography (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). Event observations allow the researcher to study situations ‘*in which larger groups of actors meet, negotiate, and deliberate*’ (Bueger, Gadinger 2014, p. 86). The approach naturally requires access to the events that one wishes to study, which might be the greatest impediment, especially in sensitive or securitised environments. However, I did not have any issues with gaining access to teaching sessions. As gatekeeper to the premises in general, the programme director had approved my presence. Furthermore, I had sent a short general notification to all lecturers of the programme explaining my purpose and the extent of my observations. I had been very careful in emphasising that my purpose was not in any way to evaluate or criticise the programme, the lecturers, or the students, but merely to gain an understanding of SHTM practices on campus. Prior to the first observation of a teaching session, I sent a personal email to the allocated lecturer, informing that they could expect to

see me in that specific class. At the time, a lot of research and development activities were taking place on campus, and the request to observe classes probably did not seem out of the ordinary to the lecturers. Moreover, some of the lecturers knew me in advance, and in general my presence was welcomed. The lecturers seemed more interested in my research than hesitant towards me being there. A written notification was also sent to the students. This notification of my presence coincided with a high information flow at the start of term; many students had probably not read the notification before they saw me in class. The students did not question my presence, but rather accepted it as a basic condition of being in class. We greeted each other with ‘good morning’ and ‘hi’, we small-talked and exchanged practical remarks about, for example, charger stations. In general, they were very friendly to me.

My event observations in the context of the SHTM programme revolved primarily around observations of teaching sessions that provided insight into the profession-related practices of that specific site, the classroom. During these observations, I sat in the back of the class. On different occasions, my observations had a more participatory nature. For instance, I talked to the students during the breaks and while we waited for the lecturer to arrive, and in that way, the event observations were an entry into informal interviews, as described below. Hence, the degree to which I was merely observing or actively participating varied a great deal and was dependent on my own active decisions in this regard, but also on how the observed (the lecturer and students) perceived and positioned me. Sometimes, for example, the lecturer would refer to me in class, and thus naturally positioning me in a more participatory role.

The ethnographic field notes are the physical output of observations and are one of my primary data sources. When working with field notes, one must acknowledge how they are at the same time an embodiment of the observations and the first early stage of analysis (Fetterman 2010). In the following sections, I touch upon the role and process of taking field notes, as well as how I structured the notes to help aid my further analysis. The field notes are the researcher’s memory of what happened, and in this regard the researcher is placed in a classic dilemma. On the one hand, one wants to write everything down, and on the other hand one must be present and pay attention to events as they unfold. Managing a balance between these two is a matter of experience and the specific situation. Is it, for instance, appropriate and possible to take notes during observations? In some situations, for instance observations where both researcher and subject are moving, it is not possible to bring pen and paper. Are the observations taking place at, for instance, a funeral or a religious festival where it would be inappropriate to be scribbling down notes (Fetterman 2010)? The researcher must also take into consideration the level of participation as described above. Having your head

in the notepad distances you from the situation. Also, Kristiansen and Krogstrup point out that one should avoid taking notes while interacting with the actors in the field as this might cause a feeling of being watched and affect the behaviour of the observed (Kristiansen, Krogstrup 2015). Thus, writing field notes is, as the observations they embody, a reflection of the balance between participation and observation. In the example of classroom observations, I mainly wrote my field notes using my laptop computer during the observations. On occasions that had a more participatory nature, I followed the students and lecturer, interacting, before returning to my laptop to write notes. In general, I attempted not to delay note taking more than absolutely necessary, as the richness of the situation would inevitably fade with time. Likewise, I ended every day of observation by going back through my notes, filling in gaps or writing in full any abbreviation that had helped me in the moment, but in the long run would have made my notes insufficient. Sometimes I recorded digital memos using my smartphone in my car on my way home from an observation to capture impressions and the emerging insights of my analysis.

While I was preparing the observations, I spent some time considering the use of the laptop. Would I be better off using pen and paper? Would the use of a computer serve as a barrier between the students and me? I decided, however, that I wanted to refrain from any actions that would draw unnecessary attention to me, and in a classroom full of note-taking students using laptops, I would have been the odd one out had I been sitting with a notebook and a pen. As an example of an exception, the first days of the new semester were days characterised by activities without student use of laptops, and according to the argument above, on such a day I did not use my laptop either but preferred taking notes using pen and paper.

A couple of weeks into my classroom observations, I noticed that most lecturers based their dissemination on presentations made in Microsoft PowerPoint. These presentations were often uploaded to the learning management system Canvas prior to the lectures, and some students wrote notes directly in the note-taking field in the PowerPoint presentations. It therefore occurred to me, that I would do the same with my field notes. In this way, I could contextualise my observations of classroom activities with the topical content of the class in question. Seemingly a good idea, but it turned out that it conflicted with the structure of field notes in three columns, as described below, as this was not possible in the PowerPoint presentations. In the end, I valued the systematic and structured approach to field notes more than the conformity of observations to the presentations. I handled this instead by noting the content of the slides in my fieldnotes.

In the table below is an overview of the different kinds of activities, I observed while doing fieldwork.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Examples</b>
The first days of the semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reception of new students by tutors and staff</li> <li>- Off-campus introduction to specialisations in Aalborg Zoo</li> <li>- On-campus introduction to specialisations</li> <li>- Company Visit, bus tour to local businesses of the industry</li> </ul>
Lectures (lecturer doing presentations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observation of teaching</li> <li>- Observation of lecturer-student interaction</li> <li>- Observation of student behaviour in class</li> </ul>
Group work (lecturer moving between groups, students working more or less independently)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observation of student-to-student interaction</li> <li>- Observation of student-to-lecturer interactions</li> </ul>
Outside formal settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observing student arrivals in the morning</li> <li>- Drinking coffee and having lunch with the team of lecturers in lecturer break room</li> <li>- Observing students in classrooms on breaks</li> <li>- Observing students outside of classrooms; in hallways and cafeteria</li> </ul>

Figure 4. Overview of observations



In general, I structured my notes in three columns. The first contained descriptions of actions and events. The second had room for my personal reflections and feelings and was thus more diary-like. Fetterman emphasises the importance of keeping these two separate (Fetterman 2010). This is not to say, however, that my personal reflections are not a part of the data. In general, my personal notes helped me to reconstruct situations, as I recalled how I felt in the classroom. Furthermore, the personal notes provide a context in which to view the field notes from the first column. In that way, the personal notes served as a form of quality control as they were a way for me to retrace my emerging analysis (Fetterman 2010). I kept the third and last column for notes for this budding analysis, as a place to write impulses, possible themes and connections. Thus, the three columns had the purpose of maintaining a distance (at least structurally) between what happened, how I felt, and how it played into an analysis. In this way, the field notes are not only ‘a piece of data’ but also a first and very rough draft for analysis.

#### **5.4.5.2 Interviews**

Interviews are described as the most widely used alternative to observational techniques and perhaps as the most problematic (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). In the traditional understanding of interviews, they provide post hoc rationalisations and are used as a form of evidence of accounts of specific incidents and to illuminate on the different perspectives. However, in the text above, I have removed myself from perspectivism, and thus, the purpose of interview in praxiography changes. Interviews in this context must be viewed as a way of talking about practices in order to reconstruct them. Bueger & Gadinger (2014) distinguish between two types of interviews: expert interviews and participant interviews; the expert being a fellow observer with expert knowledge on the practices; the participant being, naturally, someone who participates in the practice of study. Participant interviews are central to this dissertation as I engage with programme director, key lecturers, and students in both formal and informal interviews in the attempt to reconstruct their practices in STHM. One might rely on different strategies for these interviews (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). The primary strategy of choice in this dissertation is to ask interviewees to recount their actual practices (Pouliot 2013). In the following table is an overview of the formal interviews of this dissertation.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Interviewee (duration)</b>
Formal, individual student interviews	Bettina (50 minutes) Cathrin (1 hour, 15 minutes) Dorothy (40 minutes) Harriet (35 minutes) Monica (55 minutes) Nellie (35 minutes) Rose (50 minutes)
Formal, individual interview	Lecturer (45 minutes)
Formal, individual interview	Internship coordinator (1 hour)
Formal, individual interview	Programme director (1 hour 15 minutes)

Figure 5. Overview of formal interviews

As I refer to formal and informal interviews above, I do not intend to suggest any level of structuration. In general, the interviews had little, if any, structure, and my approach to the interview was to get accounts of practices, as described above. With the terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ I refer only to whether the conversation between the interviewee and me had been verbalised as an actual ‘Interview’. In some cases, the conversation was planned as a formal interview, that I digitally recorded. Other interviews were not articulated as interviews, but took the form of informal conversations that were often initiated in relation to observations. These informal conversations are not included in the table above, but are represented in my field notes.

The formal interviews were set in an undisturbed meeting room (the interview with the programme director was set in his office). In each case, I began by thanking the interviewee for participating and often engaging in some small talk about the weather, the room, approaching exams, or similar topics that

were not directly related to the interview. In the case of staff interviews, I was often offered coffee, while I took the role of host towards the students and offered them coffee, which only a few of them accepted. Having set the scene, I described the form, duration and purpose of the interview. I also asked for permission to digitally audio record the interview. All participants agreed.

I chose not to transcribe the interviews. This choice is mainly motivated by resource prioritisation. Transcription is a time-consuming matter, and the benefits of transcribing should be judged, especially in relation to the purpose of the material. In the end, it is a judgment that rests upon necessity; is it necessary to transcribe in full? This depends largely upon the analytical strategies that are applied. In the case of venturing onto discourse analysis, a full transcript is preferred (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). However, the purpose in this case is to be able to describe practices, and several data sources contribute simultaneously to these descriptions. I chose, therefore, to abstain from a full transcription, transcribing only what seems essential. Instead, I allocated time to re-listening to the interview audio recordings several times during the analytical process. In this way, I remained open to the possibility that what I perceived to be essential and relevant could change over time and in accordance with my evolving analysis.

The informal lecturer and student interviews, or verbal interactions, differed not only from the formal interviews but each other as well. Because I am also a lecturer as well as a PhD student, I had access to lecturer offices and was recognised as a lecturer by the other lecturers. This meant that, in many cases, they met and acknowledged me as one of them and we quickly shared a sort of professional confidence in which they shared their thoughts and ideas of their practices without hesitation, as well as asking me for my thoughts on specific pedagogical challenges. With the students, it was different. They perceived me as a lecturer, a person of authority. In my initial interactions with them I had underlined my position as a PhD *student* to suggest that in some way we were at the same level, as well as the fact that I did not belong to their campus to distance myself from the lecturers they knew. I generally approached the students in groups so they outnumbered me to give them a feeling of security, and underplayed the position of authority they might otherwise place me in. These measures were taken simply to remove any concerns about my role. I was not there to judge them or as a representative from the administration or management. The primary value guiding my interaction with the students was to be 'natural', that is, not overly sociable or the reverse. I attempted to maintain a balance; I was not 'one of them' and did not try to be so, nor was I one of the lecturers that would teach and grade them. I was just myself and had a sincere wish to learn about their ways. Upon my first contacts and once they had gotten used to me, I was able to instigate conversations about SHTM in which I could ask more specific and for the most part open-ended

questions. There is no doubt, however, that the students perceived me as one of the ‘grown-ups’, one of the staff. Not least because I was positioned as such by the lecturers, for instance, as they approached me in breaks, asking if I wanted to join them in the break room. The students were polite and friendly towards me, but we did not have a confidential relationship, nor was that the purpose of my interactions with the students.

I did not record the verbal interactions (with students and lecturers) that occurred during my observations, as I tried to keep the conversations as natural as possible. Placing a recording device in front of the people I talked to would have made them too aware of my purpose and might have hindered conversation. On the other hand, one might argue that not having a recording device at hand necessitated that I spend a lot of energy remembering what was said, and perhaps less energy on being present in the conversation. However, as the main purpose of the interviews was to gain an understanding of practices and in a lesser way to catch the most well-articulated quotes, I preferred not to record interviews. Instead, I scribbled down my impressions as soon as possible without ending the interview abruptly. In some cases, this included quotations that I wrote down to the best of my recollection. This underlines the role of the researcher as a node in the network, as argued above. I do not claim that I stand outside of events describing them ‘objectively’, as I do not believe that such an outside position is possible. I am in the middle of things with the purpose of describing them in such a way that the other actors in the network will recognise them and agree in my description. This is at any point in time the value that guides validity in this dissertation. I will elaborate on this matter in section 5.5.

#### **5.4.5.3 Textual Analysis and Visual Material**

Bueger & Gadinger (2014) describe textual analysis as the second major alternative to fieldwork, that is, different types of observations. As ethnographic studies have traditionally been focused on native or ‘exotic’ cultures that are mainly oral or have no written history, there is a tendency or perhaps preference towards methods centring on oral accounts. Thus, the only written documents of an ethnography have in many cases been those produced by the ethnographers themselves (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). However, Hammersley and Atkinson describe many of the social settings that ethnographers study today, as ‘self-documenting’

in the sense that their members are engaged in the production and circulation of various kinds of written material (...) These include reports on ‘cases’, financial records, rulebooks, organizational charts, timetables, memoranda, and so on. (...) documentary sources

construct ‘facts’, ‘records’, ‘diagnoses’, ‘decisions’, and ‘rules’ that are crucially involved in social activities’ (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007, p. 121).

When conducting textual analysis, however, it is naturally of great importance which documents are selected for analysis. Bearing in mind that the purpose is to describe and reconstruct practices, the selected texts must be of a certain character that they will provide an insight into this matter. Bueger & Gadinger refer to the most important texts of that kind as ‘*ego-documents that provide details of activities that have been carried out by individuals*’ (Bueger, Gadinger 2014, p. 90). This might be personal diaries or written correspondence. As mentioned, a key portion of data in this dissertation is made up by weblogs (blogs) kept by students while on internship. These blogs not only hold students’ reflection on internship learning but also accounts of daily practices, which are more or less detailed in description. These posts provide a unique insight into the practices of SHTM students in internship that would have been difficult and time-consuming to obtain in other ways. As with all other methods and types of data, documents of this sort have their inherent strengths and weaknesses. They naturally reflect the interests and perspectives of their authors, as well as the context in which they are produced. (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). Thus, these blog posts must be read and treated while keeping in mind that they were conceptualised as a learning activity in a CSCL-based approach. The main consequence of this, it seemed, was that the students felt guilty towards their classmates when they did not have the time to comment on each other’s blogs, that is, the collaborative aspect of blogging. They did, however, express great satisfaction with having the chance to read each other’s work and thus gain insight into other’s internships. The students rarely expressed concerns or hesitations about what to write but perceived the blogs as a diary or logbook. Below is an overview of the number of blog posts and comments distributed to student bloggers. In total, the students produced a large quantity of practice description, supportive comments, and learning reflections. The posts and comments varied greatly. Many posts were quite lengthy and have provided several data points for further analysis.

<b>Student Names<sup>24</sup></b>	<b>No. of blog posts</b>	<b>No. of comments and replies received</b>
<b>Cathrin</b>	8	18
<b>Bettina</b>	22	49
<b>Dorothy</b>	16	23
<b>Helen</b>	6	17
<b>Monica</b>	24	34
<b>Nellie</b>	8	14
<b>Rose</b>	19	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>187</b>

Figure 6. Overview of blogposts, comments, and replies

Other written accounts or documents are also subject to textual analysis for this dissertation. Naturally, this includes the curriculum of SHTM and other organisational documents. According to Hammersley and Atkinson, there has been, and perhaps still is, a tendency in ethnographic research to represent social worlds as essentially oral cultures and thus to focus exclusively on verbal interactions (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). This can be expressed as a critique or an actual disregard of ‘official’ documents, statistics, and rules as data in ethnographic work. Hammersley and Atkinson, however, suggest that rather than treating such information at face value, researchers acknowledge it as social products, following Garfinkel’s remarks to think of records as ‘contractual’ rather than as ‘actuarial’ (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007, Garfinkel 1967, 1984). In this perspective and regarding the laboratory studies by Latour and Woolgar, documents and texts are the product of practices (in that specific reference, the practices of the laboratory) (Latour, Woolgar 1979). Official documents, such as the curriculum, are nodes or actors in the educational network, at the same time informing educational practice, as it is an output thereof. Therefore, I include official documents in my analysis to the extent that these might provide insight into the practices of the programme.

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<sup>24</sup> The names are aliases, as the students remain anonymous.

Furthermore, the SHTM programme keeps an active Facebook page with accounts of educational and professional practices. Such accounts are also empirical material that will contribute to a reconstruction of practice (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). Similarly, both Hammersley & Atkinson and Bueger & Gadinger, with reference to Reckwitz, point to visual and material artefacts as providers of understandings of practice (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007, Bueger, Gadinger 2014, Reckwitz 2008). In this case, for instance, several photographs of everyday scenes are included as empirical material in the cases that they contribute to describing or reconstructing practices.

## **5.5. TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

In the sections above, I have on occasion mentioned the matter of validity. In this section, I will elaborate on the trustworthiness of the research by discussing the four criteria suggested by Guba in qualitative research as an alternative to the use of validity and reliability as quality signifiers in quantitative research (Guba 1981).

The principles of validity and reliability are fundamental in quantitative research. Combined, they ensure that the research is correct by living up to rigorous guidelines in the research design and thus, that is it accepted as scientific truth by the scientific community. Validity and reliability in this regard rest on matters such as whether the measurements are correct, or whether other causal relations might exist that have affected the outcome. For the researcher positioned in another paradigm than positivism, however, the question of validity and reliability must take another direction. By rejecting the notion that an objective reality exists externally to our perception of it, it does not make sense to evaluate the truth of research results based on how they correspond to reality. From an ANT-based position, the argument goes as well; there is no divide between ontology and epistemology as described in section 4.4.

Regardless of the ontological position of one's paradigm of choice, any researcher must still consider how to ensure trustworthiness. Guba and Lincoln suggest four main aspects of trustworthiness that goes for all scientific work regardless of paradigm (Guba, Lincoln 1981). The four aspects are 'truth value' (how to establish confidence in the 'truth' of the findings), 'applicability' (how to determine the degree to which the inquiry has applicability in other contexts), 'consistency' (how to determine whether the findings would be consistently repeated if the inquiry was replicated) and 'neutrality' (how to establish the degree to which the findings are a function of the inquiry and not the motivations and perspectives of the researcher). In rationalistic research, the four aspects have been labelled internal validity, external validity or generalisability, reliability, and objectivity. Guba suggests

four parallel aspects for naturalistic research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The aspects are shown in the table below with the corresponding criteria for rationalistic and naturalistic research respectively.<sup>25</sup>

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Rationalistic</b>	<b>Naturalistic</b>
<b>Truth Value</b>	Internal Validity	Credibility
<b>Applicability</b>	External Validity Generalisability	Transferability
<b>Consistency</b>	Reliability	Dependability
<b>Neutrality</b>	Objectivity	Confirmability

Figure 7. Four Aspects of Trustworthiness

The ways of dealing with these four aspects of trustworthiness depend on the nature of the research, that is, whether one is doing rationalistic or naturalistic research. The paradigmatic foundation of this dissertation is described in Chapter 4 and evidently leans towards what Guba labels a naturalistic mode of inquiry. Thus, the trustworthiness of this dissertation rests on the notions of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In the sections below, I will touch upon each aspect in general and regarding the present dissertation specifically, touching upon the measures taken both during and after the inquiry to ensure trustworthiness.

### 5.5.1. CREDIBILITY

The truth value in rationalist research is referred to as a matter of internal validity: whether the research, in fact, studies what was intended. With the assumption of a single reality in mind, it follows logically that internal validity is determined by demonstrating coherence between the data and the

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<sup>25</sup> The table is adapted from (Guba 1981). The naturalistic paradigm is also referred to as phenomenological, anthropological, or ethnographic. It is opposed to the rationalistic mode of inquiry commonly practiced in the past and still dominating today with roots in logical positivism. Adaptations of Guba's work (e.g. (Shenton 2004)) refer to the two paradigms with the commonly known terms of qualitative (naturalistic) and quantitative (rationalistic) research. According to Guba, however, the terms naturalistic and rationalistic are preferred, as these terms emphasize how the difference between the paradigms are founded on ontological differences, e.g., the nature of reality, rather than methodical ones, even though rationalist researchers have a predisposition for quantitative methods and naturalist researchers for qualitative methods.



phenomena the data represent. However, as this is not possible without absolute knowledge, rationalist researchers approach the truth value by ruling out alternative explanations. Hence, research focuses on variables of special interest while maintaining other factors under control and thus eliminating sources of error (Guba 1981). In so doing, the researcher can increase the probability that their findings are correct or 'true'.

In naturalistic research, however, efforts will be made to maintain a holistic approach to the field. Naturalistic approaches may not be as theoretically rigorous and unassailable as rationalistic approaches. Instead, the truth-value in naturalistic research deals with the congruency of the findings with reality (Merriam 1998, Shenton 2004). The researcher may take various measures to ensure congruency with reality, that is, credibility. These include measures such as a prolonged engagement at a site, peer debriefing, triangulation, and member checks (Guba 1981).

In the methodical design of this dissertation, the aspiration for credibility is partly undertaken by an extended engagement in the context of interest with non-continuous involvement. Thus, over time, an increased understanding of the characteristics of that specific context emerges while irrelevant and chronologically isolated aspects can be disregarded. For instance, it would have been problematic to study the first two weeks of a new term for a new class in isolation as this period is evidently characterised by an increased level of social activity initiated by the programme to get the new students settled in. Thus, my classroom observations span more than the first weeks, lasting until a level of stability and recognisability is clear to me.<sup>26</sup> It is naturally a balancing act to find that point in time at which I can confidently say that my observational studies are done. I have elaborated on this in section 5.4.4. I must acknowledge that I do not know all there is to know about SHTM practices, as this would require prolonged participant observation up to the point where I would find myself as a full-fledged member of the community, that is, as an SHTM lecturer or graduate. This would, on the other hand, reduce my ability to describe the practices. However, neither is it the purpose to know all. The purpose of my data collection is to know enough, under the restraint of the resources available, as mentioned in section 5.4.3.

Peer debriefing has been a significant contributor to achieving a sufficient level of credibility. During my studies, I have met frequently with both researchers and education professionals, as I am part of both communities and thus have peers in both places. As a PhD student, I have been part of various

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<sup>26</sup> As for the accounts of internship, these span the entire duration of the internship period, rather than being limited to a few days or weeks. This is also an argument that speaks well for this data collection technique, as it would have been impossible for me to gather this amount of data singlehandedly by observation.

research environments, including formal settings such as conferences, courses, and peer review meetings, but also more informal settings in my network of PhD students. In the educational community and specifically at the SHTM campus, I have had the opportunity to retreat from classroom observations to staff offices (not those of SHTM lecturers as these in this case are not lecturers but members, which I will return to below). In these different contexts, I found environments where I could test my emerging insights through discussion with peers, within education planning, management, and practice. In this way, the worlds of research and education have been mutually enriching to my work.

Triangulation is perceived as basic in ethnographic research (Fetterman 2010). The terminology of triangulation is derived from an analogy with navigation. By aligning with a single landmark, a navigator can determine his position only as somewhere along a line from that landmark. By taking bearings from two landmarks, however, an exact position is determined by the intersection of two lines on a map (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). When adapting the concept to methodology, triangulation is the idea that using more and different research methods will raise the quality, that is, the credibility, of the research results. If several methods generate results that corroborate, this will inevitably heighten the credibility. Flick suggests how triangulation is an inherent quality of ethnographic research that is often used implicitly but can be used explicitly (Flick 2008). Hammersley and Atkinson describe three forms of triangulation; that of data sources, different researchers, and techniques triangulation (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007).

Triangulation is not, however, equivalent with the rather naïve mindset that if results from different data sources, researchers, or techniques correlate, then the results must necessarily be true. Adopting this position, one runs the risk of comparing results that are all in different ways flawed and leading to the same, wrong conclusion (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). Moreover, in the case of relying on ontologies that imply multiple realities, how can we tell whether diverging results are a matter of invalidity? That is, how can we tell whether inconsistencies between different data sources and techniques indicate untrue results or simply the revelation of multiple realities? I do not search for the one true explanation or attempt to prove a hypothesis by crosschecking with, for instance, other data sources. Triangulation, then, is much more than simply combining different sorts of data, but rather a matter of relating data in a way that counteracts possible threats to the credibility of the results (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). In this dissertation, I relate different research techniques and data sources, as described in section 5.4.5, to produce ethnographic texts, or stories, that describe multiple realities. These stories are subject to peer debriefing and member checks to further increase credibility. In section 5.7, I elaborate on the analytical strategies that have shaped my work.

Member checks, that is, the process of testing data and interpretations with members of the groups from which the data is solicited, are described by Guba as *'the single most important action inquirers can take, for it goes to the heart of the credibility criterion'* (Guba 1981, p. 85). These member checks have been undertaken in mainly different ways relating to the different data collection techniques that have been applied. About the blog accounts of internship practices, these were followed up by interviews, in which I had the possibility of inquiring about matters that were unclear to me. Furthermore, more than merely doing observations, my workdays on campus provided me with the opportunity to share and discuss my inferences with staff and students, which contributed to the credibility of my work.

### 5.5.2. TRANSFERABILITY

In a rationalistic mindset, applicability understood as external validity and generalisability touches upon the extent to which situational and chronological variables are made irrelevant to the findings (Guba 1981). When that is the case, the researcher is then able to make generalisable truth statements and thus the findings will have relevance in any setting. Such a context-free understanding of validity is unthinkable in a naturalist mindset, as any phenomena under study must inevitably be understood within the contexts they are found. This is not to say, however, that naturalistic research will never have relevance outside of the context in which it is conducted. Relevance, or transferability as Guba labelled it, in naturalistic research is dependent on the degree of similarity between the context in which the research is conducted and the context to which one seeks to transfer the findings.

Krefting refers to Lincoln and Guba (1985) in stating that *'it is not the researcher's job to provide an index of transferability, it is his or her responsibility to provide an adequate database to allow transferability judgments to be made by others'* (Krefting 1991, p. 221). The extent of information contributing to this index; which factors are considered to be unimportant, and which are critical is much debated in qualitative research (Shenton 2004). Denscombe advocated that the researcher ought to demonstrate how the specific case study compares to other environments in terms of contextual data (Denscombe 2010). However, as this would demand an extensive knowledge of other contexts and the 'typicality' of the context of topic in this dissertation, most researchers are reluctant to accept this position (Shenton 2004). Following the position described by Shenton, I have undertaken the responsibility as cited in the beginning of this paragraph by providing background information about the organisation, the participants, the data collection methods, the duration of data collection sessions, and the period over which the data was collected (Shenton 2004). By aiming at

transparency in the planning and conduct of the research process, I attempt to ensure enough background information for readers to judge whether this study might be transferred to other specific contexts.

Moreover, ‘thick’ descriptions, that is, detailed descriptions of phenomena and contexts, are essential to ethnographic writing (Fetterman 2010). Both during and after the data collection process, Guba highlights thick descriptions as a provision to ensure transferability (Guba 1981). Like the extensive background information described above, these descriptions of contexts are provided for readers to consider the ‘degree of fittingness’ to other contexts. The thick descriptions in the form of stories of practices that are found in the analytical chapters of this dissertation are as described not unfamiliar to ethnographic writing in general or ANT-based writing specifically. There are numerous examples of key ANT works that use the same approach to which I have looked for inspiration (Latour 1999a, Law 2002, Mol 2002).

### **5.5.3. DEPENDABILITY**

The question of consistency in the rationalistic paradigm is a matter of reliable results and is often grounded in the stability of instruments to produce reliable and consistent results. Thus, validity is directly dependent on reliability (Guba 1981). However, whereas the rationalist bases his/her work on the assumption of a single reality from which stable findings can be extracted through measurements with instruments, the naturalist has no such ideas. For one, the naturalist researcher rejects the idea of a single reality and second, humans and human behaviour are a central instrument in obtaining knowledge. Hence, diverging results will not necessarily stem from instrumental errors, but from *‘evolving insights and sensitivities’* (Guba 1981, p. 81). What can, for instance, be described as stemming from multiple realities and what is due to increased insight for the informants? Consistency is, therefore, a matter of producing dependable results that are not necessarily invariant but whose variance can be traced back to a source, and thus the matter of dependability in this dissertation relies on establishing an ‘audit trail’ that will allow any hypothetical external auditor to examine the process of data collection and analysis (Guba 1981). I have therefore aimed for a high level of clarity and detail in the description of my data collection and analysis in the present Chapter 5.

### **5.5.4. CONFIRMABILITY**

For the rationalist researcher, the matter of neutrality is a matter of ensuring methodologically that the researcher’s assumptions and biases do not affect the results. This is assured, for instance, by maintaining a distance between the investigator and the researched and leaving research records open to public

scrutiny(Guba 1981). However, research will inevitably reflect the predispositions of the researcher, not least in the choice of topic for research. The naturalist researchers with their acknowledgement of multiple realities and, thus, multiple values, understand that, as they are instruments in the research, their predispositions affect the research. Therefore, in a naturalist paradigm, the question of neutrality is not viewed as objectivity (as this is not possible), but as confirmability of the data, moving neutrality from the investigator to the data(Guba 1981). The considerations on confirmability in this dissertation rely, as noted above in relation to credibility, on the combination of different research techniques, and data sources to produce the ethnographic ‘stories’ presented in chapters 7, 8, and 9, as well as the establishment of the audit trail, as noted in relation to dependability, with the purpose of intentionally revealing the underlying assumptions of my work(Guba 1981).

For the matter of trustworthiness in general, it must also be noted that, as opposed to rationalistic research, the naturalistic researcher cannot guarantee a study against the threats to trustworthiness. One can only increase the probability of a study’s trustworthiness and provide evidence that will persuade, rather than compel, readers of the relative trustworthiness of a study(Guba 1981).

## **5.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Research in education is not subject to standardised practices but varies a great deal depending on local and theoretical traditions. This does not, however, exclude the need for providing ethical considerations and holding the research to high ethical standards. The British Educational Research Association (BERA) published a set of ethical guidelines in 2011 (British Educational Research Association 2011). The guidelines are not a set of rules and regulations, but rather a best practice concerning ethics. These guidelines have served as the ethical foundation for my research, and in the following, I will elaborate on my ethical considerations.

The guidelines have the specific purpose of promoting respect for all who are or become engaged in educational research and thus section the responsibility of the researcher under four headlines: Responsibilities to Participants, Responsibilities to Sponsors of Research, Responsibilities to the Community of Educational Researchers, and Responsibilities to Educational Professionals, Policy Makers, and the Public. Beginning with the last, the responsibilities in this regard revolve around seeking to make one’s research public and conveying it in an appropriate language(British Educational Research Association 2011). Making the research public is naturally the essence of my intentions with this dissertation, and I already touched upon the matter of

language in section 5.3. Regarding my responsibilities to the community of educational researchers, the matter, as BERA presents it, deals heavily with academic misconduct (British Educational Research Association 2011). This issue is to some extent regulated by my considerations on trustworthiness as already described in section 5.5 and rests also on my personal integrity that I have of course kept to the highest standard. The ethical considerations regarding the sponsors of research as described by BERA emphasises independence and transparency in the work undertaken and the choices made in the process (British Educational Research Association 2011). As mentioned in the acknowledgements, this research is funded in a collaboration between UCN and AAU. There have been no attempts at influencing the process, and essentially the sponsors (UCN and AAU) have acted as hosts or facilitators for the research. BERA suggests that in cases of that nature, the researcher should, out of courtesy, inform the sponsors of the work undertaken. This has been an embedded part of my process during semi-annual evaluations and reviews. Furthermore, the management directly involved in my work by providing me access to their practices have been informed of my proposed work (as mentioned in section 5.4.3).

For the remainder of this section, my main priority is to describe the ethical considerations concerning participants. The research undertaken depends entirely on the participation of individuals, and throughout the process, I have aimed to operate within an ethic of respect for these persons (British Educational Research Association 2011). Respect in this sense implies formally or informally ensuring voluntary informed consent from participants. This has been undertaken in different ways, depending on the data collection techniques and contexts, as also noted by Fetterman (2010).

The internship students, who provided a lot of individual and personal data, were first and foremost informed through written descriptions of the intervention as well as an introductory meeting. They all signed a consent form that specified the nature and purpose of research as well as how the data would be handled afterwards. BERA states that there are specific challenges regarding the participation in online activities and that it must be made clear to the participants that the activities are being monitored and analysed (British Educational Research Association 2011). This was emphasised in the consent forms, and it was evident, that all students were aware of this fact, as we also discussed whether this had had an impact on their blogging in the interviews after their internships and therefore the blogs were concluded.

Regarding my observational studies, the approach was quite different, and this also reflected the type of data obtained. The context was much larger and the nature of the research less personal. Permission was required nonetheless, and rather than following the formal approach of the written consent form, I aimed

for a high level of openness and information and attempted to provide information about my research as best I could. As described in section 5.4.3, before my fieldwork, all students were sent an email informing them of my research (including its purpose) and my presence, and urging them to pose any question they might have or any objections to my presence in the classroom. Furthermore, I presented myself in the classroom, was naturally visible among the students, and asked for permission to join them and ask questions when I zoomed in on a specific student or group of students. Thus, the students were always aware of my presence. I did not, however, experience that my presence in any way affected their natural behaviour in class. The lecturers were, as the students, informed by email of my research prior to the initiation of my observational studies. Furthermore, before observing a specific class, I sent that lecturer an email inquiring whether they would consent to my being in class. In that email, I also clarified the purpose of my research, that is, describing the general educational practices of SHTM rather than, say, describe or evaluate individual lecturers. Therefore, all data in this dissertation have been anonymised, and all participants were informed of this. In conclusion, I would like to emphasise that during the entire project I have been available for all participants for any questions that might occur. It has been part of all my communication to participants, including email, meetings, and in person. Few took advantage of my availability, and the ones that did were lecturers. I do, however, perceive these questions (such as ‘What is it exactly you’re working on?’) that I readily answered, as more of personal interest or conversation topic, rather than a critical or nervous inquiry.

## 5.7. ANALYTICAL STRATEGIES

Fetterman describes ethnographic analysis as beginning ‘*at the moment a fieldworker selects a problem to study and ends with the last word in the report or ethnography*’ (Fetterman 2010, p. 93). It is thus not delimited to the writing of the chapters designated for analysis, that is, in this dissertation’s chapters 6, 7, and 8. Moreover, the presentation of the analytical strategies in the present section might indicate a linear process of research in which the outlining of analytical strategies follows the methodical considerations as described above and precedes the analytical work that commences in Chapter 6. This is not the case. In fact, the present section was one of the last things that I completed in my writing process. Therefore, the considerations that I present in this section may not be perceived as a merely prescriptive approach; but one that is also characterised by retrospective reflection. Granted, some of the analytical considerations were based on the research traditions often found in ANT-based research and decided and written before I began sorting the data and writing the analysis, but the specific descriptions of, for example, how I interacted with my data has been written at the end of the analytical process.

As I argued in previous sections, I—the researcher—am central to the progression of the research. This might seem like I am stating the obvious, but it nonetheless is a central point as, in the previous chapter, I have argued for the role I played in collecting my data. This somewhat egocentric perspective is not in any way lessened as I describe the analytical strategies. In fact, Fetterman argues that *'analysis in ethnography is as much a test of the ethnographer as it is a test of the data (...)* First and foremost, analysis is a test of the ethnographer's ability to think—to process information in a meaningful and useful manner' (Fetterman 2010, p. 93). From all the information, that I have gathered, I am on a task to make sense of it. This sense-making process stems from a personal perception of the data in combination with theoretical and methodical techniques (Fetterman 2010). Accordingly, this section is a description of my thinking process and the tools and techniques that supported it.

As mentioned, the process of analysis is not delimited to the actual analytical chapters. It expands the entire research process, and thus it is difficult to demarcate clearly separate phases of research. For presentation purposes, however, this is done in this dissertation through a division into chapters. This does not change the fact that in research practice (my research practice, at least) the different phases are intertwined. Specifically, I have put a great deal of consideration into where I should draw the line between describing my methodical choices and my analytical strategies. Initially, my idea was to describe *how I collected data* in one chapter and *how I interacted with (i.e., structured and presented) data* in another. In the end, however, I felt that the lines between one and the other were so fine that it made more sense to incorporate both into one quite long chapter, that is, the present Chapter 5. For instance, in my considerations on trustworthiness in section 5.5, the claims, for example, for transferability depend on 'thick descriptions', which is inevitably also a matter of presentation. Similarly, the question of transcribing interviews is treated in section 5.4.5.2 on interviews for coherence, but documenting data is as much a part of the analytical strategy as it is a matter of methods for collection. As mentioned in section 4.4, the philosophy of ANT rejects the dichotomy of the idea of a reality existing 'out there', casting aside the division between ontology and epistemology. Rather, the philosophy embraces the notion that the researcher is on par with the other actors. This contributes further to the blurring of the boundaries between collection and analysis of data. I am sure that many important points regarding the practices I was there to study got lost. Either I was not there at the right time, or I failed to see the significance at the time and did not make a note of it. It is important to remember that the presentation of the analysis as it unfolds over the next chapters is my translation of the data. John Law also touched upon this regarding his observational data (Law 1994).



### 5.7.1. LOOKING FOR PATTERNS

Having collected the data as described above, the matter of organising and exploring the data comes next. Fetterman describes the process as beginning ‘with a mass of undifferentiated ideas and behaviours, and then collects pieces of information, comparing, contrasting, and sorting gross categories and minutiae until a discernible thought or behaviour becomes identifiable’ (Fetterman 2010, p. 97). This process of identifying patterns has been central in my analytical work. As described, I looked at the practices that were visible in my data, and from these practices I could identify various patterns in SHTM educational practice. Some were visible from the start, while others appeared only as I progressed in my understanding, and yet some proved not to hold as I progressed in my work. My realisation process was characterised by a continuous and iterative movement, which on some occasions led me to reorganise the patterns that I had once identified as I saw new connections and cast others aside.

Although this sounds very abstract, in practice this was done through an explicitly concrete and analogue work process. Initially, I organised my data according to origin. I had a document for each of the internship blogs, as well as one with each interview excerpt,<sup>27</sup> and one with my observational notes. I then broke the texts into chunks, and, in the margin of each document, I wrote down the themes or keywords that related to the specific chunk of text. One chunk of text might be subject to several keywords. It was important to me to not a priori limit my understanding of the data. Hammersley and Atkinson refer to this coding practice as ‘coding inclusively’ (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). As my analysis and understanding progressed, some codes were discarded or renamed, and on other occasions the inclusive coding was inductive to revealing connections that I had previously failed to see. Having coded my entire body of data, I printed all pages, literally cut them into pieces and reorganised them into groups according to the codes.

Then, I stored each group in separate folders, thereby allowing me to deal with one theme at a time—although on more than one occasion I reviewed all data bits together, when new insights appeared. Admittedly, this could have been done through digital word processing, but I felt that this manual and analogue process made me interact more closely with my data and this way I got to know it better. Furthermore, it also helped me consider various structures for presentation. By having the categories visibly and physically in front of me, I could test my ideas of which sections would logically precede others, and which sections were logical extensions of other arguments.

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<sup>27</sup> In section 5.4.5.2, I comment on my considerations on transcribing interviews.

Many ethnographers today use Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), such as for instance NVivo or ATLAS.ti. Indeed, the use of such tools is subject of much methodical literature, also specifically in ethnomethodology and with an ANT basis, for example (Wright 2016). Using such analytic software holds certain benefits that allow for more complex forms of analysis (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). That said, Hammersley and Atkinson also acknowledge that for smaller data sets, simple and physical procedures work just as well as data-handling software (Hammersley, Atkinson 2007). My deselection of data analysis software rests in part on the benefits associated with the analogue coding and sorting as described above (an increased awareness of data and the structure), and in part on the matter of time resources. Getting acquainted with a complex piece of software takes time, and despite the benefits that might be associated with it, I chose to use that time for a refinement and condensation of the analysis.

### 5.7.2. WRITING PRAXIOGRAPHY

As mentioned on several occasions in the text above, this dissertation is based on an inherent sensitivity towards practice. Therefore, for me, the purpose of doing research is to describe practices. Thus, I have intended to develop a methodical approach and applied a combination of data collection techniques that would enable me to reconstruct practices (Bueger, Gadinger 2014, p. 91). The combination of data (techniques) is also practically visible as I chose to write my descriptions of practice by combining the different forms of data where appropriate. Thus, the dissertation is not structured by data source (e.g., by describing the findings in different sections according to source). In the process of working with the data, I found it easier to work with the internship stories by the students as a data source, rather than my observational studies. Although I was obviously present during my observational studies, this data source required significantly more analytical work to unveil its meaning, that is, to reconstruct the practices. Although present, surprisingly I was in a way further from the data during my observations, compared to the data that were ‘given to me’. One reason for this might be an underlining of the fact that matters of identity have an irrevocably personal nature. The closer the accounts were to persons, the easier they were to work with. Another obvious reason is that the internship students provided me with elaborate, ready-to-go first-person accounts of practices, while my reconstruction, for example, of classroom practices required that I again and again observed, took field notes, and refined the descriptions to get a grip on what was happening.

Bueger and Gadinger further suggest aligning with Nicolini (2009) who describes the recursivity of praxiography as a movement of zooming in and zooming out (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). Thus, it is the first step of research to focus—or zoom in—on, for example, a specific type of relation, and

afterwards zoom out to explore the effects of this relation. Accordingly, I initially zoomed in on the material elements of SHTM practices, before zooming out on their effects. This allows for a description of the enactment of identity (Chapter 6) as well as the organisational patterns that make these enactments possible or not (chapters 7 and 8). In this iterative process, I continuously moved back and forth between theory, methodology, and empirical material, and thus the research becomes empirical-methodological-theoretical gatherings rather than perceiving them as separate aspects (Hansbøl 2010). Accordingly, the following chapters of this dissertation will engage not only with empirical data, since empirical data do not exist by themselves dislocated from theory, as mentioned above. Rather, theory, methodology, and empirical data are connected and used to describe practices that I engage in by collaborating with practitioners (students, lecturers, and others) (Bueger, Gadinger 2014). Therefore, in the analytical chapters 6, 7, and 8, theory and methodology exist alongside empirics. For readability, I have chosen to present theoretical and methodological excerpts in ‘theory boxes’, such as the one below.

### **The Nature of Groups**

Latour touched upon the matter of identity in ‘Reassembling the Social’ (Latour 2005). Here, Latour described ‘*the nature of groups*’ and ‘*the way actors are given an identity*’ as a classic sociological uncertainty (Latour 2005, p. 22). According to Latour, the relation of an actor to one specific group over another (be it national, political, religious, historical, professional, or based on interest) ‘*is an on-going process made up of uncertain, fragile, controversial, and ever-shifting ties*’ (Latour 2005, p. 28). Identity is thus a matter made of social relations, which one cannot ‘*limit in advance the shape, size, heterogeneity and combination of associations*’ (Latour 2005, p. 11), as described in Chapter 4. This is a break with traditional sociology, according to Latour, which tends to approach the matter of groups through predefinitions.

Figure 8. An example of a theory box

Observation excerpts and interview quotes are indented, and quotation marks and italics indicate direct quotes. The body text of the analysis attempts to make connections between the elements.

The analytical chapters 6, 7, and 8 together constitute Part Three of this dissertation. Upon much consideration, I chose to give Part Three the title of ‘Closures’. I hereby wish to indicate and acknowledge the concept of

enactment and hereby multiplicity as fundamental to my work. As I argue for multiple identities in my analysis, I, inspired by Mol(2002), wish to maintain that these identities are, in fact, different identities, and not different representations of it, as described with regard to atherosclerosis in section 4.3.3. In education, just as in Mol's example of the health system, there must be practical closures in which the concept is locked down. This is the case with, for instance, exams or job descriptions, in which cases it is defined that in this specific closure professional identity is one thing and not another. However, as identity is continually enacted, there are no real closures (which also facilitates the argument that continuous investigation of enactments of identity is necessary, and thus is an argument for the relevance of this thesis). In my analysis, I do not wish to indicate that the descriptions of identity are anything but such practical closures that serve the purpose of presenting a piece of research. It is an attempt to pin down something that 'in reality' is a moving, produced, and enacted concept.

## **5.8. RETURNING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

In section 3.3, I posed the main research question of the dissertation:

What is the role of education in the enactment of identity?

Throughout the period of my PhD, I have continually shaped and reshaped my research question, as it was informed by the philosophy of ANT. This constant reshaping continued throughout my analytical process, in which I worked with my empirical material and saw patterns emerge. Three sub-questions were shaped in this process as well. The sub-questions are:

1. How is identity enacted in SHTM education?
2. How do organisational practices enable identity enactment?
3. What issues may lead to conflicts in identity enactment?

Besides supporting me in answering the research question, the sub-questions also structure my presentation of the analysis. Thus, Chapter 6 aims at answering sub-question 1, Chapter 7 provides insight into sub-question 2, and Chapter 8 serves as an answer to sub-question 3.



## **PART THREE: CLOSURES**



# **CHAPTER 6. IDENTITY ASSEMBLAGES OF SHTM**

## **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

The main purpose of this chapter is answering research sub-question 1: How is identity enacted in SHTM education? The chapter starts off by defining identity in relational terms as an identity assemblage. With a foundation in a theoretical understanding based mainly on the work of Bruno Latour, the chapter enrolls concepts such as that of anti-groups, mediators, and intermediaries to argue for the enactment of identity. Identity is perceived as a multiplicity, and therefore I can describe five identity assemblages including the identities of ‘not a common receptionist’, shtmx09YY, the dutiful student, the hospitality professional, and past, present, and future identities. Due to the empirical philosophy (not theory, not method) that characterises ANT, relations and enactments appear and are given meaning only through empirics, as mentioned in Chapter 4. Therefore, the empirics are enrolled through the description of practices; compare to Chapter 5. The accounts of several internship students as well as on-campus accounts are the empirical driving force of the chapter. The chapter concludes with a section summarising the main points which are that identity may be defined through its anti-groups, that identity may be understood as assemblages that include materialities, that actors in identity assemblages may be understood as mediators or intermediaries, that the successful performance of an identity depends on the nature of the relation to the actors in the identity assemblage, and that past experiences may become mediators of identity.

## **6.2. APPROACHING AN UNDERSTANDING OF IDENTITY ASSEMBLAGES**

Although the matter of identity is not a central one in traditional ANT resources, an understanding thereof can be drawn out of key ANT resources.



### **The Nature of Groups**

Latour touched upon the matter of identity in ‘Reassembling the Social’ (Latour 2005). Here, Latour described ‘*the nature of groups*’ and ‘*the way actors are given an identity*’ as a classic sociological uncertainty (Latour 2005, p. 22). According to Latour, the relation of an actor to one specific group over another (be it national, political, religious, historical, professional, or based on interest) ‘*is an on-going process made up of uncertain, fragile, controversial, and ever-shifting ties*’ (Latour 2005, p. 28). Identity is thus a matter made of social relations, which one cannot ‘*limit in advance the shape, size, heterogeneity, and combination of associations*’ (Latour 2005, p. 11), as described in Chapter 4. This is a break with traditional sociology, according to Latour, which tends to approach the matter of groups through predefinitions.

Thus, the understanding of identity in this chapter and this thesis, in general, takes its point of departure from a relational approach and can be referred to as a material semiotic, as described in section 4.2. By aligning with a material-semiotic understanding of identity, the concept is given meaning through both its positive associations, that is, what it is, as well as its disassociations, that is, what it is not. The relations or associations that both positively and negatively inform professional identity may be formed to such diverse actors as job titles, theoretical foundation, people, places, or objects.<sup>28</sup> A similar argument has been made by Marilyn Strathern who, in her work on the people of Papua New Guinea, argues for a conception of identity that is not based on a differentiation between objects and subjects, but that what one is rather a hybrid of person plus material and spiritual extensions (Strathern 1999, Gad, Jensen 2010).

Hence, identity can be referred to as an assemblage, a term not unfamiliar to ANT in which all things are considered as complicated assemblages of both human-nonhuman and material-immaterial actors (Hansbøl 2010). For this dissertation, I invoke the term ‘identity assemblage’ as the key concept, which has also provided the dissertation’s title. The term is chosen as it emphasises the relational approach but does not a priori define what is assembled. It does, however, make the a priori assumption that identity is made up of associations between more than one heterogeneous actor (Hansbøl 2010). Moreover, solely identifying and defining these actors is not the purpose of ANT-based research such as this. What is emphasised, rather, is the relations—*how* it is enacted,

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<sup>28</sup> Although the actors cannot be defined in advance but only upon an empirical investigation such as the present.

*how* the actors come into play. This is the process of translation in which the actors are enrolled in the network that makes up identity. Emphasis in ANT lies on the connections between the nodes, rather than the nature of the nodes themselves. For the present chapter, however, I focus mainly on describing the identity assemblages I have encountered during my studies. Chapter 7 is dedicated to an elaboration on the modes of ordering that enable identity assemblages.

As mentioned in the introduction, this chapter describes five identity assemblages. It is important to underline that the identity assemblages I have described in this chapter must not be perceived as an exhaustive presentation of all the identity assemblages. Nor are they unrelated. Rather, in the words of Mol, they are more than one and less than many (Mol 2002). Why exactly these five and not others, one might ask? The chapter as it appears in this finalised version is, of course, a result of an editorial process. Mainly, however, as I mentioned in Chapter 5, it is an implicit condition of my approach that the analysis is a translation of the data that I collected, and—you might add—the data I collected is a translation of the context as it presented itself to me.

The use of graphical representations of assemblages has been cause for much consideration on my behalf. I therefore feel it necessary to underline that the representations as they appear in this dissertation do not aim towards providing a fixed and steady definition of a certain identity; that would be contrary to the philosophical and methodological foundation of this dissertation. This is not a piece of research that, in the style of grounded theory such as it is presented (Strauss, Corbin 1994), for example, wishes to develop theory based on empirical data. Rather, the graphic representations are visualisations of the associations that I have seen in the enactment of various identities. They are, in a way, momentary snapshots of realities that I have attempted to describe. I have chosen to visualise the identity assemblages by relational diagrams that are without lines or arrows to avoid suggesting any hierarchy or highlighting specific relations. Nor has it been the intention to suggest either proximity or size by how the actors are placed in the diagrams, which is purely random. In this way, I hope to stay closer to the network metaphor as it was originally intended, as described in section 4.3.2. In Chapter 7, I elaborate on different modes of ordering that affect the enactment of the identity assemblages by facilitating some ways of being rather than others. Thus, Chapter 7 to some extent tries to describe how some actors may appear as ‘bigger’ or more or less ‘important’ than others. Relative size and importance are, as also described in section 4.3.2, a matter of connections.

### 6.3. NOT A COMMON RECEPTIONIST

The first identity assemblage that appears based on my empirical data is one that is defined through negation, by what it is not. To tell this story, I first introduce Bettina, an SHTM student who, at the time that I meet her, has just finished her internship. Bettina's internship position was at a small inn located in beautiful surroundings in the north of Jutland. On most days, she followed matron Elisabeth in her tasks at the inn. These tasks included handling bookings, checking guests in and out, meeting with the marketing committee, planning events, helping in the restaurant, and many other tasks. Most workdays centred on the reception as her main workstation, although her tasks were of a nature that occasionally required her presence in other places.



Figure 9. The reception at the inn. Photo from Bettina's blog.

Although the reception is central to many of her tasks and is her primary workstation, she takes great care in underlining that she is not just a 'common receptionist'. It is clear from the following exchange from our interview, in which she describes how she developed a specific strategy when she applied for internship positions to ensure that the offers she would receive were relevant:

*Bettina: I noticed that when I would send something, and I would write Service, Hospitality, and Tourism*

*Manager in the subject field, those that answered me knew what it was. Those who don't know—I can't use that. First, those people up in Hjørring, they didn't know anything, but I first accepted because, you know, I need to find a place.*

*Line: What difference does it make that they know what a Service, Hospitality, and Tourism Manager is, do you think?*

*Bettina: You run the risk that they just let you answer the phones. But if they know, they can help me and I can get to see it all. Take a place like [another hotel], I heard that they take in SHTM students like receptionist trainees and pay them a trainee salary, and that is not how it is supposed to be. It is very important to keep SHTM'ers and receptionists apart. People must understand that they are two different things. A common receptionist doesn't have the same tools that I have. And I get so annoyed because we are not just common receptionists.*

Evidently, Bettina clearly distinguishes between the SHTM professional and the receptionist.<sup>29</sup> This exemplifies the matter of anti-groups, that is, that the identity of a group must always be understood through its anti-groups (Latour 2005). The mapping of anti-groups is thus a vital part of the enactment of identity.

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<sup>29</sup> Training to be a receptionist in Denmark is a programme attended at vocational college, with admission requirements being completed primary and lower secondary school.

### Anti-groups

In *Reassembling the Social*, Latour describes how actors, while undertaking the work of tracing the boundaries of a group, and thus informing its identity, are always engaged in the business of mapping anti-groups (Latour 2005). These anti-groups are, according to Latour, often described as dangerous, obsolete, empty, and so forth (Ibid. 2005). The ties, the associations, define a group, and these associations are emphasised by comparison to competing ties and, therefore, when defining a group, a list of anti-groups can be made as well. Latour points to the fact that actors are engaged in the mapping of anti-groups as quite convenient for observers who attempt to understand the particular group. Thus, actors will provide observers with a 'full-blooded theory of what sort of sociology they should be treated with' (Ibid., p. 32). This positions the actors as more than mere 'informants', as classical sociology would have it, according to Latour. Instead, it underlines the importance of the observing being on par with the actors as touched upon in section 4.4 and allowing '(a)ctors (to) do the sociology for the sociologists and sociologists (to) learn from the actors what makes up their set of associations' (Ibid., p. 32).

In this case, Bettina defines her identity by drawing a boundary to the anti-group 'common receptionists'. Making a distinction between her and the common receptionist is important to Bettina, as she perceives the receptionist to be inferior to her SHTM identity. She does not want to run the risk of being mistaken for a receptionist. Therefore, she takes great care in underlining, not only to me, but also to possible internship hosts during the application process, that there is a difference between SHTM'ers and receptionists. Bettina bases the distinction upon 'the tools'<sup>30</sup>, that is, a higher level of education, and refuses to be paid a trainee salary. Being paid a salary is thus perceived by Bettina as inferior to receiving the state educational grant (SU), indicating that Bettina sees herself as someone with a higher purpose of learning rather than simply performing work. The anti-group of 'common receptionists' was instrumental for Bettina, and this anti-group seems to permeate other students' thinking as well. Rose, who interned at a hotel in the centre of Aalborg, applied for an internship in that particular hotel because it collaborates with a large congress centre. Therefore, the position at the hotel holds other work opportunities such as, for instance, event planning and execution. Rose is very clear:

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<sup>30</sup> I return to these 'tools' later in this chapter.

*I don't want to just be at a hotel and stand there checking people in and out. That's just too boring.*

Receptionists are clearly inferior, as Latour pointed out that anti-groups often are. A receptionist is someone who 'just answers the phones', does 'boring' work, while Bettina and Rose can 'get to see it all' and have other opportunities.

Working at the reception, Bettina has to wear 'nice clothes', that is, office clothes, although the inn does not have outright working clothes:

*We don't have working clothes here. I have to wear nice clothes because I'm regularly at the reception. Elisabeth and the cleaning staff wear black T-shirts with Forrest Inn print and whatever pants they want. And a waiter MUST wear a white shirt, black pants and black shoes. And then they are given a Forrest Inn apron to wear.*

Other students have interned at hotels and have worn uniforms. Cathrin, who interned at a large hotel in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), trained in different departments during her stay. She started out at the 'front office', which included working at the telephone switchboard and reception work. At the front office, she and her colleagues were in direct contact with guests and accordingly wore uniforms. After her period in the front office, she moved onto Sales and Marketing:

*Now I only have six shifts left in the reception, before I move onto Sales and Marketing (and there you get to wear your own clothes, hooray!)*

From both Bettina and Cathrin's example, it is evident that the materiality of the uniform is significant for their identity enactment. Both in Bettina's case where there are no formal uniforms at the inn and in Cathrin's case of a hotel with formal uniforms, the clothing enacts a clear distinction between the different professional groups. In this way, the materiality of clothing is part of the enactment of identities at the inn and hotel: the cleaning staff wears T-shirts, the waiters wear aprons, receptionists wear uniforms, Sales and Marketing does not. Thus, the physical circumstances of the workplace play into the performance of being a professional, and when Cathrin physically moves from one department to another, she tries on different identities as first a receptionist, second a sales and marketing professional, and changes not only her workplace but her clothes accordingly.

On several occasions, Bettina helped the waiters prepare the dining rooms for breakfast and evening service and on one occasion she was a waiter. Not because she had to, but as she explained, ‘*Here at the inn, everyone helps where they can.*’ Besides, waiting was the only position she had yet to try out at the inn. That way she had ‘seen it all’. Being a waiter required that she buy herself a white shirt; compare to her explanation of the professional groups and their apparel above. To assume the momentary identity of a waiter, Bettina must leave behind the regular, ‘nice’ clothes, that is, office clothes, for the sake of the white shirt and the apron. Bettina enjoyed the experience as a waiter, and although she would like to do it again, she does not see herself as a waiter:

*I showed our guests to their tables, welcomed them, and presented the menu and wine offers. It was a fish and seafood buffet. The last one this year. I’ll never be a waiter! But I like to welcome the guests.*

It is evident that the waiter identity conflicts with Bettina’s ideas of her professional identity as an SHTM professional. She clearly emphasised being a waiter was not part of her identity; she was not a waiter because she was required to be; rather, being a waiter was a matter of facilitating her knowledge of the different positions at the inn, enabling her to assume a superior SHTM identity. Being a waiter was more a matter of helping each other out, that is, doing a favour for colleagues, than it reflected who Bettina is professionally. And regarding the matter of apparel, wearing the white shirt and apron does not make Bettina a waiter, which she clearly emphasises: ‘*I’ll never be a waiter!*’

Recapturing the beginning of this chapter, Bettina mentioned how the ‘tools’ define the difference between the common receptionist and herself as an SHTM professional. In our interview, I inquired about these tools, asking her if she meant theoretical tools, which she confirmed. Bettina describes on her blog how she, based on her background as a butcher and a chef,<sup>31</sup> discovered some mistakes with the handling of the breakfast buffet at the inn. She therefore compiled a document of theory and recommendations for the inn’s management. She also shares these considerations with the readers of her blog. In both document and blog, she refers to theories and concepts such as ‘the experience over time’, ‘Pine & Gilmore’s sensory engagement’ and trends such as environmentally-aware business management through minimising food waste. These theoretical considerations are applied in specific recommendations such as:

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<sup>31</sup> I will return to Bettina’s history as a chef in section **Fejl! Henvisningskilde ikke fundet.**

- *Out of season, it is not smart to have two pitchers of milk as this produces food waste and it is just money down the drain.*
- *It is recommended that yoghurt be chilled at the buffet. The bowl should be changed EVERY day. It is disgusting for the guest that the bowl looks used.*
- *It is highly recommended to invest in a cooling solution for the breakfast buffet, and that all products that need to be cooled will be cooled for the 2-3 hours that the buffet is in session. In the long run it will be the more financial solution for the inn, since food waste is minimised.*

In the full document, she thus advised the board at the inn on the proper management of the breakfast buffet by drawing on theories of experience economy in combination with her knowledge of food handling from her training as a chef, as I will return to in section 6.7. In the interview, she explains to me that the inn's board consists mainly of bankers and only one board member with experience from the service industry. She felt that her knowledge of theories gave her arguments more impact. On her blog, she concludes the story of the breakfast buffet by relating that the board received her recommendations very well and that there will be changes. By the application and dissemination of theory, Bettina positions herself as an SHTM professional as something other (and more) than the receptionist.

The point that I have attempted to make in this section through invoking the voices of Bettina, Rose, and Cathrin is how, through a focus on practices, the matter of identity can be understood as an assemblage. The identity of 'not a common receptionist' is not something that the students do by themselves or simply 'achieves', but it is something that is enacted in an intricate web of relations between the individual student and other actors, human and non-human, material as well as immaterial. A provisional and careful sketching of this identity assemblage is suggested in Figure 10.



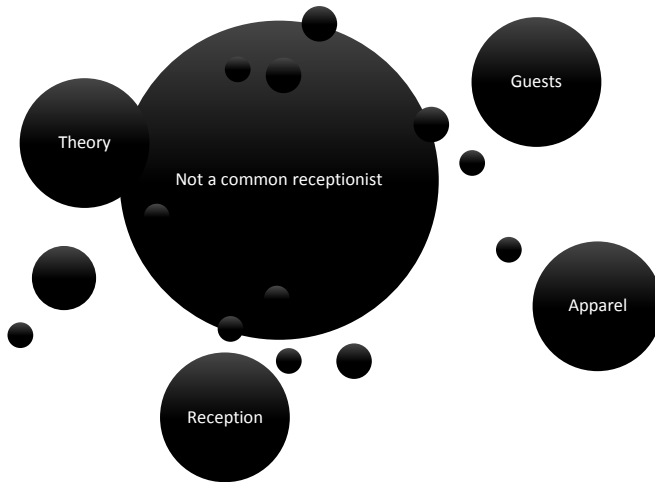


Figure 10. The Identity Assemblage of 'Not a Common Receptionist'

#### 6.4. SHTMX09YY

From the internships, we move to a classroom on campus on a non-specific day of the term, to describe another identity assemblage that appeared in my data.

I enter the classroom at about 8:20. The room is about 5x7 meters in size with whiteboards mounted on one of the longer sides. By the whiteboard is a small high table that would just about fit a laptop and a cup of coffee. It is now unoccupied. Three rows of tables with chairs are placed facing the whiteboards. The entrance that leads into the classroom from the atrium is on one of the shorter sides of the room, opposite a window section that takes up the entire other side facing a courtyard. There are about 35 student seats in the room of which 22 by now are occupied, either by students or by bags and laptops indicating the immediate return of a student.



Figure 11. The Classroom

I greet the students with a smile and a *'good morning'*, and they acknowledge my presence in the same way. I choose a place in the back row furthest from the entrance and open my laptop. Most students are looking at their laptops, some checking the schedule for today, but most are browsing social media, web shops, or other leisure activities. Others engage in friendly chat. The lecture is set to start at 8:30, and for the 10 minutes leading up to this time, more students enter the classroom.

By 8:30, the lecturer, a man in his thirties, enters the room without closing the door behind him. He greets the students and sends a friendly nod in my direction. The morning buzz of student small talk lowers on his entrance. He sets up his computer at the high table by the whiteboards and looks at the students. *'If anyone needs coffee or other refreshments'*, he says in a friendly tone, *'I suggest you go get it now while I set up. I will do a lot of talking and you will do a lot of sitting today, so we need to keep those basic physical needs fulfilled'*. A couple of students leave class upon this invitation, only to return with cups of coffee and refilled water bottles a

few moments later. For the next couple of minutes, the level of conversation rises again and a few latecomers also find their way into class.

This account of a morning in the classroom is, on first glance, nothing special. In fact, however, the first indications of another identity are visible here, the identity of students. In the example above, the materiality of the classroom with its rows of tables, whiteboards, and projector mounted to the ceiling is evidently part of the identity of the students. The room is just like any other classroom with the specific features that make it so, in many ways just another classroom, just another day. However, in delineating groups and anti-groups, the basic layout of the room plays a significant role in defining students from lecturers and vice versa. Just as Bettina is not a receptionist just because she works at the reception, neither does mere presence in the room delimit the group of students. In other words, you are not a student just because you are in the classroom at this specific time. If that were the case, the lecturer and I would have been defined as students as well. For me although I am seated in the back row like all the others, that does not grant me an identity as a student. To this group, I, the researcher, do not belong. This is clear by the fact that the lecturer acknowledges me individually and specifically by a greeting, upon entrance. The students share a collective identity as, in fact, a correlating group of which neither the lecturer nor I are a part. The lecturer and, on this specific occasion, I make up anti-groups that sketch the boundary of the collective of students.<sup>32</sup> The placement of tables, chairs, and whiteboards as seen in Figure 11 above assigns the lecturer a certain position in the room that is physically different from any other place in the room. Thus, the physical attributes of the room enact his lecturer identity as something fundamentally different from the students. More than that, the physical position is also a position of authority, as the lecturer's table indicates a standing position, allowing him to look down onto the flock of students listening attentively. This position of authority is re-enacted as he takes control of the room by providing guidelines for acceptable behaviour ('If anyone needs coffee or other refreshments, I suggest you go get it now while I set up').

Above, we saw the first indication of an identity of students being enacted through the delineation of anti-groups (the lecturer and myself, the researcher) and the physical nature of the classroom. This identity is further expanded, as the group of students become known as 'shtmx09YY'. Shtmx09YY is the class denomination that is used to refer to this specific group of students. However, what is it that *makes* shtmx09YY? We return to the classroom:

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<sup>32</sup> Latour, in fact, pointed out that '*any study of any group by any social scientist is part and parcel of what makes the group exist, last, decay or disappear*' (Latour 2005, p. 33). The fact that I study this group of students enrolls me in the network that defines them through a delineation to me.

By 8:35, the lecturer raises his gaze from the computer screen. ‘*Okay,*’ the lecturer raises his voice in indication of the commencement of class and at the same time closes the door. ‘*In the spirit of bureaucracy, we need to see who is present. When we can show that you are active students, you get paid SU<sup>33</sup> and UCN can collect government support—that way I also get paid,*’ he says jokingly. The students smile. As the lecturer calls out the names from the list that he sees on the screen of his laptop, each student responds by ‘yes’ or ‘present’. There is a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Most students are in class today, but a few are absent. By the end of the roll call, there is a small break in which the lecturer finishes his notes. The students wait in silence. Then the lecturer begins his presentation of today’s topic.

One practice is central in defining the boundaries of the group and thus for the enactment of shtmx09YY identity: the roll call. The roll call is a recurring ritual in the classroom. This is clear not only from my observations in which I have seen the roll call performed numerous times but also from the students’ attitudes towards the ritual. They engage willingly and unsurprised in this practice that is repeated daily. It is thus a central educational practice in the enactment of shtmx09YY. The present students actively indicate their membership in the group shtmx09YY by answering when their name is called out. Although present and positioned in a way that is like the students (at the back row facing the whiteboards with my laptop in front of me), I am not part of shtmx09YY, as my name is not on the list, and thus the practice of the roll call consolidates me as an anti-group. In short, students are shtmx09YYs because they are on that list. The roll call is a practice that translates several individuals into a group by assigning them the identity of being shtmx09YY.

In conclusion, the identity assemblage of the class of shtmx09YY is, like the previous assemblage of ‘not a common receptionist’, delineated through its anti-groups and performed in a network of heterogeneous actors, as suggested in Figure 12.

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<sup>33</sup> SU is the short form of Statens Uddannelsesstøtte = State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme. A monthly benefit that students in Denmark receive to attend education.

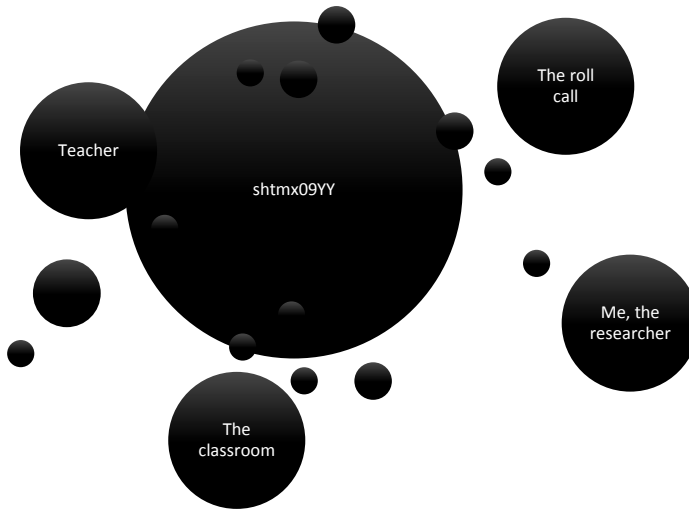


Figure 12. The Identity Assemblage of shtmx09YY

Providing the group of students with the denomination of shtmx09YY serves a practical purpose which I will elaborate on in Chapter 7.

## 6.5. THE ON-CAMPUS STUDENT

Attempting to develop further the understanding of the students who are now known as shtmx09YY, I followed their movements on campus as part of my fieldwork. From the first day on campus and the following couple of weeks, the students were occupied by social activities, excursions to local institutions, and businesses in the hospitality industry as well as introductions to this and that. Therefore, the next example takes place approximately two weeks into the semester and is effectively one of the first actual lectures of the new semester.

It is a Monday, and I enter the classroom around 8:20. It is a classroom similar to the one described previously, although it is a different one. Fifteen students are present when I enter. They are quietly talking to each other, browsing social media, and generally just passing time. More students continue to arrive during the next 10 minutes. At 8:30, the lecturer enters. She is a woman in her 20s; she smiles and greets the students, then approaches me and we greet each other. She then begins to connect her computer to the projector.

After having initially had some trouble with getting the projector to work, the lecturer is ready to begin class. She introduces herself to class with personal details such as age and background, as well as the subject she teaches. *'How many of you have found the syllabus for today?'* she asks. About half of the students raise their hands; one student quietly mumbles, *'I don't know'*. The lecturer finds the syllabus on her computer and displays it on the whiteboard. *'This is the syllabus for this subject. Here are the learning objectives'*, she says as she points to the specific section of the document. *'The learning objectives refer to the curriculum and they are split three-way: knowledge, skills, competencies. This class is a 3 ECTS-credit course. Do you know how many lessons make up 1 ECTS-credit?'* No one responds. *'It's 8! So 3 ECTS-credits equals 24 lessons. They are split in 6; we always have lesson blocks of 4.'* She pauses her long explanation for a moment before, with reference to the content of the syllabus document, she continues to explain the literature for the course and how the students can figure out when different learning activities take place. Then she continues: *'We have both the national and the institutional curriculum that apply to us. Do you know where to find them?'* She looks at the class for a moment, before answering her own question: *'On UCN.dk. If you have any questions, check out the documents before you contact the lecturers. You are always allowed to ask us, but you can figure many things out on your own by looking at the documents.'*

This story must naturally be viewed in light of the fact that a new term has just begun. Therefore, the lecturer introduces the logic of the syllabus to the new students. This long introduction is not repeated for each lecture, but on most occasions where a new subject is introduced, variations of the above take place; performed by different lecturers in different subjects. This situation, however, unveils new associations in the identity assemblage of the students. The syllabus, a document that is developed for each subject, and the curricula—both national and institutional—are identified as part of the identity assemblage. The syllabus defines the content and suggested reading for all classes within a specific subject. In the following example, the practice of the syllabus is evident as well. The example takes place in the same classroom as before, just a couple of weeks later than the previous account.

The lecturer, a man in his thirties (but a different one than before), has plugged in his laptop to the projector and a PowerPoint slide is projected on the whiteboard. The presentation is based on a template that is designed based on UCN colours and fonts. In the top right hand corner of the template UCN's pay-off 'Real-life Education' is positioned. He introduces himself and the subject. He then says: *'One of you asked me if it was intentional that I had not uploaded the syllabus to Canvas, and it was. Today's lecture is a sort of teaser to this subject, but I have uploaded the syllabus now.'* As the lecture moves on, it is supported by the lecturer's presentation slides. He explains key concepts of the subject and regularly asks questions of the students who answer willingly when approached, and otherwise are focused on note-taking on their laptops.

This story is one that I have seen play out many times during my observations. It is the basic rule, with only a very few exceptions, that the lectures depart from a UCN template slideshow in their dissemination. Moreover, it is an established practice that the lecturers upload the syllabus to the learning management system (LMS) Canvas. The LMS in general works as a gateway to information, such as the syllabus or assignments, as is also the case in this story. Access to the LMS is thus instrumental in the enactment of a student identity; thereby the technology of the LMS is enrolled in the identity assemblages. In our understanding of the materialities of identity assemblages in general, and digital technologies specifically, we might draw in Latour's distinction between mediators and intermediaries.

### Mediators and Intermediaries

In *Reassembling the Social*, Latour introduces the concepts of mediators and intermediaries (Latour 2005). Latour argues that the distinction between mediators and intermediaries, and the significance attributed to those concepts, rest heavily on the distinction between sociology of the social and sociology of associations, as touched upon in sections 3.2 and 4.3.2. In essence, and reaffirming the sensibility of enactment, sociology of associations is a matter of accepting that the social is continuously being enacted, and thus that change and movement is the rule, while stability and order are what needs to be explained; quite the opposite of traditional sociology that tends to consider the stable structures of society as the norm and deviations from stability as what needs explaining. The ‘means’ or ‘tools’ used in this continuing ‘construction’ of society play a vital role in distinguishing between the two schools of thought. These tools might be characterised as intermediaries or mediators: *‘An intermediary, in my vocabulary, is what transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs. For all practical purposes, an intermediary can be taken not only as a black box, but also as a black box counting for one, even if it is internally made of many parts. Mediators, on the other hand, cannot be counted as just one; they might count for one, for nothing, for several, or for infinity. Their input is never a good predictor of their output; their specificity has to be taken into account every time. Mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry. No matter how complicated an intermediary is, it may, for all practical purposes, count for just one—or even for nothing at all because it can be easily forgotten. No matter how apparently simple a mediator may look, it may become complex; it may lead in multiple directions which will modify all the contradictory accounts attributed to its role. A properly functioning computer could be taken as a good case of a complicated intermediary while a banal conversation may become a terribly complex chain of mediators where passions, opinions, and attitudes bifurcate at every turn. But if it breaks down, a computer may turn into a horrendously complex mediator while a highly sophisticated panel during an academic conference may become a perfectly predictable and uneventful intermediary in rubber stamping a decision made elsewhere.’* (Latour 2005, p. 39). Latour argues how sociology of associations is based on the belief in endless mediators, while the intermediary is the exception to the rule. Thus, the basic rule of the ANT sociology is that we must acknowledge a world full of mediators and only few intermediaries.



Any actor that transforms or modifies meaning is, according to the definition above, a mediator, that is, has agency. In the example above, we might say that the technology of the projector and the PowerPoint presentation serve as intermediaries as they simply convey content and meaning and thereby reinforce the identities at play. The technologies described above are part of the continuous enactment of the on-campus student identity. It reinforces the distinction between lecturer and students, as the lecturer disseminates content in a UCN template and the students listen. The LMS plays a similar role, providing access to essential documents and assignments. The LMS and the UCN template PowerPoint function as significant mediators that are part of the enactment of on-campus UCN students. They signify and embody the essence of what it is to be a student: someone who listens, learns, and passes exams. In this way, the technologies are part of the translation of a group of people into UCN students.

In summary, the identity assemblage of the on-campus student is naturally related to that of shtmx09YY. It relates to physical surroundings such as the classroom, regulatory documents such as the curriculum and syllabus, the dissemination of the lecturer aided by the PowerPoint presentation, as well as technologies such as the Internet and LMS. This identity assemblage may be visualised as in Figure 13 below.

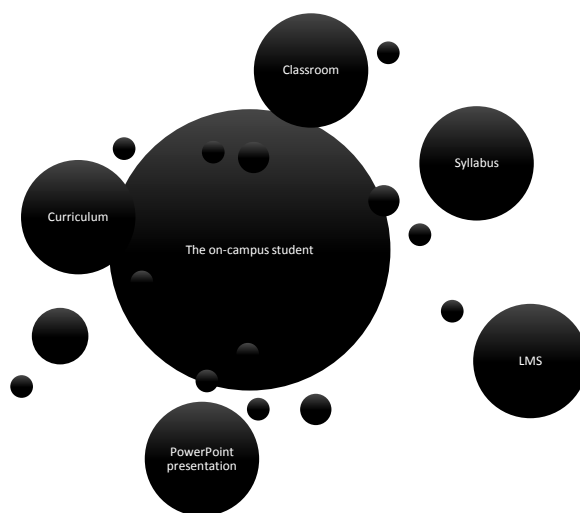


Figure 13. The Identity Assemblage of the On-campus Student

## 6.6. THE HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL

The fourth identity assemblage that I would like to describe based on my empirics is one that some might say is central in the SHTM programme, that

is, the hospitality professional. After all, the objective of the programme is *'to qualify students to independently perform work assignments relating to the development, planning, implementation and delivery of services at national and international levels in businesses and organisations operating in the fields of service, holiday and business tourism as well as hotels and restaurants'* (UCN 2016a). However, one of the main points of my philosophical position is that nothing can a priori be defined as central or more important than anything else. The relative importance of any actor (inherently meaning an actor-network or assemblages) must be attributed to the strength of its associations and the effect it has on other elements. In the following section, I will describe the enactment of the identity of the hospitality professional as it unfolds within the SHTM programme. This identity assemblage is described with examples from both on-campus and internship practices. Keeping in mind the central sensibility of enactment or performativity, as established in Chapter 4, the description of the hospitality professional rests on descriptions of professional practices.

### **Performativity**

As described in the theorybox on mediators and intermediaries, the distinction between sociology of the social and sociology of associations is essential in Latour's work and in this thesis as well. In the preconception of society as inherent in sociology of the social, the steady structures that make up society are subject to an ostensive definition, that is, something the we can point to convey its meaning. *'Like mugs and cats and chairs that can be pointed at by the index finger'*, Latour exemplifies (Latour 2005, p. 34). However, by aligning with sociology of associations and thus discarding the idea that society consists of preexisting structures, one must accept that society exists only through the continuous movement, continuous enactment: *'[it] is not a building in need of restoration but a movement in need of continuation'* (Ibid., p. 37) Hence, social aggregates are subject to a performative definition; they are made to exist, and we therefore must pay attention to what is done, that is, the practices. This is, according to Latour, the great benefit of the focus on performativity: *'It draws attention to the means necessary to ceaselessly upkeep the groups and to the key contributions made by the analysts' own resources'* (Ibid., p. 35).

Previously, we saw identities enacted through the delineation of anti-groups (e.g., the receptionist, the lecturer, and myself, the researcher). Now, the focus turns to the group and what this group of hospitality professionals *do*. To describe the practice of hospitality professionals, let us first return to campus.

All three Danish first-semester classes are gathered in a large room. There are about 80 students in the room, sitting by rows of tables. A couple of graduates are scheduled to visit campus today. They are here to tell about their career paths. The first presentation is by John. John is 35 years old and graduated from SHTM eight years earlier. Before attending the SHTM programme, John had had experience as a tour guide, from travelling and doing carpentry work. Today, he works for a public administration travel agency, booking domestic and international travels for ministers, secretaries and all other kinds of public employees. During his presentation, he urges the students to ask questions. One student asks: *'How have you used the education in your job?'* *'Well,'* John hesitates for a moment before continuing: *'I don't really deal with the different subjects, but it provides a basic knowledge of what's going on in the organisation, how to communicate, and why management makes different decisions.'*

Previously, I described how the application of theory was central in the delineation of the anti-group of receptionists. In the practice of the professional, however, theory is not applied but rather serves as a foundation with which to comprehend surroundings. When I asked the interns if they, in their replication of professional practices in internship used theories, the answers varied. Bettina, as mentioned, put theory to very practical use, and Helen who interned in a start-up project with the purpose of reinventing empty spaces and public buildings, also worked directly with theory:

*This week, I continue my work on [the project's] segments, target groups, and budgets.*

However, most of the interns mainly recognised aspects that they had previously encountered only in theory in the professional practices of the internship hosts. Cathrin, for instance, who as part of her training programme in the UAE interned at the hotel's HR department, wrote on her blog:

*Now, I'm working on making a training about Cultural Diversity—which of course is related to our classes in Intercultural Competencies, so it is really interesting.*

Other than that, literal application of theory was scarce. Rose put it this way when I asked her whether she could apply theory in her internship:

*I will say that it's probably limited, but on the other hand, I guess you can see things that you wouldn't have before, professionally you have a different understanding [due to theory], so, yeah, I can see that you take something with you [from the programme], that you start to think differently. But outright application... that's probably not much.*

Thus, it is not specifically the practice of theory that defines the hospitality professional; rather, theory serves as a foundation for other practices. One practice that all the internship students define as central as a hospitality professional is the practice of service in relation to the guests. Rose put it quite eloquently:

*It's definitely the time with the guests I enjoy the most. To find another room for an elderly couple, because the first room was next to the noisy gym, doesn't take much but is a great joy for the guests. At day we are guides and at night bartenders; it gives you a day with a lot of variety and a changing work environment, which has a positive effect on my mood. It's the smiles and providing the service they don't expect that makes me give a 110% even on rainy days.*

The guests are defined as central actors in the identity assemblage of the hospitality professional. The nature of the relation to the guests is defined by 'providing service', that is, fixing problems (finding a new room) or fulfilling needs (giving directions). The students, as aspiring hospitality professionals, find an immense drive in being able to make a positive difference for the people with whom they interact. By providing service, by interacting with guests, the students perform the identity of the hospitality professional. The logic follows: When they are unable to provide service, they feel inadequate and frustrated, as in this case from one of the first days in Monica's internship:

*It wasn't a particularly busy shift, but I still felt a bit under pressure, because there were a lot of the daily tasks that I didn't yet feel up to and therefore it was a challenge to provide the optimal service for the hotel's guests. At that time, I had only been in [city] for three days and hadn't had time to find out where the different sights and restaurants were and had to apologize to the guests several times. (...) Many of the guests were understanding and kind, but there were guests that became irritated and didn't see it as the optimal service. (...) I therefore spent the remaining three hours of my*

*shift (...) on marking all relevant and asked-for sights and restaurants in the city onto a map—a least that way I could guide the guests in the right direction.'*

It is clear from the quote that Monica's lack of knowledge of the city and not specifically of hotel practices was what hindered her from providing service and thus from a satisfying performance of the identity of a hospitality professional. Obviously, this was in the beginning of Monica's internship while she was still coming into the role. To cover this apparent gap of knowledge, Monica attempted to research her way out of the predicament.

The relation to guests and providing service may be a complex mediator in the identity assemblage of the hospitality professional, using the vocabulary of Latour. It consists of several different aspects (e.g., not being too busy, having a basic knowledge of the local area, being able to allocate rooms in the booking system, giving advice, fixing problems, evaluating experiences, and of course the guest and staffer alike). The fact that it consists of many aspects does not in itself make it a mediator. As mentioned above, even the most complex actor can be an intermediary if it counts for just one, if its output can be predicted by its input. However, in the cases described above, successfully providing 'optimal' service is what changes a student, a newcomer, or an amateur into a hospitality professional. Failing to provide service, that is, failing to enrol these immaterial (e.g., knowledge of location), material (e.g., maps), human (e.g., the guests themselves by evaluating their experience), and non-human (e.g., the booking system) actors in one's identity assemblage, results in an inability to enact the identity. This is clear not least from the fact that Monica tries to tend to her lack of knowledge by enrolling a map and doing research on sights and restaurants.

Another practice that tends to characterise the identity of the hospitality professional as the interns enacted it is the practice of marketing tasks and social media. Thus, a recurring task was the updating of and marketing on social media, including shooting photos and writing press releases that were published on social media, such as Dorothy, who did her internship at an animal park, experienced:

*Everyday pictures and interesting texts about animals are posted [on Facebook]. We [Dorothy and another intern] helped [staff member] find funny pictures in the park and work out text to go with it.*

Other students also interacted with Instagram, such as Bettina, who, when she began her internship, realised that the inn did not have an Instagram account. One was subsequently created on her initiative to show the daily life at the inn, as she explains in this excerpt from the blog:

*Yesterday, I posted a picture of a butterfly that had made its way inside the inn. This picture was liked by the public television channel in Norway. So, on that occasion I reached about 3000 people.'*

Several of the interns attempted to market their respective internship hosts through Facebook competitions, such as Nellie who interned at a congress centre:

*I've made a Facebook competition. My goal was to get our calendar for the next three months out to guests so they know what's happening. (...) To get the guests to see/reflect on the calendar, they had to pick an event [that they would like to participate in]. (...) We got 36 likes—21 shares and 47 comments, so that is quite satisfactory.*

Bettina specifically states that she enjoys being part of the marketing committee; the identity of the marketer sits well with her. She explained to me how she felt appreciated and heard, and she stated on her blog that she could 'see herself' on the marketing committee. The members of the marketing committee likewise acknowledged Bettina as a possible 'marketer', by stating that if they were happy with her, they wouldn't want to let her go again. Similarly for Dorothy, the marketer is a good identity. On one occasion, she spent the day with marketing executives from different tourism organisations in Northern Jutland, an experience that she describes as 'the most significant' during her internship:

*I spend the day observing the different marketing executives and soak up everything about their way of working. Even though I spent an entire day listening, I found it extremely interesting, because these people are some that I hope to work with in the future.*

It is evident that marketing practices are fundamental in the identity of the hospitality professional that the students imagine in their future. The interns use social media platforms to promote their internship hosts through both stories about the daily life as well as outright promotional efforts in competitions with the purpose of reaching as many people as possible.

Other digital technologies are also important actors in the identity assemblage of the hospitality professional. Specifically for the interns in hotels, online booking services or online travel agencies, commonly referred to as OTAs such as Booking.com or expedia.com, are part of the daily practices of the

hospitality professional. For instance, Bettina's tasks often revolve around handling these services and the problems that arise from their use:

*On Friday, I came across an error that no one could explain. There is an R by all Sundays in high season. It is not supposed to. Because it means that the rooms are only available with limitation. To be honest, it was a real test of my patience. Because I couldn't find any available rooms on those dates on the webpage. And I came across other 'problems' when searching booking.com. [...]*

*After a while, I came to the conclusion that that R must be something that is preset by booking.com. And after Elisabeth talked to the previous owner [...] it turned out that my conclusion is correct. And I found out that the R is also there this year. We are losing money with that R and the guests cannot book rooms in high season on Sundays through booking.com.'*

After contacting booking.com, Elisabeth and Bettina had all rooms opened on Sundays. This is something that must be repeated annually for high season, so Bettina wrote down all the information for future users. In this example of booking.com, the settings of the platform initially hindered full booking of hotel rooms that were in fact available. Rather than simply being an intermediary, a functional tool that is used by hospitality professionals, the technology in a sense 'breaks down' and becomes a complicated mediator that changes the situation by hindering Bettina and the inn in making money.

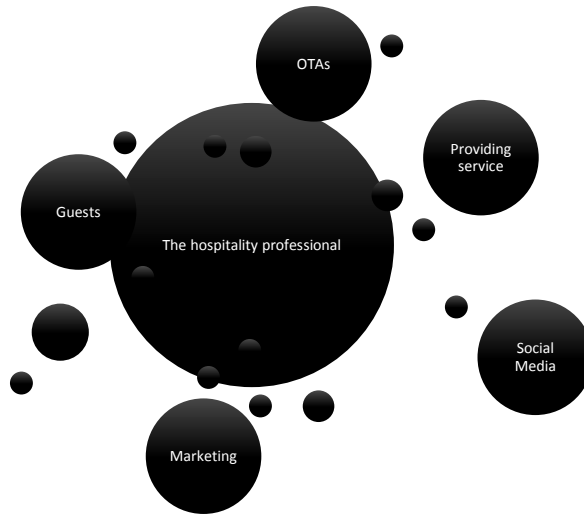


Figure 14. The Identity Assemblage of the Hospitality Professional

Alongside the relation to the guests and the ability to provide service, the different media platforms are important non-human actors of the students' identity assemblages as hospitality professionals. Through them, the interns can enact identities that are (also) characterised by performing tasks related to marketing and management of bookings. To successfully perform this identity, the interns therefore enrol social media platforms and OTAs in their identity work. By working with the technologies and using them to their advantage, Dorothy, Bettina, Monica, and Nellie perform the identity of the hospitality professional through online marketing and booking management.

## 6.7. PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE IDENTITIES

The final identity assemblage I will describe in this chapter has a slightly different character than the previous assemblages. Attempting to describe identity as a socio-material construction does not imply that it is not personal or that it is ahistorical. In fact, this identity assemblage aims to acknowledge the specific, temporary nature of education. Education is, by definition, a temporary instalment, a step on the path of 'becoming', and is in this way part of a person's personal life journey. However, education does not exist in isolation. It is evident that education can in no way be understood as a secluded period of two, three, four, or five years. It is not a period that is without relation to other parts of a person's life—past, present, and future alike. This is another key point that I wish to draw forth based on my empirical data: the significance of the students' background in relation to their (future) identity enactment. Students of SHTM have very different backgrounds. Post-compulsory education is a typical gateway to studying



SHTM, as well as vocational qualifications. Other typically older students with a great deal of work experience from very different industries end up in the SHTM program either because their lives have taken an unexpected turn, for example from stress or physical diagnoses that hinder them from staying with their old occupations, or because they perceive SHTM as a natural, theoretical continuation of a career as, for instance, tour guides or restaurant managers. Their motivation for application as well as their ideas of their future professional life also vary to some extent, although certain common denominators frequently appear. The students with whom I have spoken often mention aspects such as ‘working with people’, ‘making people happy’, and ‘travelling’ as their motivation for applying for SHTM.

In the classroom, I observed how different lecturers on various occasions included the background and working experience of the students in their teaching. The following example is from a class in management.

The lecturer looks curiously to the students. *‘Does anyone here have management experience?’* she asks. Three to four students raise their hands. *‘How was that?’* she asks, *‘what was the best part about it, and what were the hardest parts?’* One student, a young woman, answers. She liked being the one to inspire and motivate, but didn’t enjoy difficult conversations where she had to reprimand an employee. A male student adds how he as a manager had to take charge and show how things are done, and in some ways became a bearer of culture. The lecturer listens to their answers, acknowledging them with a slight nod of the head. *‘Great!’* she says, *‘in this class, we are going to practice putting those experiences to theory.’* She moves on to the suggested readings of today.

In this as well as other situations that I have observed, the students and their past experiences are enrolled in the lecturers’ dissemination of theory to illustrate points and make the theories more relevant to the students. However, more than this, the histories of the students are part of who they become professionally, setting them on a very personalised course in their professional lives. In the following section, I tell the stories of two students to illustrate how the past is enrolled in their identity assemblage.

In the previous sections, we have on different occasions become acquainted with Bettina as she has enacted her identity in her internship. Leaving behind a long and diverse working life, Bettina decided to study service, hospitality and tourism management at the mature age of 40. Before her studies, she

worked in the fishing industry, had been trained as an electrician, and finally found her place in the professional kitchen. She trained to be a retail butcher, and during her training, her master craftsmen signed her up for ‘Food Fighter’ due to her innovative skills, and she was even signed up for the national championships. After having completed her training, she worked professionally as a retail butcher and head chef. The years of hard physical work have worn out her body, and on top of that she has suffered a stress diagnosis. In her own humorous way, she says, *‘If I had been a horse, I would have been taken out back and shot’*. Two years ago, she was subject to professional rehabilitation and thus received public support to re-educate. She first considered studying a bachelor’s programme in nutrition and health, but as this required a commute to Aarhus, approximately 100 km away, she discarded that idea. She then came across the programme of Service, Hospitality and Tourism Management, met with a student advisor and decided to apply.

Bettina is clearly proud of her accomplishments as a butcher and chef, as she describes how being a butcher and a chef was a professional identity that she performed successfully. As she describes the change from chef to SHTM student, she makes sure that I understand that her leaving the profession was not because she was not good at being a chef. Having to discard her former professional identity, one that she was comfortable with and good at, constituted a conflict with her self-image. By providing me (and herself) with the explanation that giving up being a chef was unavoidable due to physical and mental impairment, she actively performs the identity of not being a *failed* chef. Once again, her identity is negatively defined through a disassociation, by what it is not, that is, an anti-group. She is not a chef, but it is not because she was not competent. On that account, she does not entirely abandon her butcher/chef identity; it is one that she carries with her into her new identity enactment. She refers to it, as in the example of the breakfast buffet that I described in section 6.3. On that occasion, the faulty handling of the breakfast buffet irritated *‘her professional pride as a butcher’*, she wrote on her blog. She even performs her butcher/chef identity actively in the kitchen. Off-season, the kitchen at the inn is closed on Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays, except for larger parties. Bettina had booked a party of 11 on a Sunday when all the chefs were off duty and had made private plans. The head chef asked Bettina to fill in, based on her professional kitchen experience. She agreed on the condition that she would get help with the heavy lifts.

*So, I’m very excited to be doing gourmet dishes. It’s been many years since I’ve done parties with plate servings. But I hope that I still know my way around a kitchen like the back of my own hand.*

When asked what her dreams are for the future, she is very clear; she wants to be a hotel director. However, she realistically acknowledges that this might not be the first step in her career path and that financially she is far from being able to open her own, say, hotel or inn. Instead, she has begun playing with the idea that she might start a small consultancy company. The entrepreneurship idea was first sparked in class the year before the internship, where one of the lecturers talked about consultancy in relation to hospitality and hotel management. The idea of starting her own consultancy business gained momentum during the internship in which Bettina experienced that she had a certain talent:

*I liked to come in and see what can we improve, what can I do, how can we market this better, how can we move this furniture better, do you see what I mean? It didn't take me long before I started saying things up there. (...) that was something I just could do in some weird way.*

According to Bettina, there are no service and hospitality consultants in the region of Northern Jutland. At the same time, a lot of restaurants and hotel are struggling to stay in business. Hence, she has identified both a talent that she possesses and a need in the industry. Furthermore, the identity of being a hospitality consultant complies with previous life choices:

*If I look back at my history, I haven't stayed long at each workplace, and then if I can do that (be a consultant, ed.) and be a short time at each workplace and have a big network.*

In this way, Bettina sees a fit between a work history characterised by a lot of changes and moves and a consultant's work life. Bettina turns something that could be perceived as a negative (shifting employments) into a positive narrative in which she gets to be the expert that saves businesses from going under. To achieve the identity of the hospitality consultant, Bettina intends to apply for the bachelor top-up programme of SHTM and to enrol in UCN's entrepreneurship program Next Step.<sup>34</sup> This would allow her to initiate her own business as part of the internship of the top-up education and thus get a head start in the entrepreneur life while still being in education.

Although stories like Bettina's are not rare, not all SHTM students come with her level of life experience. For instance, Nellie is one of the younger students. She is 21 years old. Before applying for the SHTM programme, she

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<sup>34</sup> Next Step is a program at UCN that allows students to work with their own entrepreneurship projects rather than do their internship placement in an external company.

attended general and vocational upper secondary education. She then had a gap year in which she worked full-time as a shop assistant at a bakery shop. When I asked her why she had chosen to study SHTM, she explained that she had this idea that she wanted to work with arranging events. Her sister had a friend who studied the programme in another city, which prompted Nellie to check it out. Based on her sister's idea, she checked out the SHTM programme and felt right at home.

When she had to apply for an internship, she still wanted something in the event business. She had originally thought about applying for an internship in a specific, large congress centre, but found out that they would not take interns. Her boyfriend then suggested a smaller congress centre located in her hometown, because they do some of the same things as the larger centre. She landed the internship at that congress centre, with the purpose of participating in the planning of a specific trade fair. However, the fair got cancelled, but luckily the local chamber of commerce had tasks with which she could help. Her internship did not quite work out how she expected, but she did get to plan and carry out various events, such as themed and seasonal events and small concerts, and in hindsight, she thinks of the internship as '*a very good internship*' because she '*got to do a lot of things*'.

When asked what she wanted of the future, if it is still the event business she wants to pursue, she hesitantly answers:

*Yes... But I want one of the good positions, I think I'll be a good manager, so I'll apply for the top-up. I don't want to work at a reception, for instance. I like the planning part, that's what's interesting, and I think there isn't enough of that on this specialisation.'*

Obviously, the stories of Bettina and Nellie are very different. However, it is presently not the purpose to perform a comparative analysis, nor is this the direction that I'm headed. These two stories illustrate the same phenomenon, that is, the passing of time and the importance thereof. For analytical purposes, we might pause for a moment and return to the notion of mediators and intermediaries, as touched upon in section 6.5, but here specifically related to time.

### The twin travellers

In Latour's *Trains of Thought* (Latour 1997), he tells a tale of two travellers travelling the same distance. One travels comfortably by train; the other travels by foot through a jungle using a hatchet to chop down obstacles on her way. Vines and branches make their mark on her body as she covered in sweat and blood from her scratches during her progress through the jungle, centimetre by centimetre. For the remainder of her life, she will remember this journey in which each step has been won by negotiating with branches, trees, streams, and wildlife. In contrast, the other traveller, whom Latour pictures to be her male twin, enjoys a smooth journey in the air-conditioned comfort of the first-class passenger car, arriving at his destination after a three-hour travel. The journey has left little mark on his body, other than perhaps a slight cramp in the leg or a wrinkle of the trousers. He might be able to remember some of the newspaper articles he read under way, but other than that the journey is far from memorable. Through the tale of the twin travellers, Latour argues for an understanding of time that is not merely objective, that is, a matter of the passing of seconds, minutes, hours, and years as measured by clocks, nor merely subjective, that is, a matter of perception. The female traveller, who struggled through the jungle, aged by each step she laboriously progressed, sacrificing blood, sweat, and tears on her way. The male traveller, on the other hand, remains largely unchanged by the journey. Latour argues that differences in the two trips come *'from the number of others one has to take into account and from the nature of those others. Are they well-aligned intermediaries, making no fuss and no history and thus allowing a smooth passage, or full mediators defining paths and fates on their own terms?'* (Latour 1997, p. 175).

One might say that time may be viewed to be transformational under certain circumstances. My claim based on the examples above is that the history of students becomes part of the identity assemblage, particularly if the history contains 'a number of others' and that these others are mediators, rather than intermediaries. Bettina's experiences have changed who she is. The physical and mental difficulties that have put a stop in her professional life as a butcher mediate a turn in her professional life. The butcher identity and the knowledge that this identity implies mediate a new SHTM identity in which she experiences an increased power of impact. In fact, her entire working experience, which has been characterised by short employments, now mediates a new future career as a consultant. Thus, her past plays into her present and future identities, and conscious reflection and continuous movement characterise her story. The process of becoming an SHTM

professional is a personal project instigated by necessity. The choice of SHTM is not a dream in itself but brought on by being worn physically and mentally. By choosing the SHTM programme, she can maintain a connection to the hospitality industry and thus facilitate the use of knowledge and competencies of her former identity in a new and meaningful way. The specific, personal identity assemblage of Bettina might be illustrated in the following way:

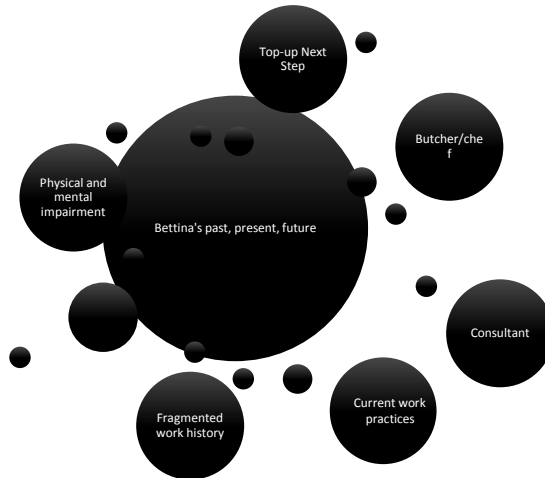


Figure 15. The Identity Assemblage of Bettina's Past, Present and Future

Nellie, on the other hand, has travelled a much smoother path that, one might say, is not uncommon to younger students. Her life story enrolls several others that might in a greater sense be characterised as intermediaries, allowing a smooth passage through life. She attended post-compulsory education, which served as a mediator in giving her access to the SHTM programme. Her work experience is characterised as a 'gap year', an intermediary, rather than something that mediates meaning on her present professional path. In her movement to a future professional career she enrolls the top-up programme as a mediator, without being able to enrol other actors, such as experience, other than somewhat fuzzy ideas of 'event' and 'management' which she thinks she might be good at. For Nellie, her personal assemblage of past, present, and future may be depicted in the following manner:

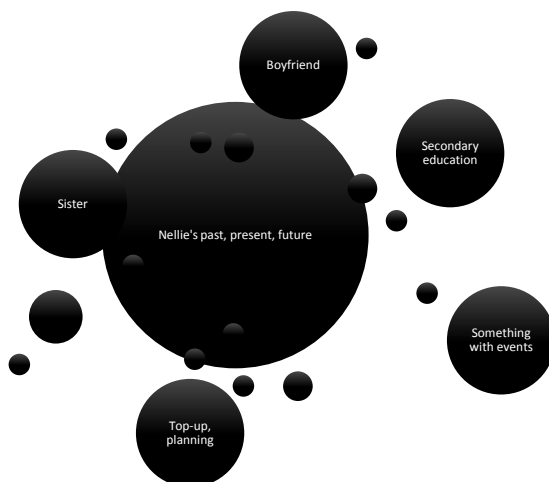


Figure 16. The Identity Assemblage of Nellie's Past, Present and Future

These examples of Bettina and Nellie and how they relate to and enrol their past contributes to an expansion of the types of actors that can be made part of the network. Bettina clearly forms associations to her past experiences while she enacts her identity and thus, her history becomes a part of the identity assemblage. Bettina's past is enrolled in her identity network, facilitating the meaningful application of SHTM theories and (re)enacts her identity as a hospitality professional. Not as a newcomer to the profession, but one that has continually been part of the profession for a large part of her adult life. In this way, the life choices that she has been forced to make due to physical and mental impairment are made to make sense, also in relation to her future. The difference in the journey that these two students have had thus can be ascribed to the number of others that have been part of their journey, and naturally the nature and the specificity of these others as well as their mediating potential.

## 6.8. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

Throughout this chapter, I have expanded on a relational approach to identity, defining identity as a material-semiotic construction. The purpose of this specific chapter was answering research sub-question 1: How is identity enacted? I have attempted to provide an answer to this question by describing five different identity assemblages through both on- and off-campus practices.

Based on the arguments made so far in this chapter, what conclusions can then be made regarding SHTM identity? It seems a somewhat messy story with a multitude of different, non-coherent points. The relations to the guests, online technologies, the curriculum, the lecturer, and much more define SHTM identities. SHTM'ers are not receptionists, nor are they waiters or cleaning

staff; they are marketers and skilled users of social media, they emphasise human relations and, when studied in this specific context, they are students known as shtmx09YY, not lecturers nor researchers, but governed by a performance of the curriculum. Readers prone to ostensive definitions might argue that I have been able to create only more confusion than clarity. One might be tempted to ask, Which version is the right one? The apparent answer is, of course, that all the identity assemblages that I have argued for here are correct, and are all equally part of the identity assemblage of SHTM.

This rather confusing notion is a natural consequence of the move to performativity, and accordingly the acknowledgement of multiplicities; compare to Chapter 4. Mol studied the enactment of atherosclerosis in different sites, concluding that atherosclerosis is a multiplicity (Mol 2002). Applying the same logic to the enactment of identity, multiple identities are enacted in the different sites I studied. I have studied the practices that make up identity within SHTM, and since reality is generated in these multiple practices, the result is multiple realities of identity. The sensibility of performativity also leads us to an enhanced understanding of identity as something that is done. In Chapter 4, I referred to the examples of the strawberry market and atherosclerosis, and this logic transfers to the assemblage of identity. It is not possible for us to point and say, ‘There is an identity, and there!’ Accordingly, I have built my points regarding identity through attention to the practices that I see or have described for me.

In summary, through the telling of the stories of the interns, as well as through the description of classroom and on-campus activities, I make the following points regarding the enactment of identity:

- Identity may be described through the definition of anti-groups. Who or what I am is given meaning through who or what I am not. For example, Bettina defines herself as something other than the receptionist, and in the classroom, the class of shtmx09YY is given an identity by its opposed position to the lecturer.
- Identity is assemblages that include material artefacts. For instance, the physical surroundings of the reception and the practices of uniform play into the identity of Bettina and Cathrin, as do the physical surroundings of the classroom for shtmx09YY.
- Actors in identity assemblages may take the form of mediators or intermediaries. When Bettina and Cathrin make a change of clothes, it changes their identity. For Bettina, even to an extent that she needs to distance herself from this identity (‘I’ll never be a waiter!’ she exclaims), because the waiter is an anti-group in her enactment of identity. Hence, the clothes they wear are mediators, as they transform the situation. The physical circumstances of the classroom



as described are not just a matter of practicality: a place to be and chairs to sit on. They exert an influence on the situation, changing a group of people into students and one lecturer. If placed in a different location, this group of people might assume other roles. In the sports club, they could have made a football team, in a restaurant they could have assumed the identities of chefs, waiters, and customers. But here, on campus, in the classroom, they are students and lecturer. Likewise, Nellie assumes the role of the successful online marketer by enrolling social media into her identity enactment. The media thus serves as a mediator in her identity enactment.

- Successfully performing an identity depends on a successful enrolment of specific actors in the assemblage. The success of the enrolment further depends on the nature of the association.
- Students' past experiences may be enrolled in identity assemblages that also hold a potential for the future. Experience may take the form of either mediators or intermediaries.

When examining the points made above, critics might pose the objection that these points are no more than a blatant application of actor-network theory, and that given the philosophical position these findings are self-evident. With an ontological position characterised by the material-semiotic and sensitivity towards performativity, is it not obvious that I thus argue for identity as a performed material-semiotic? However, actor-network theory is never simply applied. As I touched upon in Chapter 4, ANT cannot be viewed as a *theory*, but is a way of being in the world. On this note, the points above and the way that I have argued for them, is and will always be a performance of an empirical philosophy. John Law argued that ANT is best understood when it is grounded in empirical case studies (Law 2009). Thus, this analysis contributes to an increased understanding of ANT as a philosophy of identity, unfolded within the case of the SHTM programme.

# CHAPTER 7. SHTM AND MODES OF ORDERING

## 7.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at answering research sub-question 2: How do organisational practices enable identity enactment? It does so by enrolling John Law's concept of 'modes of ordering' (Law 1994). Therefore, the chapter opens with a short, general description of the concept. Through this notion, I argue for four organisational patterns (administration, curriculum, specialist, and enterprise) that provide their own, specific way of speaking about the organisation of the SHTM programme. The central point of the chapter is that these ordering modes on their own terms enable the performance of multiple identity assemblages, compare to Chapter 6. The chapter concludes with an analytical summary.

## 7.2. MODES OF ORDERING

In the previous Chapter 6, I argued how different identity assemblages come into being, how they are enacted. I described five different identity assemblages that revealed themselves to me based on my empirical material. At this point in the argumentation, it is important to thread carefully, as there is a risk that these different identity assemblages may be taken to embody certain categories or personality types of SHTM students, or that these identity assemblages may be said to 'exist'. This is not the intention, as Law similarly argued in his ethnography *Organizing Modernity* (Law 1994). Rather, my point is that these specific identity assemblages may be understood as effects of specific modes of ordering. As I described the five different identity assemblages that were enacted in the SHTM programme, one might wonder why it is these identities and not others. If identities are performed, shaped by our practices, couldn't any other identity have presented itself to us, if our practices were different? The answer to this question is a yes and a no. If the practices were different, yes, other identities would have been enacted. However, not just any identity is possible. In any context, including that of education, there exist certain patterns or certain, and I use this term loosely, structures that define the possibilities of identity enactment. In his book *Organizing Modernity*, Law refers to these patterns as 'modes of ordering' (Law 1994).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The notion of 'modes of ordering' is reminiscent of Foucault's notion of discourse, and Law indeed admits being inspired by the writing of Foucault (e.g. Foucault 1970). Foucault argued that discourses perform regimes

### **Modes of Ordering**

Law's 1994 ethnography of a large scientific laboratory investigated how an organisation holds itself together. The objective of the ethnography was to *'show that a series of different ordering modes—which might indeed in some circumstances actually be in conflict with one another—may interact to perform a series of materials and material arrangements that have hierarchical and distributional effects'* (Law 1994, p. 25). In a sense, then, organization is a product of these modes of ordering that are performed in various heterogeneous assemblages (Knox et al. 2008). However, and this is essential, the modes of ordering must not be understood as an over-arching structure that shapes the social. Instead, Law described ordering modes as a form of storytelling that has its own way of making sense of actors, their relations, and their practices (Law 1994). Modes of ordering are fairly regular, recurring patterns that are *'embodied within, witnessed by, generated in, and reproduced as part of the ordering of human and non-human relations'* (Law 1994, p. 83). Law is very cautious when it comes to talking of modes of ordering as either 'imaginary' or 'existing'. Rather, they are 'tools of sense-making'; ways of talking about patterns of ordering. Through his ethnographic work, Law described four ways of working that characterised the laboratory, four different modes of ordering that came not from the individual character of managers or employees but existed in the network of people, technologies, and organisational arrangements (Law 2009). The four modes of ordering that he described were enterprise, administration, vision, and vocation. Each mode of ordering has its own ways of constructing and understanding problems, problem solutions, and criteria of success; it enables different performances and has specific understandings of what it means to be 'a good agent' in that specific mode of ordering. Law does not claim that his description of four modes of ordering of the social is exhaustive. Rather, he insists that the description of these modes of ordering is an entirely empirical matter, and specifically assumes that modes of ordering are subject to diversity and change (Law 1994).

Law's notion of modes of ordering enables an understanding of the performance of identity as something that does not happen in a vacuum:

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that frame our possibilities of doing. However, whereas Foucault deals very little (according to Law) with the interaction of discourses, Law insists that several modes of ordering may co-exist (Law 1994).

Certain patterns allow certain performances. In the specific educational context of UCN, the practices of the organisation, the modes of ordering, invite the actors to think about themselves in a certain way; it provides the actors with a certain way to go about things. Hence, different identities are a result of different modes of ordering. To put it differently, perhaps different modes of ordering allow for different identity assemblages.

Based on my empirical material, I will describe four modes of ordering that I found in the organisation of the SHTM programme at UCN. Some are similar to those that Law found in the laboratory and are accordingly named the same way, although the specific ways of making sense of the organisation in the specific mode are of course unique to UCN, as the argument for the modes of ordering is empirically based. Some patterns do not, however, resemble those that Law found in the laboratory. This should not come as a surprise, as an educational organisation has objectives, patterns, and modes of ordering that are specific to that type of organisation and accordingly are different from those of a scientific laboratory. As I describe these four modes of ordering, I continuously align them with the enactment of identity as described in Chapter 6.

### **7.2.1. ADMINISTRATION**

According to Law, the administrative mode of ordering is like that which Weber argued for in his description of modern bureaucracy (e.g. Weber 2015). This mode tells stories about structure, procedure, and planning that generate the well-regulated organisation. Each actor (and this naturally includes non-human actors as well) plays a specific role in the organisational clockwork to ensure the rational management, maintenance and control of the organisation.

In Chapter 6, I described how some individuals were translated into a group by assigning them the identity of shtmx09YY. Shtmx09YY is one of six SHTM classes this specific year. Its denomination refers to the short form of Service, Hospitality, and Tourism Management, 'x' is the specific class designation (as opposed to parallel classes y, z, w, p, and q), and 09YY indicates the month and year that the class began, in this case, September 20YY. Each class in the entire organisation of UCN is given a similar denomination. More than 35 educational programmes with several parallel classes and sometimes even biannual enrolment add up to an extensive number of classes. These class denominations distinguish one from the other, and through administrative practices, lecturers, classes, and classrooms are combined in schedules for efficient resource management; see, for instance, an example of the shtmx09YY schedule in Figure 17.

	Tuesday November 8 <sup>th</sup>	Friday November 9 <sup>th</sup>
8.30-11.45	Shtmx09YY, [Lecturer initials], Management, CHV 1.2.3	Shtmx09YY, [Lecturer initials], Method, CHV 1.2.17
12.15-15-30	Shtmx09YY, [Lecturer initials], Experience economy, CHV 1.1.4	Shtmx09YY, [Lecturer initials], Management, CHV 1.2.3

Figure 17 An Excerpt of SHTMX09YY's Schedule

The identity of shtmx09YY as it is translated into the schedule allows the students (and lecturers as indicated by initials) to be at the right time (date and hours) in the right place (e.g., the denomination CHV 1.2.3 refers to room 3 on the second floor of building 1 on Campus Hobrovej). Thus, the identity of shtmx09YY allows students, lecturers, rooms, and syllabus<sup>36</sup> to operate smoothly on a day-to-day basis. It is a way to ensure that these different actors each play their part as a cog in the machine of everyday life on campus. Thus, the identity of shtmx09YY may be seen as an effect of an administrative mode of ordering, a way of sense-making that relies on all actors playing their allotted role in the complex, heterogeneous network of education.

The identity of shtmx09YY is an identity that is allocated by the administration and is performed daily through the roll call. The identity serves a practical purpose of resource management, but what exactly is the purpose of the roll call? As the roll call was performed daily, the lecturers would note which students were present, and which students were not. In its essence, there is no specific relation to resource management in the practice. Let's recapture the lecturer's argument for the roll call:

*In the spirit of bureaucracy, we need to see who is present. When we can show that you are active students, you get paid SU<sup>37</sup> and UCN can collect government support—that way I also get paid!*

According to this statement, the administrative mode of ordering is the way to make sense of this practice; compare the phrase 'in the spirit of bureaucracy'. Uttered in a humoristic tone of voice that sarcastically refers to the negative

<sup>36</sup> The reference in the schedule to a specific subject is an example of two modes of ordering (the administrative and the curricular) interrelating. I return to the curricular mode of ordering in section 7.2.2.

<sup>37</sup> SU is the short form of Statens Uddannelsesstøtte = State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme. A monthly benefit that students in Denmark receive to attend education.

connotations of the term ‘bureaucracy’, the lecturer emphasises that this is a practice that is regulated by rules and governance—and this is the proper way to make sense of the roll call. In a way, it is explained as a necessary evil that allows the organisation to determine student activity. The lecturer frames the roll call as a ritual that serves a financial purpose for both students and organisation. Granted, student activity is a central term in Danish educational practice. It is a prerequisite for receiving SU(Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet 2017b); it is central in the public funding of educations(Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet 2016c), and—according to the curriculum—a lack of student activity ‘may cause cessation of registration as a student’(UCN 2016b). So, in a sense, the lecturer is on point here, the determination of student activity is critical. However, none of the above requirements for student activity rely on a day-to-day report of presence but instead determines student activity primarily based on participation in examinations. Based on these grounds, there is no regulatory foundation for controlling attendance daily. When I asked one of the lecturers why they do the roll call, she answered:

*That’s a good question and one that we’ve been over many times. Some employees support the attendance records, others don’t, but especially the students want us to register attendance (...) a lot of students like to be registered and are very much into having a high level of attendance. We also use it to take a hold of students with a lot of absence. Then the class coordinator contacts the student and either writes a bit back and forth letting him or her know that we have noticed that they are rarely here or has a conversation with the student. We often see that it has a positive effect on their attendance, and that’s why we keep on doing it. In some cases, the effect wears off when they discover that we can’t impose any consequences. So, there are no rules to back it up and attendance is not compulsory—it’s more of a ‘we-see-you’ strategy.’*

Evidently, there are no regulations that require that attendance records be kept. According to the lecturer above, it is in part student-motivated, something that the students seek, and part a way for the lecturers to keep up to date on which students have an alarmingly low level of attendance. This allows the class coordinator to intervene, for example, to keep students from dropping out. There are no consequences to impose based on absence; the students cannot be expelled or required to do extra-credit work. Rather, the attendance records form a basis for student-lecturer interaction.

In Chapter 6, I argued how the fact that I was not on the list delineated me as an anti-group, the researcher who, although present, was not an shtmx09YY. Thus, presence, that is, who is in the classroom at the moment, does not in itself grant someone the identity of shtmx09YY, but is as mentioned based on the list for the roll call. In a way, presence is not limited to a here and now but is expanded over time. For example, on that specific day where I was present, reversely, there were students who were not present. In the moment, they would still be identified as shtmx09YYs because their name is called out. In many instances, I saw how the students who were present commented on the absence of students on the list. In some cases, it was by excusing the person, *'He's on his way'*, *'He'll be here in a few minutes'*, or *'She's ill today'*. In other cases, the students who were present distanced themselves from the person in question, for example, *'Him, we've never even seen'* or *'That guy, he was here the first week, but we haven't seen him since'*. Through the roll call, the students thus continually enact the identity of shtmx09YY by drawing boundaries between who, despite their momentary absence, may still be considered as part of the group and who may not. A continued failure to be present would, thus, result in the non-present students falling out of the identity of shtmx09YY by not being considered as part of the social community by the other students.

Furthermore, a continued absence results in the attention of the class coordinator, which sometimes succeeds in 'drawing students back in', but other times will fail in doing so. Absence to the extent that includes failure to participate actively in examinations and similar activities will result in cessation of registration as a student (UCN 2016b). Accordingly, the student in question will be removed from the list by the administration, thus formalising the failure to claim an shtmx09YY identity, as his or her name will no longer be called out during the roll call.

In summary, the identity of shtmx09YY appears to be the embodiment of the administrative mode of ordering; it is an effect of an administrative need to control resources. Within the mode of ordering that is characterised by administration, actors play specific roles. These roles are characterised by attention to the rules, by playing the part one has been allotted (Law 1994). This logic is embedded in the perception of agents within this specific mode of ordering. What determines success in this ordering mode, that is, what defines 'the good agent' is the story of conformity, of doing things the right way. In the context of the SHTM programme, it tells stories of students that are characterised by presence.

## **7.2.2. CURRICULUM**

The ordering mode of the curriculum is specific to educational institutions

and, thus, is not one of the ordering modes that Law described in his study of the scientific laboratory. It is, however, an important tool for sense-making of many of the practices, I encountered in my study of SHTM. The regulatory basis of the SHTM programme is both a national and institutional curriculum (UCN 2016a, UCN 2016b). Based on the curricula, the syllabuses are developed, which explicates the theme of each lesson block as well as the date and the suggested readings, along with what specific learning objectives each lesson block attends to, as seen in Figure 18.

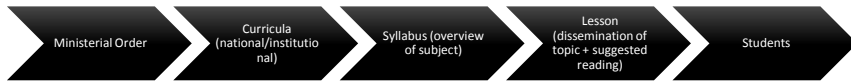


Figure 18. The structure of the regulations

The ministerial order and curricula are translated and given meaning through practices in the network. There is a direct line of translations from the ministerial order to the content of each lecture, that is, what is being disseminated to the students. Accordingly, what happens in class is based on a continuous series of translations of the curriculum. In this process, the identity of the SHTM student is thus performed through compliance with the regulatory basis. In this sense, an SHTM candidate may be said to embody what is described in the curriculum. This can be argued to be the case, as failure to comply with the requirements of the curriculum (e.g., by failing exams) will mean that a student is not able to gain the AP degree, have their diploma, and exclaim, ‘I am an SHTM’er’.

The curricular mode of ordering is central to understanding many of the practices of SHTM, specifically on campus, but also to some extent off campus, which I will return to in a moment. When the female lecturer in section 6.5 describes the logic of the syllabus to the students, this is a way of establishing this specific pattern or way of making sense of the practices within the organisation. Each lesson has a specified subject and purpose (i.e., relates to a specific learning objective from the curriculum) that can be found in the syllabus. As mentioned in section 7.2.1, the schedule of shtmx09YY not only specifies time and place, but also the allocated subjects (and thus the lecturer) for that time and place. In this way, the administrative mode of ordering (focused on resource management) and the curricular mode of ordering (focused on compliance to the curriculum) run in parallel, enabling both that the students known as shtmx09YY can be at a specific place at a specific time, that each subject is allocated the exact amount of lesson blocks required for the exact number of ECTS-credits (remember: ‘*This class is a 3 ECTS-credit course. (...) 3 ECTS-credits equals 24 lessons. They are split in*



6; *we always have lesson blocks of 4'*), and accordingly that students through the schedule know for which class to prepare.

The curricular mode of ordering also explains why system access is so important to the students. The LMS is, as mentioned, a mediator in the enactment of this identity, and it is so because within this mode of ordering success is defined by compliance to the curriculum and therefore preparation in accordance with the syllabus. The curricular mode of ordering is thus a pattern that emphasises the learning goals, the dissemination of theory, and the compliance with regulations. On several occasions during my observations, I saw how the lecturers express expectations and requirements that reproduced the curricular way of thinking about the organisation. See the following examples, which stem from three different days, subjects, and lecturers:

Lecturer 1: *I count on you to read [the suggested literature in the syllabus] either before or after [class]. I count on you to figure out what works best for you. (...) I've put the presentation on Canvas. And I have this idea that taking notes is a good thing.*

Lecturer 2: *In class, we will work with the topics of the syllabus in new ways. It is important that you prepare for each class, as preparation is a prerequisite for participating in group work.*

Lecturer 3: *The syllabus for today explicated that you were to complete and send me the assignment. But none of you did. I then take it that you didn't read and prepare for today. You leave me no choice but to go through it bit by bit.*

In class, lecturers emphasise good student practices, such as reading, note-taking, and participation in general as essential. Without these essentials, the lecturers and students are not able to enact the identity of—in this case—the on-campus students. This is what happens in the third example above that is taken from a situation in which the students did not prepare, that is, they did not put in the effort to read and undertake the assignment for that day from home. Consequently, the lecturer chose to disseminate that topic, instead of contributing with something new, something that would take the students further. The fundamental criterion of success within this pattern of organising is that students learn what is stated in the syllabus. The excerpts above are clear examples of the way of making sense of practices within this mode of ordering. Here, the specific problems that are constructed and the way in which they are understood is a matter of compliance with the curricula (the documents). Having students prepared by accessing the syllabus and reading

or writing assignments determines the success of those students. Thereby, students collect ECTS-credits and can eventually be considered as SHTM graduates. Thus, this mode of ordering enables an understanding of SHTM identity as defined by the learning objectives and regulations of the curriculum. Thus, the SHTM identity is characterised by compliance with regulations, enacting an identity of a not just a student, but a *dutiful* and *learning* student.

This way of storytelling resonates specifically in two of the identity assemblages I described in Chapter 6. First, by the arguments above, the identity of the on-campus student has developed further than that described in the identity assemblage of shtmx09YY. As described above, the identity of shtmx09YY enables students to navigate in time and space and at the same time emphasises presence as central to that identity. The curricular mode of ordering delineates a student identity that is characterised not merely by presence (the roll call), but by participation and preparation, by fulfilling the requirements of the lecturers and the curriculum, as described above.

Second, this mode of ordering enables the enactment of the identity of ‘not a common receptionist’ as described in Chapter 7. Recalling that one of the things that set the SHTM’er apart from the receptionist is the application of theory, thereby resonating the learning objectives of the curriculum. By acquiring theoretical knowledge through preparation and participation in classroom activities and group work, Bettina (in the specific example from section 6.3) can distance herself from the ‘common receptionist’.

Contrary to what one might expect,<sup>38</sup> the curricular mode of ordering is not a distinctive tool for making sense of the practices of the hospitality professional, as described in section 6.6. A few interns have literally applied theory, while graduate John and most interns do not emphasise theory and/or compliance with curriculum as instrumental as they perform the identity. Rather, it mainly serves as a foundation, a certain gaze that enables the hospitality professional ‘to see things differently’. So, theory, the curriculum, does matter, but not to an extent where one might consider the hospitality professional primarily as ‘someone who applies theory’. Another mode of ordering might be said to enable the performance of the identity of the hospitality professional, which I will return to in section 7.2.4.

In summary, the curricular mode of ordering has the effect that the students can approach their practices in a specific way that is characterised by the practice of theory (both on and off campus). This mode of ordering defines a form of subjectivity that emphasises compliance with regulatory documents,

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<sup>38</sup> As the curriculum is considered to prepare students for their practice as hospitality professionals.

and thus embodies an image of the ‘good agent’ that is characterised by acquiring the specific theoretical knowledge defined in the syllabus; in essence to eventually pass exams.

### 7.2.3. SPECIALISATION

A third mode of ordering that seems to permeate the organisation of the SHTM programme is that of specialisation. It relates to the ordering mode of the curriculum, as the specialist mode is embodied in the regulatory foundation of the institutional curriculum(UCN 2016b). The document of the curriculum implies that at an institutional level<sup>39</sup> the SHTM programme is organised in three specialisations: hotel & restaurant management, tourism management, and sport & event management. When applying for the SHTM programme, each student is required to provide an indication in advance of the choice of specialisation. All students adhere to the same general regulatory basis that does, however, indicate specific learning outcomes for each specialisation. The specialisations, or elective components as they are also denominated, ‘*give the students the opportunity to qualify their study and professional competence through specialising and further expanding subjects*’(UCN 2016b, p. 7).

The students of SHTM are organised in classes according to their advance indication of specialisation, and the classes are colloquially referred to as ‘the hotel class’, ‘the tourism class’, and ‘the sport class’ of which there are two classes each, one Danish and one international. According to staff, the class organisation according to specialisation is installed to ‘*manage it*’ and ‘*to make sense of things*’ and thus functions as an administrative precaution for handling a large number of students; in a way, it thus relates to the administrative mode of ordering. For the students, however, the specialisation is an important point of identification. Although their advance indication of specialisation is only that, an indication given in advance and not a binding obligation, according to a management representative it rarely happens that a student changes his/her mind on their elective component once they begin classes, indicating that before starting class the students already have an idea of what interests them the most on the wide spectrum of hospitality-related topics. On the first day of the new term, I was talking to one of the lecturers and she told me what had happened earlier that morning:

*They are so focused on where they belong. I was standing outside when they arrived today and because the tutors had to go do something, I and two other colleagues were welcoming the students and I had the*

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<sup>39</sup> At UCN. Other institutions that offer the SHTM programme organize the programme differently.

*list of students on the tourism specialisation and [colleague] had the one from the hotel specialisation and there was no one in my queue. So, I gestured to some of them in the other queue that I could help them, because the list was right there. But they were like ‘no, no, I’m here with these guys’. And actually, it’s kind of like small children starting in the first grade. They are so focused on this new class, that they can’t even say hi to their playmate from another class when they pass each other in the hall.*

The ordering mode of specialisations is apparently an important way of making sense of a new programme. For these new students, the first two weeks of the new term are dedicated to introductory activities. Some have a mainly social character (getting to know each other), some relate to administrative or technical topics (e.g., introductions to the library or digital platforms), and some speak to the specialisations. On these last occasions, the specialist identity is further enacted, as in the following example in which all three Danish first-semester classes are gathered in a large room. It is the same occasion as described in section 6.6. We are about halfway through the four-hour lesson. During the first half, earlier graduates from each specialisation made presentations about their career paths upon graduation. After a short break, the lecturer introduces a group exercise.

In smaller groups of 4-5 students, the students are to brainstorm on different businesses in the hospitality industry. Students write the names of different businesses and organisations on multicoloured Post-its. Subsequently, they are asked to place the Post-its for all to see on the whiteboard, grouped into one of three categories: Hotel & Restaurant, Tourism, and Sport & Event companies or organisations. The whiteboard is quickly filled by hundreds of Post-its.



Facilitated by the lecturer, a woman in her 40s, the students engage in a talk about the differences and likenesses of the companies and organisations in question. Together, they very quickly conclude that rarely does a company act solely in one category. For example, hotels may organise events and tourist attractions may offer hotels or restaurants. The lecturer asks the students: *'So, what was the purpose of this exercise?'* One student exclaims, *'That we need to understand that things are connected.'* The lecturer nods in concordance: *'Exactly. And in a minute, you all go into your separate classes and start to think of yourself and your specialisation as a unity. And then it's important that you remember the view from above.'* One student raises his hand, and the lecturer nods in his direction. *'Before I applied, I spoke to the student counsellor, and he said that the programme was about an 80-20 distribution between hospitality/specialisation?'* The lecturer ponders this for a short moment before answering. *'Yes, you could say that, at least when it comes to the structure of the programme, but I bet that you chose this programme because of the specialisation.'* Many of the students nod in confirmation.

This excerpt from my observations further indicates how the ordering mode of specialisations is significant in the enactment of the identity of the students. The exercise intended to provide an overview of a general, very wide, and connected hospitality industry, but it also reconfirmed the division into specialisations. This lecturer, like the one in the prior example, states that the class organisation matters to the students as a mode of identification, as something that mediates an identity as a specialist of hotel & restaurant, tourism, or sport & event. Although the programme is described as having a structural emphasis on hospitality in general, the lecturer claims *'you chose this programme because of the specialisation'*. The students present in class on that day confirm the claim.

Several of the internship students I spoke to reconfirm the lecturer's claim as well. This is the case, for instance, with Cathrin who perceives the SHTM programme as a mediator for a career in the hotel industry that holds more opportunities than merely working as a receptionist:

*For me, when I chose this programme, it was because I thought that the hotel industry might be for me. And I was kind of looking for a place to start, a cornerstone, and this seemed like it with the subjects, you get around a lot of things. Then you can practically choose any hotel and any department and say that I want to work here, because I had that at school. (...) And I think it opens up your possibilities even more than starting as a receptionist trainee, because then you kind of get stuck and that wasn't what I wanted. I wanted to start somewhere that opens up opportunities, and I think this [the programme] does.*

This quote is particularly interesting as several modes of ordering and, accordingly, multiple identities coexist and enrich each other. The specialisation mode of ordering is what motivated Cathrin in her choice of the programme and is essential in her perception of herself as she ponders: *'the hotel industry might be for me'*. The curricular mode of ordering provides a broad entry into the business *'because we had that at school'* and thus enabling her enactment of the identity of *'not a common receptionist'*. Monica also describes how from the start she knew what she wanted to gain from the programme; the specialisation was essential for her choice of SHTM. Since she was 16 years old, she has had many jobs in the service industry, specifically in restaurants.

*I loved it, there was just a lot going on. And then when I turned 18, I moved on to [another restaurant] and became a sous-chef. I know that's just what I'm going to do in the future; there is no doubt in my mind. (...) This is the industry for me, I love it!*

Monica felt that she lacked a theoretical foundation, applied for the programme and chose the hotel and restaurant specialisation of the programme to further her career in the restaurant industry. Again, the curricular and the specialist mode of ordering coexist—not surprisingly as they are both to some extent embodied in the same regulatory basis.

However, not all internship students were specifically focused on one part of the hospitality industry and one specialisation. Rose, in comparison to Monica and Cathrin, is an older student in her late thirties who originally trained as an office clerk and has been employed as a salesperson and a medical secretary. On her blog, she describes how she always wondered why these jobs were often characterised by a tendency to *'do what you've always done'*, and instead of focusing on optimisation and streamlining, cut-backs and *'just running faster'* were the main focus points. These issues motivated her to apply for the SHTM programme. As she says:

*I never really thought about it as the service industry. There is a lot of strategy and management [in the programme] that you can use in many industries. It was more of a necessity that I had to choose a specialisation.*

For Rose, specifically, the specialist mode of ordering is not essential in her way of making sense of the programme. Rather, another mode, that is, that of enterprise, may be at stake here, which I will return to in section 7.2.4.

In summary, the specialist mode of ordering is an important pattern in conjunction with both the administrative and curricular modes of the programme. It is an ordering mode that is primarily embodied in on-campus practices and in student considerations on choice of education before enrolment. In the specialist mode of ordering, 'the good agent' is determined and focused on one aspect of the hospitality industry and has a specific idea of the kind of business that he or she will work for in the future. The ordering mode tells a story of the SHTM programme/students/graduates as, obviously, specialists, rather than generalists.

#### **7.2.4. ENTERPRISE**

The fourth mode of ordering that I wish to describe is that of enterprise. John Law also identified this mode of ordering in his study of the scientific

laboratory(Law 1994). According to Law, the enterprise mode of ordering ‘celebrate[s] opportunism, pragmatism and performance’(Law 1994, p. 75). It is a pattern that emphasises ‘getting the job done’, seizing opportunities, and making things happen.

In section 6.6, I argued that the identity of the hospitality professional as suggested in section 7.2.2 is not the embodiment of a curricular mode of ordering. Rather, I suggested that there might be another mode for talking about this identity enactment. This mode of ordering is exactly that of enterprise, which plays a central role in understanding the practices of the hospitality professional. The hospitality professional is, I described in section 6.6, characterised by a focus on the provision of service. While performing the identity of the hospitality professional, the students help, guide, fix problems, correct mistakes, and make social media posts. It is an understanding of the identity of the hospitality professional as dependent on, for instance, properly using the non-human actor of OTA’s for revenue increase and thus the other way around, that is, failing to enrol the OTA, as is initially the case for Bettina, conflicts with this identity.

The stories of the hospitality professional tell of an identity that is characterised by action, and by solving problematic situations with the use of common sense (that to some extent is founded in theory). Indeed, Law describes the perfect agent as ‘a mini-entrepreneur. She is someone who can take the pieces and pull them together, making pragmatic sense of all its components’(Law 1994, p. 75). Another example can be found in the following story that Rose shared on her blog:

*Last week in a quiet moment, I was fixing some things in the reception. I noticed the ‘kiosk’ of the hotel, which consisted of a white ceramic bowl of approximately 40 cm’s in diameter. I had never sold anything from the bowl for the six weeks I had worked in the reception. In the bowl, all the goods were on top of each other and it didn’t look very inviting. First I tried to place the goods on a silver platter. It was better, but didn’t quite live up to the idea I had in my head. Then I (...) found a nice black wooden box and placed [all the candy and refreshments] in a pyramid shape so it looked inviting and delicious. I made my own little investigation that same night and in two hours we had sold seven chocolates and two [bags of liquorice]. [About a week later] the manager comes and says to me that I’m brilliant. (...) He said that it looked much better and now we have started selling the kiosk goods.’*



If we were to understand this story through the logic of, say, the curricular mode of ordering, we would expect that the practice Rose here describes was a translation of learning objectives found in the curriculum. It would be something that she did to pass her exam. If on the other hand, the logic of the specialist mode of ordering was used to make sense of Rose's actions, we would expect that the story had been characteristic for someone working in a hotel, describing hotel-specific practices. Instead, it is a story of common sense and an urge to improve matters that could have taken place in any kind of business, be it hotel, restaurant, or something in a completely different industry, say, a pharmacy or a convenience store.

Rose's story is one of initiative; she saw an opportunity and seized it. At first, she failed. Her improvements did not work out as intended, but she tried again and succeeded. Indeed, Law describes that for the perfect agent in enterprise *'failure is a practical matter—something to be put right by trying again. For there is no such thing as absolute failure. Rather, there are setbacks and strategic withdrawals'* (Law 1994, p. 75). However, in the end, there is success, and it is one that is measured by certain performance indicators. For Rose, these performance indicators are the number of chocolate bars and so forth that sold, which was a sudden increase from zero sold in six weeks, to nine items in one evening. Subsequently, the manager praised her for the improvement. Earlier in this chapter, I described similar stories about the enactment of identity as hospitality professionals, for example, how Dorothy, Bettina, and Nellie succeeded in their marketing efforts. All are stories that can be made to make sense through the ordering mode of enterprise, as it emphasises performance and determines the success of actors as they score on specific key performance indicators, that is, making profit, gaining followers, minimising complaints.

One might argue, that this mode of ordering is a way of speaking of the world and actors that is an embodiment of the ideas of liberalism, which indeed Law admits (Law 1994). Classic liberalist theory does indeed rely heavily on the ideas of personal initiative and individual agency as the foundation for a perfect social world, that—in theory—will find an optimal equilibrium if it is allowed to regulate itself.<sup>40</sup> In opposition to such a point of view is, naturally, the emphasis on administration and its civil servants that, from a classic liberalist viewpoint, are characterised by rules, regulations, and bureaucratic inertia: something to be minimised. So, the modes of ordering that Law named enterprise and administration are to some extent opposites. Law argues that these modes of ordering may collide (Law 1994). This might be what is at

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<sup>40</sup> Admitted, the ideas of liberalism are rather simplified in this rendition. However, as the present purpose is not to provide a textbook of political and economic philosophy, this short description seems sufficient.

stake in the following excerpt from Helen's blog. As mentioned, Helen interned in a start-up project.

*It's been very quiet for the past couple of weeks. The process of getting all the licenses and permissions for the new project is delayed. (...) [the manager] will contact me to continue the work, once all the permits are in place. (...) He also offered me to entirely take over the operation of this new place at one point. Because he thinks I have a flair for it, more than he does. And I think he is right. He is all over the place.*

In the quote, we see the contrast between following the rules and the outright operation of a business. In this specific case, one is a prerequisite for the other. Helen, the manager, and the project are rule followers (a story of administration), which currently stops them from 'doing', from continuation, and operation (a story of enterprise). The quote underlines a very important point, one that is general to this chapter. Modes of ordering are, as described above, patterns that enable us to make sense of our practices. Essential to the understanding of these patterns (and where Law parts ways with Foucault) is that they may coexist. The mode of enterprise is embodied in many of the practices of the hospitality professional, and at other times, the mode of administration may be the way to make sense of the actors, their relations, and their practices as hospitality professionals.

Both examples (that of Rose and that of Helen) also tell stories of their relations to other actors (in these cases, the managers) and the organisation. In both cases, it is evident that the enterprise mode of ordering is performed in the organisation as well, and not just in the isolated individual actions of the actors. They are acknowledged, respectively, for their initiative (Rose) and ability to perform, rather than be 'all over the place' (Helen). These are examples of the good organisation in the mode of enterprise which, as Law describes, is one of harnessed opportunities and delegation of responsibility (Law 1994).

In summary, like the other modes of ordering, enterprise tells stories about agency that entail certain ways to perceive the success of actors. In enterprise, the perfect agent is one that capitalises on possibilities, is active, and has a pragmatic attitude to problems. From this perspective, the enterprise mode of ordering also tells stories of organisations, of what defines the perfect organisation in this mode. The enterprise mode of ordering enables the performance of organisations that are not characterised by control, regulation, and governance (such as those in administration), but rather by delegation of responsibility.

### 7.3. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

In Chapter 6, I argued how identity is something that is enacted, with multiple identities being the effect. In this present Chapter 7, it has been my purpose to follow this line of thinking by staying with the notion of performativity. Thus, the different identities that I described in elsewhere in this chapter do not describe personality types that in some way ‘are’ or ‘exist’. Instead, the identities can be seen as effects that are generated through modes of ordering; ways of sense-making that enable certain forms of subjectivity, certain ways to go about things. The modes of ordering must not be perceived as structures around agency, or the other way around. Rather, the argument is that of the actor-network, which I described in Chapter 4, it is a way of bypassing the agency/structure debate.

The modes of ordering take the form of relatively regular patterns that are embodied and reproduced in the ordering of networks of relations. I have described four modes of ordering in the SHTM programme based on my empirical material. The modes of ordering are:

- Administration. This mode of ordering tells stories of agents as rule followers. I argued that the identity of shtmx09YY is an effect of this mode of ordering, enacting an identity that is defined by presence in class.
- Curriculum. The curricular mode of ordering is embodied in many on-campus and off-campus practices. It tells stories of dutiful students who are focused on learning and complying with the requirements of the curriculum document. The identities of the ‘not a common receptionist’ and the on-campus student are enabled by this way of making sense of the SHTM programme.
- Specialist. The specialist mode of ordering is based on the curriculum. It is an important way to make sense of SHTM for the on-campus students where it interacts with the administrative and curricular modes of ordering. It enables a view of SHTM as specialised rather than generalised.
- Enterprise. The enterprise mode of ordering tells stories about opportunism, pragmatism, and performance. It speaks of ‘getting things done’ and enables a form of subjectivity that is characterised by a high level of individual responsibility and performance that is measured by certain key performance indicators.

The notion of modes of ordering thus qualifies the understanding of identities. These patterns of sense-making tell certain stories of agency. They define what qualifies as a ‘good’ agent or ‘good’ organisation within the specific mode. Thereby it becomes clear that the different identities have different

objectives; that is, they are defined as successful in different ways. The successful enactment of the identity of the hospitality professional is related to the enterprise mode of ordering, relying on performance on certain indicators of, for example, achieving views, gaining followers, making profit, and being recognised by peers, all of which is made possible using digital technology. In comparison, the successful enactment of on-campus student identities is a story of the curricular mode of ordering, as a matter of being prepared for class, collecting ECTS-credits, and passing exams, all of which require access to the Internet (to find the curriculum) and to the learning management systems (to find the syllabus).

Enrolling the concept of modes of ordering in this dissertation enables an understanding of the role of education in identity enactment. By describing and perceiving agency and organisation together, it fundamentally interlinks these two. Identity assemblages like those described in Chapter 6 neither simply exist nor are they simply enacted on a blank canvas. Rather, the organisation (in this case, the UCN SHTM programme) invites students to think about themselves in certain ways and act in certain ways that are not exclusively related to the target industry or profession, but rather to the upkeep of the educational administration.



# **CHAPTER 8. CONFLICTS IN IDENTITY AND MODES OF ORDERING**

## **8.1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to answer research sub-question 3: What issues may lead to conflicts in identity enactment? The chapter is based on the line of thinking presented in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7: that educational practices and organisational ordering modes allow for certain identity enactments. First, a brief description of modes of ordering as multiple and coexisting begins the chapter. Then, I move on to analyse four situations of conflict before providing an analytical summary of the chapter. The central argument of this chapter is that situations of identity conflicts may be perceived because of the deficiency of ordering modes as sense-making tools in certain practices or that the multiple ordering modes interrelate in a problematic manner.

## **8.2. MULTIPLE MODES OF ORDERING**

If one accepts the logic that I have argued for in the previous chapters, that the enactment of identities is interlinked with modes of ordering, one might suggest the inference that any conflicts in identity enactment are an embodiment of conflicting ordering modes. These inferences require that we investigate the relations of ordering modes further.

### **Multiple Modes of Ordering**

John Law argued, that the multiple modes of ordering create organisational stability *'precisely because these are irreducible to one another'* (Law 2009, p. 152). He claimed that had the laboratory he described in *Organizing Modernity* been governed solely by the mode of enterprise, it *'would have run the risk of illegality'* (Law 2009, p. 149) Performance and results would have been the sole objectives that actors would direct themselves towards regardless of consequences. Likewise, a single ordering mode of administration would let the organisation succumb to 'red tape' by doing things by the book. The organisation works because the ordering modes hold each other at bay, they co-exist, flow into each other, thereby creating a reality that is stable. Moreover, when one mode of ordering becomes problematic, *'others might be more effective'* (Law 2009, p. 149).

Following Law's line of thinking, a similar argument may be put forward in the organisation of the UCN SHTM programme. The mode of administration, as it manages resources and makes sure that every lesson has a classroom and an assigned lecturer, is irreducible to the curricular mode of ordering that, among other things, ensures that each class relates to subjects, learning objectives, and ECTS-credits. The programme would not function without either. Together the two ordering modes flow into each other and are visibly embodied in the schedule as shown in Figure 17. Similarly, the curricular mode of ordering and the enterprise mode of ordering are altogether different patterns defining different ways of being for all actors. Exclusively defining the content of the programme based on the curricular mode of ordering holds the risk that students, lecturers, and management would get lost in theory and regulations. The mode of enterprise, which primarily is an ordering mode that characterises the internship period serves as a form of counterweight. These two ordering modes cannot be reduced to one another but function specifically because they are different. The practices in internship make the theories come to life, and the curriculum regulates the duration and learning objectives of internship. Without the internship and the patterns and logic of enterprise that characterise it, the programme might be considered as cut off from reality. The other way around, that is, reducing the programme only to the ordering mode of enterprise, would seriously question the academic legality of the programme.

### 8.3. IDENTITY CONFLICTS

John Law suggested the possibility that where one mode of ordering falls short, others might be more suitable (Law 2009). It is my contention, as suggested above, that problems with or conflicts in identity enactment are related to problematic ordering modes. In Chapter 7, I have already briefly touched upon situations in which certain modes of ordering fail as sense-making tools in enactments of identity. In the example, this is the case because Rose does not think of herself as a hotel ‘specialist’ but, instead, as a sort of mini-entrepreneur motivated by the optimisation of practices. For Rose, the specialisation mode is not the optimal way of making sense of her identity as an SHTM’er. This emphasises how identity enactments can never be generalised as an objective reality (or realities). The enactment of identity entails a notion of subjectivity; it is in its essence connected to person, as I also argued in section 6.7.

In the following, I will describe four instances where the enactment of identities was in some ways conflicted. These instances typically appear in my data as conflicts, frustrations, or the need for explaining away a certain practice. The four sections each elaborate on the understanding of the concept of ordering modes in general and in educational contexts specifically. Although the stories in these four sections might seem to go in very different directions, they do, however, all elaborate on how modes of ordering and identity enactment play out in an educational context.

#### 8.3.1. FAILING TO ESTABLISH ANTI-GROUPS

In section 6.3, I described how the ‘receptionist’ is considered as an anti-group to the identity of the SHTM professional. Despite this, all the students who interned at hotels had to perform receptionist work. This account by Rose describes a common receptionist practice:

*Checking in of a guest who has booked a room takes 2-3 minutes. That’s way too long in high season. First you must:*

1. *Find the guest on the arrival list*
2. *Open the reservation*
3. *Find a clean room*
4. *Choose when and where the payment is to take place*



5. *Ask the guest to check in their credit card*
6. *Wait for the terminal to register the card*
7. *Make room keys for the guest*

These central receptionist tasks are performed using software systems. The software systems typically handle room bookings, table reservations, sales, invoicing, and budgets and are thus a key tool in the working life of the receptionist. Alternatively, one might say the software is enrolled in the identity assemblage of the receptionist. For the students, these systems generally posed a challenge for them in their internship. Some, like Monica, who interned at a Danish hotel that is part of a large hotel chain, did not have full access to the systems (e.g., their own username), which to some extent hindered or complicated the performance of the tasks:

*This week I, for the first time, was responsible for all group bookings from [customer]. This is incredibly insurmountable and there was a lot to do. Especially because [two other chain hotels] are dependent on that the correspondences function and that the bookings are done right and distributed correctly. And because I do not have access to the other internal systems, I constantly have to get in touch with them to inquire whether we'll take in groups that exceed their allotment.'*

Some had never worked with such a system before while others had experience with similar systems from former employments but had to become acquainted with a new system. Bettina, for instance, was not familiar with the Spectra system at the inn and it was not always easy navigating the system when it came to daily tasks, as she writes in one of her blog posts:

*Alone in the reception the first two hours at breakfast. And of course, there were a couple of tasks in the inn's payment system that I have NOT been trained in. Isn't that typical? With a smile and an explanation to the guests in question, the tasks had to wait until Elisabeth came to work.'*

In our interview, Bettina explains that she has felt little prepared for the work with hotel management systems. Before her internship, Bettina had had experience with other similar systems, but she vividly remembers the first

time she set foot in a reception and was quite puzzled by the system. She points to the fact that not all her classmates have experience to draw from, as mentioned in section 6.7. Despite her previous experience and her months at the inn, in retrospect Bettina still does not feel entirely at home in Spectra, as she writes in one of her later blogposts:

*I feel that I still need to fully learn the Spectra system, it's not just about making bookings but also making credit notes. So, I hope it will come to me. All along, I've been saying that the Spectra system is easy, but in this regard, it was easier working with the system I used at [a previous employment].'*

In the enactment of the identity of not a 'common receptionist', the lack of skill in using the booking systems poses a problem. Failing to enrol the systems in the identity assemblage problematises the identity performance as 'not just a common receptionist'. Bettina is troubled by the fact that she does not understand the system or know how to use its full potential. As Spectra is the main working software of 'common receptionists', she is not able to maintain her perceived superior position, that is, she is not able to establish 'the common receptionists' as an anti-group. The booking systems and the ability to use them are thus instrumental in her enactment of identity through the delineation of anti-groups. For her and several of the students expressed similar sentiments, the programme is the mediator of 'something more' than merely doing receptionist work. By failing to provide her with the needed competencies, she feels that the programme has failed her in a way. She believes the programme should have introduced them to the most-used systems and perhaps shown introductory films, if not specifically train them in using the systems 'so you don't feel as stupid', as she says. This example underlines how the booking systems function as mediators in the identity enactment of 'not a common receptionist'. Were we to elaborate on Figure 10, we might add the booking systems to that identity assemblage.

Furthermore, the example above illustrates how a singular mode of ordering as a sense-making tool might be insufficient. The booking systems are a common hotel practice that is not included as a learning objective in the curriculum; the students are not trained in the use of booking systems on campus. Thus, the ordering mode of the curriculum in isolation is not sufficient as a sense-making tool in the enactment of the identity of 'not a common receptionist'. The curricular mode of ordering is an essential way to understand the importance of theory as a mediator of an identity that is superior to that of the receptionist, but it fails when it comes to the importance of booking systems that are also indispensable in the enactment of this identity. Accordingly, this example also illustrates that ordering modes are not

isolated, disconnected logics. The performance of the identity of ‘not a common receptionist’ is dependent not only on theory and not only booking systems, but rather on both in combination.

In this specific example, the failure of the curricular mode of ordering as a sole sense-making tool leads Bettina to conclude that the programme is insufficient. By explaining away her problems with the booking systems and by placing the blame with the programme for not providing her with the skills and competencies necessary to perform the identity of the SHTM professional and not the ‘common receptionist’, she is able to maintain a feeling of self-worth and superiority as a SHTM professional.

### 8.3.2. WHEN TECHNOLOGY FAILS

In other instances, in my data, technologies and the matter of successfully enrolling them or not in the enactment of identity is evident as well. In section 6.5, I described that the on-campus technologies were mediators in the enactment of the on-campus student identity. Consequently, the technological failure of these mediators might constitute a conflict in the enactment of identity and accordingly the identity cannot be performed. To illustrate, we return to campus on one of the first days of the semester. On this occasion, I was standing in the hallway talking with one of the lecturers about the program for these first days.

A young woman with a nametag attached to the shirt, approached us; she seemed quite flustered. *‘Can I ask you a question?’* she inquired. *‘I’m looking for someone named Line and was told to come here,’* indicating with a hand gesture to the offices around us, which were primarily inhabited by programme directors and strategic staff. The lecturer and I looked at each other. *‘Well...’*, I said puzzled why someone would want to talk to me on the first day of term on a location where I’m not local, *‘my name is Line, but I don’t know if it’s me you’re looking for.’* She continued in a tone of voice indicating the irony of her problem: *‘It’s because I’m new here and I don’t even have my user ID or password yet!’* I replied: *‘Then it’s definitely not me you want, but...’* I looked at the lecturer beside me who quickly answered: *‘Ah, you see you need to go around this corner and into the administration—they can help you!’* *‘Thank you!’* the student replied while continuing past us.

Without the username and password, the student in the story above is not only unable to connect to the LMS, but she also does not even have Internet access; hence, she cannot find information about curriculum, syllabus, activities, and assignments. Without access, she cannot perform her identity as a student, which to her is a great irony, as this was the explicit purpose of being on campus. In the example above, the problem is mended. The female student in the first story finds help with administrative staff who provides her with a user ID and password, and her performance of the on-campus student identity can be continued.

The importance of having access becomes even clearer in the following account from the classroom. It is about three weeks into the semester, and the students have already begun to settle in. They daily choose the same seat as they have gotten used to throughout the previous weeks, and their student life has become quite a matter of routine. When we enter the story, the lecturer has already performed the almost ritualistic practices of roll call and PowerPoint dissemination.

After some time and a break, the lecturer introduces an assignment. *'I have uploaded an article from a newspaper to Canvas. I would like you to read this article and try to analyse its arguments to the concepts I have introduced to you today. Once you are done reading and analysing the article, we will discuss it in class. You have half an hour to read the article.'* A quiet mumbling begins as the students go to Canvas to find the article. Shortly after, a student raises her hand and says: *'I can't seem to download the article on Canvas.'* The lecturer, who was standing at his table, approaches the student, and confirms that he too is unable to download it to her computer. They briefly discuss whether the Internet connection, the browser, or something else causes the problem. Then he concludes: *'Well, I'll go and print a copy for you,'* he raises his voice and looks toward the class, *'Is anyone else having trouble?'* Two other students raise their hands; the lecturer nods in their direction, leaves the room and returns a couple of minutes later with three copies of the article.

In this example, the students have already assumed their on-campus student identities. They act in a certain way, sit in 'their' seat and expect the proper information to be available on Canvas, the learning management system (LMS). The lecturer, for his part, re-enacts this order of things with his UCN

PowerPoint slide that reconfirms the lecturer-student dichotomy of communicator and listeners. This seems to be an unproblematic way of interacting for the students, perhaps because they recognise it as a well-known identity from their past experiences with teaching; it is a form of general pedagogic contract in the teacher-student relationship. The digital technologies of, for example, slide show, Internet, and LMS are actors in the identity assemblage of the students. It re-enacts their identity as students by following the somewhat standardised way of being in the classroom. However, in this specific case, something interesting happens. Three students are unable to access the article. The LMS is a mediator, as I argued in section 6.5, of an on-campus student identity. However, on this occasion, due to the apparent failure in the LMS, the students are not immediately able to successfully enrol the LMS into their identity assemblage; hence, they are unable to perform the on-campus student identity. Like the first account of the female student without the user ID, order is restored. It is resolved, however, not by fixing the technological problems but by working around the LMS with printed copies of the text. Students and lecturer are thus able to resume the classroom activities.

In combination with section 8.3.1, this second example illustrates how modes of ordering imply certain technologies, and when these fail, the enactment of identity fails as well. Evidently, identity enactment, organisational patterns, and technologies become intertwined. The curricular mode of ordering implies, as I have already argued in section 7.2.2, the use of the LMS, rather than booking systems. Likewise, the ordering mode of enterprise is dependent on the technology of booking systems, through which hospitality professionals pursue an efficient and cost-optimising operation of hotels.

### **8.3.3. ESTABLISHING AN UNEXPECTED ANTI-GROUP**

On one occasion, I observed how a class almost broke down when the technology failed in a lecture on methodology. This lecture was held on a Monday morning in a regular classroom with approximately 25 students present. The topic of the day was information searching in online databases.

Using the projector, the lecturer demonstrates how to search for statistics and other information using various online resources. The students attempt to replicate the process on their own laptops as the lecturer moves from one online resource to the next. Suddenly, one student exclaims in a frustrated tone: *'It won't even give me access! It says I have an insecure IP address!'* The lecturer looks at the student: *'Which browser are you using? Sometimes there are problems with specific*

*browsers,*' he says. A general feeling of frustration spreads through the students. Some initiate a frustrated conversation with each other, and some even place their heads on the table in resignation. The lecturer moves on, but the students continue mumbling. From my place in the classroom, I can see how some have abandoned any attempt at following the class; they are now using their laptops for social media and online shopping. At the end of the class, the lecturer tries to evaluate: *'What went wrong?'* he asks. The students say things like *'It was difficult'* and *'We didn't have enough time'*. They seem tired and discouraged.

Afterwards, the lecturer and I have lunch together and talk about the class. He is frustrated by the experience. *'It didn't go as I had hoped,'* he says. *'It seems like once one of them gives up, they start reconfirming each other that it's hard.'* Another lecturer joins us and we tell her about the frustrating experience. After a while, the female lecturer concludes: *'It's a recurring problem, isn't it? There are just some things that they do not come here for. Subjects that they don't really see as important.'*

From the experience in the classroom, it was clear to me that the students approached the methodology class with little motivation. In fact, from the very beginning of class, I made a comment in my observational notes that perhaps they were just tired on a Monday morning. The breaking point in the class, however, was clearly when one of the students was unable to make the database work—when 'it' accused him of having an insecure IP address. In this case, the technology that was to provide the smooth access to information by being an intermediary actor in the network became a mediator. As the technology failed to allow him access, he was unable to follow the lecturer and perform the role of the on-campus student, the one who does what the lecturer tells him.

In the aftermath of the lecturers evaluating the class, however, the lack of motivation and increased level of frustration was ascribed to the dichotomy of generalist/specialist that I introduced in section 7.2.3. On several occasions, I encountered how this dichotomy produced a clear distinction between topics, knowledge, and competencies that are perceived as belonging to either a general SHTM identity or a specialist SHTM identity. Thus, I witnessed how this dichotomy of specialist and generalist was verbalised by the lecturers, such as the following instance of a class in management, in which the lecturer introduced herself and the subject in the following way:

*I teach what I call the ‘generalist-subjects’; what lies outside your specialisation. Management, human resources, inter-cultural communication, organisation. The somewhat generalized subjects that support your service and hospitality subjects.*

In section 7.2.3, I argued that the ordering mode of specialisation constituted an important sense-making practice for both students and lecturers. It proved to be a way for the students to mark their membership in the on-campus groups of classes (e.g., that of shtmxx09YY), and for some, it was an important definer in their motivation for their choice of programme and their plans. For the lecturers, it was a way to manage a large group of students into smaller classes and a way to explain connections between sub-industries of the hospitality industry, that is, a way to describe the sub-industries of hotel & restaurant, tourism, and sport & event as different, but related. I similarly argued, that this ordering mode defined the students as specialists, that is, as the class of shtmxx09YY became known as ‘the hotel class’.

As suggested in the previous section, certain ordering modes imply certain technologies. In the example above of the methodology class, the curricular ordering mode implies the use of online databases for information searching. By failing to use them, the students are unable to perform the identity of the on-campus student. However, rather than mending the problem or working around it as in section 8.3.2, the problematic situation is explained away by the lecturers, by referring to the ordering mode of specialisation. This subject becomes one of those that the students ‘don’t come here for’. These stories highlight a dichotomy of ‘specialist’ and ‘generalist’ that seems central but not necessarily unproblematic in the on-campus practices. In a way, you might say, that telling stories of the programme as ‘specialist’ enacts an identity with which the ‘generalist’ subjects are in opposition. By doing so, the problems in class that might initially have been caused by lack of motivation—the difficulty of the activities, pressure of time, or the failure of technology—are explained away by reaffirming the ordering mode of specialisation. In this way, the ‘generalist subjects’ are positioned as an anti-group, thus producing an inferior position for these subjects. Thereby, the ordering mode of specialisation conflicts with that of the curriculum; central parts of the curriculum are positioned outside of the identity assemblage of the specialised hospitality professional. This peripheral and inferior position of generalist subjects is an effect of the organisational pattern or ordering mode of specialisation. Evidently, the ordering mode of specialisation falls short as a sense-making tool for the methodology class that might be better understood by the curricular mode of ordering.

### 8.3.4. WORKER OR LEARNER?

In section 6.6, I described how the identity of the hospitality professional was enacted by the provision of service, among other things. Thus, the relation to the guests is an important and complex mediator of this identity. It is a mediator that may be problematic. In the specific example in section 6.6, the problems arose because Monica lacked the knowledge to guide guests properly to local sights and restaurants. However, on other occasions, it was not specifically the general level of knowledge that hindered Monica in a professional performance, but rather external circumstances of peak hours and lack of organisational planning, like in this example from a later time in Monica's internship:

*I don't understand why they don't have an extra person on duty Sunday mornings helping with the checking out, it's always super busy and you can't keep up when you're there alone, because everyone tends to check out at the same time, and it's super frustrating, because you don't have the time to hear about how the guests experienced their stay and follow up on any unfortunate experiences before they leave.*

It seems that simply being too busy constitutes a problem in the enactment of the identity of the hospitality professional through the provision of service. In the example above, Monica feels frustrated because she is not able to provide properly the service that is essential for her professional hospitality identity. Being too busy is a challenge in another regard, as well. Some of the students expressed considerations that indicate that they were in a way caught up by the demands of reality. The students considered themselves as interns, someone who was there to learn, not as employees, a distinction that Bettina also touched upon in section 6.3 where she expressed that she did not wish to receive a trainee salary. Instead, the interns have a higher purpose that to some extent conflicts with the needs of the internship host. This is an articulation of a dichotomy of worker/learner which is considered a challenge, as Monica puts it: *'It's like being on a knife-edge with regard to just being a regular worker and actually being an intern'*. As the daily life takes over, the objective of internship, that is, learning in practice, gets pushed aside, she elaborates:

*There wasn't really time for the things that [we had agreed on, ed.] in my internship contract, because their routines and their daily life that was an entirely different flow (...) you ended up being a part of that regular group [of permanent members of staff, ed.] and there*



*was a duty roster that had to be covered. And you learn something from that, but it's more learning by doing rather than be given insight into what the company is about. It ended up being a full-time job that was extremely demanding but you didn't get anything out of it at the end of the day.'*

Some of the students clearly experienced how their learning process was hindered as they came to be considered not as interns, but rather employees. Some, like Helen, described it as 'exploitation of free labour'. Dorothy experienced how she got assigned to do 'crappy things', that is, all kinds of odd jobs that did not specifically speak to her perceived identity as an SHTM'er. She expressed to me that she had expected that this would happen and describes it as 'okay, but too easy', that is, too easy for the internship host to abstain from taking responsibility for her learning process by considering her a 'helping hand' rather than have her perform tasks that related to her sense of professionalism.

The students describe these problems as stemming in part from their inability to stand on their own and insist on a professional and learning-centred internship. They were even told about this imminent risk beforehand, Monica explains, but still, once reality hit, it was difficult to change it:

*It's not because we haven't been made aware of this from the start or because it's something new and surprising that happens in the labour market. But once you got started and the three months have begun it was surprisingly difficult to stop and realise it and do something about it, before it was over. And it bothers me that I wasn't able to do something about it. It's not because I didn't gain something, and I'm happy about the learning processes and the professional knowledge I got, but because I think I could have gotten more, if I had been a bit more selfish and remembered why I was there.*

Apparently, however, the perception of the internship as having a different and higher purpose than 'simply' working also reflects the way the internship is framed by the programme. Monica describes this:

*On-campus [the internship] is spoken of as though you are just going out to learn something, and granted, there are more things you see in practice once you know the theory behind it, but it's also about learning a new job and getting into the daily life they have. It's not just*

*about standing there and figuring out solutions for them. (...) it's not about us coming out there and saving a business with a major problem. And I kind of think that it is presented that way.'*

There appear to be two identities that are in conflict here. One is the identity of learner which holds close ties to that of the on-campus student as it has an inherent focus on learning objectives that are described in an internship contract and are founded in the curriculum document. The other is the identity of the worker which, on the other hand, is related to that of the hospitality professional defined by the performance of work tasks. It is thereby also a conflict of two modes of ordering, that is, that of the curricular and the enterprise modes of ordering. The two modes fail, in some cases, to coexist, leading to frustrations for the students. Certain organisational and academic practices have been implemented to ensure that this does not happen, such as the internship contract that the internship host as well as the supervisor and the student sign. Furthermore, the individual student formulates learning objectives for the internship period. Nonetheless, the enterprise mode of ordering embodied by the busy operation of a business and a feeling of obligation to satisfy a potential employer easily carries the students away from the logic of the curricular mode of ordering or leaves them frustrated as they cannot do both at the same time.

#### **8.4. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY**

In chapters 6 and 7, I argued that the enactment of identity is interrelated with the organisational modes of ordering. Identities are produced in and enabled by certain practices. The present Chapter 8, which also constitutes the final analytical chapter before I move onto a reflection on the perspectives of the analysis for UC educational practice, builds upon the arguments introduced in the previous chapters. The purpose of this chapter is to answer research sub-question 3 regarding identity conflicts. The main argument in this chapter is that conflicts in identity enactments arise due to conflicting logics in ordering modes.

As argued in Chapter 7, the SHTM programme might be said to be characterised by four modes of ordering: administration, curriculum, specialist, and enterprise. These may be perceived as logics that define what characterises a successful performance of identities. The four modes in each way play a role in the organisation of the UCN SHTM programme, which functions exactly due to these four modes. In their coexistence, they ensure the academic legality of the programme as well as the relevance of theory to practice.

In my analysis, technology reappeared as central to the understanding of identities and ordering modes. I have argued that the effective enrolment of technology is paramount to the identity enactment and thus to the ordering modes. Therefore, specific ordering modes imply specific technologies, such as the mode of curriculum implies the use of the LMS and the mode of enterprise the use of booking systems. Trivial matters such as having Internet access and user IDs thus become indispensable in the enactment of identities.

Furthermore, I described two instances in which the modes of ordering conflicted. In this way, the specific logic implied by one ordering mode is in opposition to another, thus creating identity conflicts for the students. These conflicts are characterised by an inability to discern and prioritise the actions necessary for a successful identity performance.

In summary, through the analysis of four situations of identity conflicts, I have argued that:

- Ordering modes are not isolated, disconnected logics, and a singular mode of ordering as a sense-making tool of SHTM practice might be said to be insufficient. Hence, multiple ordering modes might productively overlap.
- Certain modes of ordering imply certain technologies, and when these fail, the enactment of identity fails as well. Evidently, identity enactment, organisational patterns, and technologies become intertwined.
- The coexistence of ordering modes is not necessarily unproblematic. In some instances, the logic of a mode of ordering may be in opposition to another, resulting in identity conflicts.

The arguments that I have presented in this and the previous chapters, that identity enactment is interlinked with organisational patterns, hold certain limitations. It is important to underline that I do not wish to argue for a 1:1 relationship between the modes of ordering and the enactment of identities. A mode of ordering is not to be perceived as a structure that is set in stone and enables a specific identity. Granted, some have a closer relationship than others (e.g., the administrative mode of ordering and the identity of shtmx09YY), while others coincide either in conflict or productive interaction in the performance of practices and organisational arrangements. This understanding enables a general discussion of the role of education in the enactment of identity, which is the purpose of the following Chapter 9.

# CHAPTER 9. PERSPECTIVES ON ANT, IDENTITY, AND EDUCATION

## 9.1. INTRODUCTION

In section 3.5, I briefly outlined three categories within which this dissertation is thought to contribute: educational practice in university colleges, the body of knowledge of identity theory, and ANT studies as an explication of a methodical approach. These are practical, theoretical, and methodological contributions. A large part of this contribution is inherently present throughout the dissertation, specifically regarding the theoretical and methodological contribution. The dissertation is essentially an explication of theoretical and methodological consideration, and in the following sections (9.2 and 9.3), I will briefly summarise the main points regarding this. Thereafter in section 9.4, I will reflect on the perspectives of my work heretofore in relation to educational practice, specifically regarding the unique aspects of University Colleges and AP programmes.

## 9.2. METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

On several occasions in the dissertation, I have argued that, despite the name, ANT may not be perceived as a theory of how things work. Similarly, ANT cannot be considered a prescriptive method, although it does entail a preference for specific methodical approaches and actions over others. Instead, I have argued for a perception of ANT as a philosophy that enables an understanding of ontological matters. This includes the relation between theory and empirics as well as the epistemological concern of how to acknowledge ‘reality’, which I touched upon in Chapter 4.

Another central ontological argument of this dissertation is that of multiplicity, which is derived from the focus on enactment and, for me in this dissertation, based upon the work by Annemarie Mol (Mol 2002). The implications of this argument in relation to identity have been expanded specifically in Chapter 6, in which I have argued for the multiple identities within SHTM education. However, acknowledging identity as multiple does not mean that there are endless identities, or that anything goes. In the words of Mol, there are *‘more than one, and less than many’* (Mol 2002, p. 55) since the different versions are related and overlap. For Bettina, theory is part of her enactment of identity, as it helps her maintain a superior identity in relation to the receptionist and assists her in performing her tasks in her internship. At the same time, but not unrelated, reading and hearing about theory and using it in

assignments are part of the enactment of the on-campus student identity of those who adhere to the curriculum.

However, it is important to emphasise that describing reality as multiple is not a goal in itself. As Woolgar and Lezaun argued, the purpose of researching ontology in ANT-based studies is not to propose a ‘better’ understanding of reality that is thought to replace other conceptions of *‘the way the world is real’* (Woolgar, Lezaun 2013, p. 323). That is, the intention is not to replace the notion of the world as singular with a notion of multiple worlds, what Zuiderent-Jerak describes as *multiplicity realism* (Zuiderent-Jerak 2015). Rather, the intention and potential of ANT is to propose ontological studies that interfere with notions of a *stable* reality (Winthereik 2015). Coming to terms with the notion of multiplicity—and accordingly instability—poses a challenge for most of us. Mol argues how we, in our dealings with the world, long for singularity (Mol 2002). In general, we do not thrive with multiplicity and have an inherent antipathy for the flux of life. Consequently, we have a hard time capturing the point that identity is always in motion. In exploring a relational approach to identity, we do, however, need to acknowledge that identity is not one, single thing that can be locked down and defined in simple terms. Instead, we need to propose analytical strategies that enable an understanding of identity that acknowledges its inherent movements. This dissertation in its entirety can be considered as an explication of such a proposal.

### 9.3. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Throughout this dissertation, I have pursued an investigation of matters of identity based on Actor-Network Theory. This resulted in a study of practices and an understanding of identity as an effect of organisational patterns. However, as I am now approaching the end, it also warrants the question: Is ANT a useful tool to capture issues of identity? During my PhD period, I have encountered many doubtful looks, questions, and comments regarding my choice of ANT as the foundation of my dissertation. From the helpful: *‘Have you thought about going in a different direction, say Bourdieu/Activity Theory/discourse theory?’* all depending on the preferred theory of the inquirer, to sheer warnings, *‘You open yourself up to a lot of criticism when going in that direction’*. Granted, on some occasions, I have been concerned regarding my choice of ANT as a way of perceiving identity. Not because ANT was in any way inadequate; but rather because other ANT-based publications focusing on identity are sparse. Fundamentally, ANT is NOT a theory of identity, and my investigation might have been less complicated and my personal journey less frustrating (and perhaps, I might add, less interesting) had there been an elaborate theoretical framework that I could have leant on.

Although other publications regarding ANT and identity are sparse, Hamilton in 2012 proposed that there might be ‘*a theory of identity that could be teased out of ANT*’(Hamilton 2012). In this perspective, identity is, as I have argued, shaped by social relationships, thus creating a dynamic understanding of identity as an effect of networks, rather than a quality that resides in an individual. This dynamic understanding resembles a concept such as identity work as introduced by, for example, Ibarra and Petriglieri and Boudreau, Serrano, and Larson (Ibarra, Petriglieri 2010, Boudreau, Serrano & Larson 2014). However, in my opinion, these works tend to consider identity as an end goal. Ibarra mentions how identity is something to be ‘*granted*’(Ibarra, Petriglieri 2010, p. 12) while Boudreau et al. write of ‘*provisional identities*’, that is, steppingstones on the way to a ‘*realized identity*’(Boudreau, Serrano & Larson 2014, p. 9) This position is contradictory to the notion of performativity, which enables the understanding of identity as something that is continuously enacted, rather than something to be developed. Compare this also the argument in the previous section on stability.

In this dissertation, the initial focus was on identity that is related to a professional life, but it is clear from the arguments in the analysis that this identity performance does not exist in isolation. During our lifetime, we perform various identities such as daughter, friend, student, employee, mother, and so forth. These identities coexist and may be related. For instance, we saw how the professional identity enactment for Bettina was not limited to professional considerations, but also to matters that were personal, her health history, for example, and practical matters regarding transportation. Professional identity is thus not just a matter of relating to a profession—regardless of how specific or complex that profession may be, which I will return to in the next section. The analysis rather emphasised identity as a personal project of making things work holistically. Such a holistic focus on identity is not ground-breaking; see, for example, (Mulcahy 2011, Hamilton 2012).

However, one of the main distinctions between other conceptions of identity and the one presented in this dissertation is that from an ANT point of view, identity is not merely considered to be a human-centred and cognitive phenomenon. The present ANT-inspired analysis of identity and the central conception of identity assemblages provide for a potential redefinition of the unit of study that is not predefined as, for instance, knowledge-based or social, nor a specific human attribute. Instead, the analysis indicates that the clothes we wear and the technologies we use, for example, are part of our identity enactment. This entails an understanding of identity that is not strictly associated with concepts such as intentionality and subjectivity that are commonly considered to be human attributes—a notion also suggested by (Hamilton 2012). This necessitates an approach to the study of identity which

recognises that identity must be considered and studied as assemblages of a socio-material nature. Such an expanded understanding of identity is central and applicable on a general level. As I have focused on identity enactments within the context of education (and I elaborate on the perspectives in this relation in the following section), one might ask how this socio-material understanding of identity might play out in other transition processes. How is identity performed when one becomes a mother for the first time, or when one loses one's job or takes on a new one? My analysis suggests that successfully enrolling digital technologies, for example, is paramount to the enactment of identities and, thereby, that entities of a material, non-human nature are part of and may potentially hinder the transition from one identity performance to another.

#### **9.4. PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

As described in Chapter 1, I was initially motivated by the identity struggles that my students experienced. I wanted to figure out why these struggles were even present and, preferably, what I, or perhaps the educational programmes and institutions, could do to alleviate those struggles. Many of the issues that the students struggled with seemed to relate to the applicability of subjects and classes to a future practice. The relation between theory and practice is a consistent field of interest in educational research. The development of recent years—as short- and medium-term programmes experience an increasing academisation, and long-term programmes seem to experience an increased sensitivity towards application of theory—necessitates continued studies and new perspectives on the matter. For the present purpose in this dissertation, it might be beneficial to consider briefly the role of the SHTM programme and other AP programmes in the educational system and the relation of theory and practice that this entails.

For the person who contemplates the direction of their future professional life, the educational system might be perceived as a spectrum, ranging from vocational programmes on the one end to university programmes on the other, from short-term to long-term, from practical knowledge to increasingly theoretical and complex knowledge.<sup>41</sup> The approach to learning in vocational programmes is characterised by apprenticeships in which the apprentice becomes enrolled in communities of practice by observing and mimicking the actions of the practitioners, a process that Lave and Wenger termed 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave, Wenger 2004). Thereby, the professional identity of the apprentice is seen as a result of a socialisation

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<sup>41</sup>In reality, the vocational programmes are not part of the system of higher education, cf. section 3.4.2, that require an upper secondary school certificate; however, Illeris et al. argue that for the young people who face the choice of education, the educational system is perceived as a coherent spectrum (Illeris et al. 2002).

process. Learning in practice holds the inherent requirement for theory, that theory must ‘fit’ practice and directly relate to the specific performance and action. Any theory that relates to general, context-independent issues will from this perspective seem irrelevant (Bjerre 2016). On the other end of the spectrum, formalised, academic programmes find their foundation within research-based knowledge, and working with and understanding theory is the central practice—although universities experience increased requirements for application (Bjerre 2016).

The AP programmes might be said to occupy a position in the Danish educational system between the vocational programmes characterised by practice learning in apprenticeships and the academic programmes characterised by formalised, scholarly learning. The academy programmes are thus characterised by two touch points that are often considered to be opposites. One is directed towards the professional practice of the programmes (i.e., ‘the real world’), the other is directed towards academic research. The relation between theory and practice is particularly essential for short- and medium-term programmes. As mentioned in section 3.4.2, the knowledge base for these programmes is both trade- and profession-based, as well as development-based. Historically, this position between practice and academic theory must be perceived in light of structural changes in the educational system, specifically during the last 20 years. The short-term educational programmes have been moved from technical colleges to business academies (Illeris et al. 2002, UCN 2017a) and, in the case of UCN, to university colleges that have an obligation to collaborate with the universities (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet 2016b). This move towards a research base inherently holds the consequence that students have been subjected to an increasing amount of knowledge that is not profession- or practice-specific (Eriksen 2011). This further creates a dichotomy of general, context-independent knowledge and specific, practice-based knowledge. The AP programmes have thus seen an increase in theoretical content and academisation. As early as 2002, Illeris et al. characterised this as a challenge for the short-term programmes in suggesting that these programmes might attract students who otherwise would have chosen a vocational programme and whose experience and interests are not directed towards an increased theoretical content (Illeris et al. 2002).

The fact that the short- and medium-term programmes in a way might be said to be serving two masters; theory and practice, entails certain challenges in the pedagogical approach. The approach to learning in the short- and medium-term programmes cannot be merely practice-based, as is the case for vocational programmes. Nor can general, context-independent knowledge stand alone for the student and graduate of short- and medium-term programmes, as in university programmes. In popular terms, one might say



that it is not enough to know how to act, but one also needs to know why—and to be able to reflect upon and choose from different approaches to a problem. This is also apparent in the Danish Act on Academy Profession Programmes and Professional Bachelor Programmes (Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet 2014). Accordingly, Donald Schön's ideas of the Reflective Practitioner often form the basis of the learning approach of the short- and medium-term programmes (Schön 1987, Frederiksen 2011). This, among other things, has enabled an organisation of short- and medium-term programmes with a strong emphasis on periods of internship. Thereby, theory is understood as a tool to comprehend and to make sense of practice and by providing a knowledge base that enables students to act.

In recent years, UCN has introduced and implemented an approach to learning named 'Reflective Practice-Based Learning' (UCN 2017c). Such an approach holds the inherent objective that, to graduate, students must be able not only to be and act in practice, but also must be able to distance themselves from practice by rising above it to reflect upon it (Bjerre 2016). Evidently, the learning approach is based on a specific relation between theory and practice, which may be described not only as a combination of theory and practice. Rather, students must obtain a theoretical understanding of practice (so that they can reflect) rather than a practice understanding of theory (Bjerre 2016). Bjerre describes two central issues that are related to this challenge: familiarity and the 'two-worlds pitfall' (Bjerre 2016, Smith, Avetisian 2011).

Beginning with the latter, the two-worlds pitfall might come across as an inability to differentiate between theory and practice or that students consider lectures as an entirely and fundamentally different world than practice (Bjerre 2016). This 'pitfall' was also evident in my analysis, as the students seemed to consider certain theoretical aspects to be irrelevant to what they considered that they were essentially there to do. Within the SHTM programme, general knowledge, such as methodology, organisation, and communication, was considered to be in opposition to specialised, practice-specific knowledge within fields such as service, experience economy, and tourism; perhaps it was even considered irrelevant. The acknowledgement of the relevance of theory was dependent on practical experience, either from internships or experience. This does not necessarily imply that students have a practice understanding of theory rather than the other way around. It is more likely that without any knowledge at all about the practice they are to reflect upon, theory is useless. In other words, theory must be directed at something for it to make sense in this educational context.

The issue of familiarity deals with the phenomenon that in certain cases the profession might already be familiar, even before the programme commences for the student. This is especially an issue for teacher education, where one

might claim that student teachers already have 12-15 years of observations as pupils (Bjerre 2016, Eriksen 2011). Accordingly, it might be difficult for student teachers to acknowledge that they occupy a different role. Thus, they tend to intuitively have an idea of what it means to be a teacher that may not be consistent with the theoretical, practice-based knowledge of the programme.

However, in my choice of context as described in section 3.4, I deliberately zoomed in on future professions, and thus professionals, that might be characterised as competency nomadic, as described in section 1.3 (Krejsler, Kryger & Ravn 2007). For these educational programmes, issues of familiarity are not relevant to the extent of teacher education. Granted, some students come with experience, but it does not seem to permeate their perception of their profession to the extent that might be problematic. Rather, their experience from practice enables them to understand theory and use it to reflect upon their practices, as it was evident in the descriptions of the identity assemblages of Bettina and Nellie (cf. section 6.7). It did not become a pitfall, but rather a potential.

The focus on the competency nomads holds an inherent perspective and, perhaps, certain challenges regarding the role of education in relation to professional identity. Eriksen introduces the term ‘polyvalent’ to describe educational programmes that enable its graduates to choose various occupations rather than one (Eriksen 2011). The higher the degree of polyvalence of an educational programme, the more opportunities exist to direct graduates to different occupations or to create programmes that quickly pick up on new trends and demands in the market (Eriksen 2011). Eriksen suggests that the tendencies within university colleges, as described above, to focus on general, context-independent content, is well suited to educational programmes with a high degree of polyvalence. He further argues that this constitutes a conflict for a monovalent programme such as teacher education since research in this field suggests that it is the profession-specific elements such as pedagogical practice that contribute to a strong sense of professionalism (Eriksen 2011).

I would not, however, uncritically follow Eriksen’s argument regarding the educational programmes that might be said to be polyvalent. The SHTM programme is of a polyvalent nature, but it appears from my analysis that the specialised, profession-specific elements of the programme are central to the identity of SHTM students. Indeed, the general, context-independent subjects are ‘not what they come here for’. This emphasises context-specific knowledge and experience (specialist subjects) not as more important than general context-independent knowledge (generalist subjects), but perhaps to some extent they may be considered as a prerequisite in short-term, polyvalent

programmes. Thus, this observation might enable considerations on how to arrange activities, subjects, and other educational elements sequentially.

The dichotomy of general and specialised knowledge poses a structural challenge for academy programmes that, with reference to my analysis in Chapter 8, also constitutes an identity conflict for the students. This should not, however, be perceived as an argument for structure as an explanation for identity conflicts, but rather reinforce the argument that identity and identity conflicts are effects of actor-networks that also include the regulatory basis and organisation of the educational system as actors. That is, the identity conflict between the generalist and the specialist is an effect of the actor-network of the SHTM programme.

As described above, the relation, or perhaps conflict, of theory and practice has been the subject of much research and development of specific pedagogical models and efforts (such as different taxonomies and a pedagogy such as Reflective Practice-Based Learning) that enable researchers and practitioners alike to discuss and adapt pedagogical practices. For instance, Bjerre argues for an understanding of Reflective Practice-Based Learning as a successive process consisting of phases with different aims that connect theory and practice (Bjerre 2016). Throughout this dissertation, I have so far paid little attention to such models, and the purpose of this chapter of reflection is not to change that practice. First, it has never been the intention of the dissertation. Second, many other excellent works excel in this field and any small contribution that I might make on these pages would suffice very little. However, thirdly, and most importantly, the choice of foundation within ANT provides an altogether different perception of education. This perspective considers all things as an effect of webs of relations that enable certain practices. Thereby, education is not considered as something that in some way enables a 'future potential', but rather, in the words of Fenwick and Edwards, the turn to ANT in relation to education 'is a powerful counter-narrative to the conventional view of developmentalism that dominates the pedagogical gaze, positioning learners in continual deficit and learning activities as preparation for some imagined ideal' (Fenwick, Edwards 2012, p. xviii). This approach enables a rethinking of how to support students in learning and identity development. Rather than placing a unilateral emphasis on the learning objectives of the curriculum, educators might also look for ways to support the individual student in looking for various opportunities to engage in different performances (Barnacle, Mewburn 2010). These activities might serve as mediators of identity, and the primary role of the educator in this context is thus to assist the student in making sense of these various experiences, thereby enrolling them in the student's identity assemblage. Instead of considering the student as a learning subject on a paved road to a

specified goal of a future profession, this approach might view education as an impassable landscape through which the student attempts to navigate.



# CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION

## 10.1. INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I have attempted to apply a relational approach that would acknowledge identity as a moving concept. The dissertation is essentially an attempt to capture these movements in a stationary form. On the following pages, I will attempt to summarise the arguments and findings of this dissertation, with special emphasis on answering the research question. The overall research question that guided my research is:

What is the role of education in the enactment of identity?

Three sub-questions supported this research question. These three sub-questions have served as a support in the process of articulating the findings that were embedded in my data and my initially subconscious understanding thereof. Furthermore, the sub-questions shaped the structure of the analysis as a hopefully readable and logical presentation. The three sub-questions are:

1. How is identity enacted in SHTM education?
2. How do organisational practices enable identity enactment?
3. What issues may lead to conflicts in identity enactment?

In the summary, I will describe the theoretical and empirical pillars that served as the foundation of my investigation. This foundation enabled the answers of the sub-questions and thereby the overall research question, that I summarise in section 10.2. I conclude this chapter with a brief consideration of the limitations of my work in section 10.1 and suggestions for further research in section 10.1.

Philosophically, the research is founded on central ideas of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and introduces the ideas of sociology of associations as a possible framework within which to investigate a relational approach to identity in Chapter 4. Resting on ideas of ANT-associated authors such as Latour, Law, and Mol, the approach enabled an understanding of identity as something that is done, performed, enacted. It thus allowed me to investigate identity without falling into the trap of predefining it as an object of study that could be considered as, say, a psychological or cognitive matter. Thereby, I maintain my focus on identity as the object to investigate, rather than primarily focusing on the processes that might result in a predefined understanding of identity. Hence, identity is the question, not the answer.

As my primary research question centred on the role of education in relation to identity, empirically, my study was conducted in the context of the Service, Hospitality, and Tourism Management (SHTM) programme at University College in Northern Denmark (UCN). The philosophical position implies that the study of identity must be understood as the study of practices and defines the chosen method as ‘praxiography with the application of ethnographic techniques’, which I described in Chapter 5. I thus attempted to investigate and reconstruct the practices of this specific programme. I used a variety of techniques, including observations, interviews, and textual analysis to reconstruct practices. The empirical investigation along with the process of coding shaped my insights and enabled the answers to and the phrasing of the sub-questions, which I will address in the following section.

## **10.2. ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

In the following section, I address the sub-questions individually, summarising the main points and thereby providing insights that all relate to the primary research question.

### **10.2.1. HOW IS IDENTITY ENACTED IN SHTM EDUCATION?**

The reconstruction of practices enabled me in Chapter 6 to describe how identity is enacted, by introducing the central concept of identity assemblages. This conception is a consequence of the relational approach to identity as described above. Such an approach allows for recognition of the spatial and temporal contexts of identity. Thereby, I made the point that identity cannot be construed as an essentially psychological or cognitive concept. Rather, identity is perceived as something that is continuously performed, enrolling technology, material objects, immaterial notions, and sentiments as well as the past, the present, and the future in identity assemblages.

Applying the plural form of assemblage above is a second central point: that as identity is continuously performed, multiple realities of identity exist—or come into being as they are performed. There is not one, singular version of SHTM identity, but many. Thus, I have described five different identity assemblages that were enacted as I studied SHTM practices. These identity assemblages may not be perceived as different perspectives on the same matter, but rather as interconnected realities that are more than one, but less than many.

Besides acknowledging identity as something performed and, thus, multiple, I infer some insights into the matter of identity, based on the descriptions of these five identity assemblages. First, that identity may be described through its anti-groups, that is, by what it is not. Being able to identify other groups is

a powerful tool in the delineation of one's own identity. Furthermore, the identity assemblages that I describe are socio-material constructions that may include material artefacts, such as, for example, clothing, the physical surroundings, and technologies that are specific in the practices of a group. Thereby, these actors serve as mediators of identity, as they enable certain practices. Therefore, the successful performance of a specific identity may be said to depend on the successful enrolment of a specific actor in the identity assemblage. Failing to enrol such an actor, for instance by not being able to use a technology—either due to the lack of skill or due to a technological breakdown—may hinder the performance of an identity. A final point relating to the understanding of identity assemblages is that they are essentially timeless. Past experiences serve as powerful mediators of present practices, and future potential and identity assemblages may thus not exclusively be limited in the here and now.

### **10.2.2. HOW DO ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES ENABLE IDENTITY ENACTMENT?**

Chapter 7 of this dissertation focused primarily on answering sub-question 2. For this purpose, I invoked the concept of modes of ordering as organisational patterns or logics that enable certain identity performances. Modes of ordering are specific ways to talk about the organisation that provides a way to make sense of the actors, their relations, and their practices.

My empirical studies enabled me to describe four modes of ordering that were visible in the organisation of the SHTM programme at UCN. The administration mode of ordering is one of order and rules. Its inherent logic is characterised by the administration of resources, that is, rooms, lecturers, and students, and serves a mainly practical purpose that assigns a certain identity to students. This identity, *shtm09YY*, enables the control of students' presence in class. The second mode of ordering that was evident in the practices of the SHTM programme is that of the curriculum. The understanding of subjectivity within this mode of ordering is characterised by compliance with the document of the curriculum, by learning, and by preparation. Third, I described the specialist mode of ordering which is interlinked with the abovementioned modes and serves as an important way for students to make sense of on-campus practices. Furthermore, it defines a SHTM identity as specialised as opposed to generalised. The fourth mode of ordering is that of enterprise, that is characterised by a logic that emphasises results.

The modes of ordering provide certain forms of subjectivity, a certain perception of what characterises a good agent within the mode of ordering. This not only reconfirms the notion of identities as multiple, but also that



different identities have different objectives, that is, they are deemed successful in different ways. Furthermore, the concept of modes of ordering provides an understanding of identity as essentially interlinked with organisation. Identities are not enacted in a vacuum, but through its practices the organisation invites entities to think about themselves in certain ways. These notions of subjectivity may serve different purposes, some of which are related to external practice, and others are essentially a consequence of the management of the educational institution.

### **10.2.3. WHAT ISSUES MAY LEAD TO CONFLICTS IN IDENTITY ENACTMENT?**

Chapter 8 builds on the arguments of Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. Considering identity as enactments that unfold within certain organisational logics, Chapter 8 suggests considering identity conflicts as conflicting ordering modes. The chapter describes four situations of conflict in relation to identity enactment and organisational modes of ordering to illuminate this argument.

Identity conflicts may arise as certain ordering modes fail as sense-making tools. Thereby, the logic of an ordering mode may not be sufficient to explain specific practices that accordingly do not make sense. This seems to be the case with, for instance, technologies that for the students are associated with anti-groups. Technologies are hereby enrolled as central to the enactment of certain identities, as mediators of identity, and technological failure may constitute an identity conflict. Furthermore, identity conflicts may be viewed as a result of conflicting logics of multiple ordering modes. When more ordering modes than one play into certain practices, students are unable to discern which logic to follow and thus which actions to prioritise

These arguments also serve to illuminate the concept of modes of ordering. Ordering modes may not be considered as isolated, disconnected logics. They coexist and the organisation (in this case UCN) functions specifically due to the different ordering modes. However, their coexistence is not necessarily unproblematic, and may lead to identity conflicts.

### **10.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Any study has limitations, including this study. In this section, I briefly touch upon at least some of the limitations that are associated with my theoretical and methodical choices. These insights inherently hold directions in which future work could go.

Studying identity with departure in Actor-Network Theory provides an opportunity to study and acknowledge identity as an essentially fluctuating concept. It is in its capacity to empirically explore associations that ANT has its primary potential. As a theoretical framework of identity, ANT falls short. However, to provide theoretical frameworks was never the intention of ANT, which I have also touched upon in Chapter 4. ANT allows for exploration and descriptions of what is, but not for explanations and causal relations.

The study that I have conducted is naturally limited in duration, as described in Chapter 5. As a post-rationalisation, one might consider the circumstances for an extended collection of data. Under which circumstances could I imagine that more data could contribute to my understanding of the field? As I argued in Chapter 5, I did not feel at the point of my withdrawal from the field that further observations on that specific semester provided additional insights, so staying more weeks or months at that time, would not have been beneficial. One might consider studying other contexts, other AP, BA, or graduate programmes to support further the claims of generalisability. However, had I been given the choice and—not least—unlimited resources in this present study, I would rather have extended my involvement with the SHTM programme, for instance, by studying the practices around a certain class ( e.g., that of shtmx09YY) from their first day on campus, over their internships, and until their graduation. As my project changed under way, I did not have this possibility, but it would make for an interesting future project, as would longitudinal studies of other educational programmes.

The present study has focused on *what is*, that is, on describing the reality (realities) that played out before me. Thereby, it has provided insights into the dynamics of identity-constructing practices within the context of short-term higher education. Looking back in time, and as mentioned in Part One of this dissertation, educational practitioners and researchers have often been interested in matters of *how to support identity*, which has motivated many pedagogical studies and theories, such as taxonomies, for example. However, based on the insights of the present study, identity cannot be reduced to matters of pedagogy, but are socio-material enactments. These insights might provide a platform for future studies that explore ways potentially to rearrange or reorder educational practices, and considering the chronological or spatial sequencing of educational activities, to create ‘rooms’ in space and time that are dedicated to one logic, one organisational pattern. Thereby, one might minimise conflicts or consciously manage the fruitful ‘cross-pollination’ of different practices.



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ISSN (online): 2246-123X  
ISBN (online): 978-87-7112-958-8

AALBORG UNIVERSITY PRESS