

Academic Paper

Developing “Haltung” through autoethnographic reflections during supervisor training research

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Abstract

In this article I focus on the development of my professional attitude [Haltung] during the transition from practitioner to researcher. It is part of my dissertation in which I ask in what sense (coaching) supervisors in training develop Haltung during their training period. Based on self-reflective documentation resulting from both my practice and research, here I aim to sketch developmental processes while studying my own occupation (i.e., supervisor trainer) in the field. Thus, I (i) analyse my own professional development as parallel to my dissertation research, I (ii) illustrate the corresponding mixed-methods approach as a case study of working with the self, and I (iii) value induced contextual framings as additional insights for my research.

Keywords

objective hermeneutics, autoethnography, developmental coaching, supervisor training, professional attitude [Haltung], self-reflection

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Introduction

Based on a paradigm of interactive constructivism (for a brief explanation, see below under “methodology”), my dissertation project’s research is concerned with the development of professional attitude [Haltung] of nascent supervisors during their participation in a supervisor training program. The German term “Haltung” is used here since it puts emphasis on the integrative quality of the phenomenon of professional attitude (Hennig, 2020). Haltung is, in that sense, the situational embodiment of the interactive potential during a specific moment, resulting from the interplay of individual values and beliefs of the interaction partners, and the relevant interactional context. From the perspective of interactive constructivism, Haltung integrates three areas of self-reference, namely subjective construction, social interaction, and functionally differentiated social sub-systems (Sutter, 2009, p. 320). Through its dimension of embodiment, Haltung is an

experiential marker, and therefore must be considered as an aesthetic category that signifies “socialisation-in-progress”.

As a qualitative longitudinal study, in my research project I make use of narrative before- and after-interviews (Hummrich, 2021) with participants in a training course “systemic supervision”. The interviews are reconstructively interpreted in groups using objective hermeneutics (Oevermann, 2010, p.14). I aim to identify individual differences between before and after participating in the part-time training course of approximately 45 days within two-and-a-half years. The findings are put in contrast with concepts of *haltung* to identify relevant developmental types, as well as hypothesize both potential resources for and challenges to development of professional attitude during supervisor training. The study has been initially funded in part by the German association of systemic therapy, counselling, and family therapy (DGSF).

Self-reflexivity is a required component of qualitative methodologies when following constructivist research paradigms. “In qualitative research, reflexivity enables researchers to recognise their presence and particular ways of seeing and thinking and acknowledging that what they see influences how they see their world and others” (Ide & Beddoe, 2023, p.13). Accordingly, the focus of this article is on the processes of self-reflection on the developmental aspects of my professional transformation from practitioner to researcher. While a research motivation rooted in everyday life observations may not be unusual, the use of objective hermeneutics requires the researcher’s reflection of and distance from personal norms and values to prevent entanglement with own assumptions and biases as much as possible (Wernet, 2022). In my case this seems even more necessary since the area of my research corresponds to the field of my professional occupation. This implies my potentially strong identification with convictions corresponding to those of a professional supervisor and trainer of coaching supervisors. These convictions cannot be expected to be congruent with those of a professional researcher, so caution to avoid conflicting interests seems well advised. Also, both I and my research participants are in a process of professional transformation. This might have additional implications for the roles we play for each other, including our respective *haltung*.

With respect to the above, I see it as due diligence in my research to consider accordingly relevant sources of data, e.g., autoethnographic material. At the same time, I hope to illustrate a case study of developmental processes, exemplary as an approach to reflexively “working with the self” (Bachkirova, 2022). Finally, both my own and my research participants’ insights on *haltung* offer perspectives on the general context of my research. Contrasting these insights might offer new ways to access my subjective constructs, e.g., personal, and professional norms and values. Also, contrast may induce additional perspectives on the multitude of structural hypotheses inherent in each interview (Oevermann, 2010). It might shed additional light on the contextual factors relevant to supervisor education.

In the spirit of autoethnography, my case study integrates narrative elements of self-reflection, descriptive sample applications of methods and concepts, excerpts of developmental processes in their situational contexts, as well as selected theoretical framings. My decisions regarding variations in format, selection of content, order of presentation, as well as weighing the concrete versus the abstract, were made (i) compliant with research ethics, (ii) emphasising transformational aspects of *haltung*, and (iii) considering narratability. Accordingly, I highlight self-reflexive examples of my emotional experiences, individual actions, and subjective constructs.

The sample case I illustrate is representative for my intentions with this approach, but not exhaustive of the methods of self-reflection I used. Here, I aim to show some of the iterations of the process of my professional self-development. During this process, additional perspectives on the context of professional development evolved through consciously experiencing and reflecting my own development. I was able to identify additional structural hypotheses regarding said context, and by reintegrating my reflexive experience into an expanded perspective of “making sense” I allowed for the development of a professionally appropriate *haltung* of a researching practitioner.

Literature Review

Haltung as conceptual aspect of professionalism must inquire a framing of supervision as a profession at least in the broadest sense. Certifying bodies offer qualitative and quantitative criteria to define the minimum threshold for professionalism, e.g., ethical standpoints and hours of training or practice. However, “organizational formalities of professions are meaningless unless we understand their context” (Abbott, 1988, p. 30), which Bohn and Kühl frame by considering such institutions as organisations that have managed to present themselves with a particularly expansive claim (Bohn & Kühl, 2010). The German Association for Counselling (DGfB) as the national umbrella organization for the counselling professions in Germany claims the concept of “reflexivity as a profession” (Seel, 2014) as their point of reference. Here, the DGfB discusses a practice of reflection as corresponding to professionalism of the counselling professions (DGfB, 2020). This includes supervisors as experts for process-focused counselling (Binder, 2016, p. 175) and emphasizes the potential of ego-development, self-experience, and training for this profession (Binder, 2016, p.240).

The epistemological perspective of the constructivist paradigm alone can neither legitimize the value of professionalism in general, nor of (systemic) Haltung in particular (Lindemann, 2019). As a result, systemic practice needs to be pragmatically considered as an applied epistemology (Ochs, 2020, p.134). To make sense of the gap between theory and practice of professional development (and development of profession), the spectrum of ethical motives leading organizational processes of institutions representing the profession (Banks, 1995; Buer, 2011) must be taken into account. A profession’s social function represents an expertise in society which implies sets of values as inherently valuable with respect to the dynamics of the society in question, e.g., reflexivity as an expertise necessary for reflection. In that sense, the profession of supervision is the social entity representing the value of reflexivity within a society. And, like all institutions of a complex society, professional supervision is constantly challenged by the dilemmas of contrasting social values (Hennig, 2021).

Considering the development of Haltung as part of the development of a professional self, concepts of learning in the training of future professionals have been discussed. Picking up on everyday experience is a necessary part of this education. To develop a concept of professionalism with respect to Haltung, it requires educators and participants to move further (Seel, 2016). Self-experience of future professionals should be placed in the foreground for appropriate mediation, and explicitly in the work-specific context (Rohr, 2022). During the training of professionals the development of Haltung as an integrated concept of situationally embodied aesthetic experience happens primarily via socialization.

The development of a professional Haltung is a process of socialization. To cultivate the corresponding learning potential, supervisor trainers are required to model integration of the three areas of self-referentiality (Sutter, 2009, p. 320). They do this by (i) professionally handling the challenges professionals face concerning their subjective constructions of themselves and of the profession (including “failing professionally”). This (ii) takes place within the supervisor training group as a space of socialization, and it relates to challenges prospective professionals face themselves within their (nascent) practice. It furthermore (iii) relates to the relevant socially differentiated sub-areas, meaning contextual framings, e.g., stakeholders like the training institution, the certifying body, various interest groups like clients, colleagues, or customers, or institutions representing the scientific discourse on the profession itself.

Methodology

The research I present here is founded on the paradigm of interactive constructivism. Interactive constructivism emphasizes the role of the social interaction of observers in shaping their subjective constructions of reality. More than other constructivist approaches, it focusses on the roles of both interactive and socio-cultural dimensions of experience. Particularly, those related to processes of socialization (Sutter 1994; 2009), and to education (Reich 1998; Neubert 2008).

The autoethnographic material serving as my qualitative research data for this article comes from a range of “genres of self-narrative [sharing] the common activities of memory search, self-revelation through personal stories, and self-reflection” (Chang, 2008, p.37), e.g., my personal diaries, field journals, or memory-protocols. The need for qualitative studies based on diaries of supervisors (Bachkirova et al., 2020) has been identified. Here, scope prohibits detailed accounts of my journal contents and interview transcripts. Instead, I put forward selected case in point aspects as exemplary illustrations. They are concerned with situations both relating to my dissertation research itself, as well as relevant to experiencing myself in the large variety of my professional roles and corresponding situations. These are in relation to supervision as my profession, like supervisor trainer, coaching supervisor, training participant, freelance partner to training institutions, colleague, supervisee, client, both volunteer and functionary of certifying bodies, or researching practitioner.

The Observations presented here are my subjective constructs, and the attributions contained therein illustrate my personal conceptions. The materials originally arose from interactive situations, some of which are partly reconstructed here. In their context, a variety of institutions and persons other than myself have been involved. Thus, even though the focus here is on self-reflexivity, some degree of anonymization remains necessary. Possible follow-up challenges, e.g., with respect to comparability of data (Kühl, 2020a), have been weighed against potential misunderstandings. In either case, solely I take blame, ask forgiveness, and invite further dialogue.

With the need for self-reflection on the transition from practitioner to researcher, as a specific part of the larger research project, a personal collection of self-narratives emerged through documenting my inner processes during scientifically researching the professional development of training supervisors. With a growing amount of these autoethnographic materials, emerging patterns in experiences, activities, and self-concepts became accessible to me. To minimize bias and conflict of interest, I selected a variety of approaches to recognize within the material possible resonances, repetitions, constants, or anomalies. This would enable me to put them into contrast with each other, as well as with different reflexive contextual framings. Several models and techniques familiar to me from training supervisors, from supervision, as well as from research, proved helpful to handle these processes. Reflecting on that, additional material was generated, which again was scrutinized in various settings, once more by using a mix of methods.

Examples for this mix range from tiny exercises in creative writing, like six-word-story reflection (Bramberger, 2020), to self-reflexive contextual framings of potential stakeholders' perspectives, like the M.R.I., a circular multi-rater investigation (Hennig, 2018), to large and highly structured projects of self-appraisal via systematic contrasting and rearranging (Wahl, 2013), which were done by me alone. Dialogic formats like supervision, i.e., supervision on my own professional development, or intervision, i.e., peer-supervision between colleagues and me, were used as spaces for feedback and interactive reflection, both in tandem as well as in group settings. Here, classic use of verbal interventions was made, supported by creative visualizations, embodiment exercises, or structured reflections. Finally, highly structured group settings designed to handle specific aspects of group work as part of qualitative research, like research labs, interpretation groups, and project workshop, proved helpful by offering me perspectives from the point of view of structural (objective) hermeneutics (Oevermann, 1999), metaphor analysis (Schmitt, 2000), or in-depth hermeneutic cultural analysis (Lorenzer, 1986). Finally, additional sense was made of the

insights emerging from my developmental process through the concept of working with the self (Bachkirova, 2022).

Findings: Working with the self

The following narrative is told and reflected upon in two parts. It is based on selected episodes and excerpts taken from my personal autoethnographic data, like fieldnotes etc. They include some of my experiences, thought processes, and interactive reflections and interpretations. Taken together, this episodic narrative represents my attempt to illustrate both state of mind and process of development. This is respective to my transformation of *haltung* as a practitioner becoming a researcher by researching the development of *haltung* within my own field of practice, i.e., supervisor education (including the supervision of coaching supervisors in training).

In part one I will present three autoethnographic episodes dealing with the idealism related to my professional self-concepts, namely (i) the origin of my professional motivation, (ii) the challenge that led me to my research, and (iii) the realisation of necessary changes accompanying my professional transformation. Discussing the insights of my reflections will identify one specifically challenging aspect of the development of my *haltung*, namely “relative formalism” (see below).

In part two I will use a case study to illustrate in more detail my efforts to deal with some of my dissonant experiences resulting from this specific dilemma between idealism and professionalism. This includes my effort to developmentally work with the self by applying the concept of “ego”, “working with the I”, and “identifying 3rd persons” (Bachkirova, 2022) to my creative efforts at self-reflexive practice. In four steps, (i) a personal experience is described, (ii) compared to related experiences, and a sample case is chosen to (iii) illustrate the process of analysing, contextualising, and interpreting this example. I have aimed to achieve this through a methodical interplay of roles, stakeholders, as well as both circular and dialogic reframing in various reflective settings. Finally (iv), the resulting spectrum of my insights regarding these personal experiences, as well as the resulting widened perspectives, are highlighted.

Part 1: Summary of autoethnographic self-narratives

How my idealism led me to my profession

I remember vividly a scene I experienced as an adolescent. A sensation I can still only describe as “transcending congruence”, accompanied by an insight concerning the concept of reflexivity as the core of my self-awareness. I consider this to represent the founding-moment of my professional identity. Long story short, ever since, my resulting motivation has been to enable self-awareness for others and for myself. Lucky me, I found a fitting job, which I consider a joyful and challenging occupation. My identification with performance and responsibilities is high. Accordingly, I put a lot of effort into my own professional development, and maybe not surprisingly, I frequently have been expecting this of others as well. As a result, situations in which the professional responsibility of others seems to me, well, let’s say “too relative”, I tend to get personally involved. I become invested emotionally, trying to initiate a process of clarification. I get frustrated quickly if this does not lead to dialogue, and thus I get angry, I criticize, and sometimes my anger leads to unprofessional behaviour, like inappropriate confrontation. Need I differentiate more precisely between myself and my role?

How my idealism and my profession conflict

Amongst colleagues we would passionately discuss the “whys and hows” of professional supervisor training again and again. Inevitably after some back and forth on one of the discussion’s deeper reaching aspects, one of my colleagues would state something like “well, you just need the

proper attitude [Haltung]”. A shared display of consensus like nodding heads, approving murmurs, and knowing miens would typically follow, ending the exchange. My efforts to keep our discussions going after this point were always quickly stalled, often rather sternly so. Eventually I felt compelled to try harder at keeping quiet to not squander my social capital. Still, I kept wondering why discussions between trainers would stop when things got interesting. Eventually, this brought me to my dissertation project. Are my expectations regarding professional standards inappropriate?

How my profession transforms my idealism

A reoccurring episode during interpretation group meetings was me repeatedly feeling irritated about attitudes implicit within some of the narratives of the interviewees participating in my research, be it stories concerning themselves or their colleagues. While I angrily questioned these to qualify as cases at all, my fellow researchers stayed calm, to me inexplicably so, stating these cases to be very interesting and very valid indeed. For lack of a better description, this particular aesthetic quality of my personal anger seemed oddly familiar to me, which eventually prompted my more structured approach towards trying to make sense of it. Is it difficult for me to put my expectations into perspective?

Taking it to all supervision

1 - Need I differentiate more precisely between myself and my role? I think I do, and I am, and I keep failing better and better: Thanks to my colleagues, during one of my intervision sessions I finally was able to identify my moment of “transcending congruence” as a peak experience (Maslow, 1970). For me, it represents the strong fusion between the leading motives of both my idealism and my professionalism (Banks 1995; Buer 2011). This realization has led me to focus issues of conflicting values, and so it has enabled me to supervise, coach, and educate my participants more appropriately. At the same time, it has kept me working on my respective Haltung. These two perspectives profit from each other, and taken together, they have guided me on my course ever since.

2 - Are my expectations regarding professional standards inappropriate? Not per se, but professional logic alone (especially if advocated with idealism) might not be a sufficient perspective from which to argue pragmatic cultivation of viable didactics: during my research, I came upon a possible explanation. The likely function of the above-mentioned reoccurring turning point within discussions or debates might be a thought-terminating cliché (Lifton, 1989). It could be expressing the “unity and exclusiveness” (Lifton, 1989, p. 429) of a cultural group, i.e., trainers for systemic supervision. They might be averting potential cognitive dissonance between a perceived professionalism and the need for belonging, while trying to navigate contextual dilemmas, e.g., between profession, administration, and efficiency.

3 - Is it difficult for me to put my expectations into perspective? Well, I would like to say “only in case I am not sure about the perspective”, but I will admit to the occasional challenge to do so (while imagining these situations to occur less and less frequently). Trying to work this through, during intervision I was told that I expect too much of my participants, and in supervision there was talk of the metaphor of a high horse. I since have managed to distinguish more clearly between the expectations I have towards my own professional development in contrast to those towards my participants’. Also, I manage to differentiate this with respect to my professional roles. With these learnings came a more differentiated view of my anger. Interestingly, it seems to be easier for me to accept as relative a variety of concepts of professionalism if they were concerned with qualitative aspects of supervisor education, instead of with its quantitative aspects, i.e., “relative professionalism” as opposed to “relative formalism”.

Relative professionalism. Qualitative aspects of the profession of coaching supervisor might be details of interventions, concepts of supervision, or ethics of the profession. Concerning supervisor training participants, these perspectives include a whole spectrum of individual motivations to take

part in supervisor trainings. Thus, participation might be for collecting more tools of the trade, for strategic career positioning as an executive in the field of social work, for a chance to be absent from work or to spend time with somebody else also participating in the same training, or for gaining a title that corresponds with their self-image. The willingness to participate in active reflection on professional practice may be limited accordingly, with strategies of deflection ranging from subtly denying to openly refusing the necessity. A range of motives is certainly to be expected, and open dialogue about this range can likely be an enlightening part of supervisor training. Especially since qualitative training aspects, like appropriateness of content or professionalism of motivation remain, likely for good reasons, almost completely unregulated (discounting the certifying bodies' abstract frames of professional ethics). Making use of this expanded view, over time I have found that dealing with relative professionalism can be a very powerful intervention in supervisor training to constructively challenge participants' perspectives (if the resulting group dynamics are handled appropriately).

Relative Formalism. On the other hand, there are the situations dealing with irregular handling of quantified rules, like number of hours of training, intervision, or supervision required for successful certification, or the necessary amount of documented casework required of the supervisors in training. The irritating situations I encountered in my various roles and in constellations with stakeholders are multitude, and many of them have repeated themselves over the years. For example, even though all time frames and hour-requirements are clearly set, individual participants show up half an hour late, some repeatedly so. Smaller (or larger) groups of them leave (very) early on Friday afternoons. Groups have intense discussions about appropriate duration of breaks, they fight over displayed attitudes of punctuality or commitment, and sometimes, they complain with head-office if attendance records show their absence. Occasionally, final assignments are already handed in midway during a 2,5-year course and pass, even though they are completely missing even what little was expected. Even hours of practice are created out of thin air, taped sessions documenting practice are staged, proposals are made to confirm documentation of hours that never took place, and certificates of attendance attest to considerable sums of hours though they never actually took place during the course in question. Judging from personal experience, these cases tend to be more rare than common. Compared to relative professionalism, I find it more difficult to professionally handle these kinds of relative formalism.

Part 2: Exemplary case study

Pang! (Ego)

I can still feel the familiar sting of anger I first experienced in the situation: a person asked for my take on a dilemma they had faced while participating in a training program for supervisors. In a nutshell: the course-specific requirements for documentation of practice dictate a certain number of hours of characteristic work during a specific timeframe. Apparently unable to comply because of circumstance, the person asked for counsel after remorsefully sharing their guilt with me about whitewashing their documentation to insure certification. Pang! A forceful phrenic stab hit me briefly. I kept my professional haltung, and we discussed the issue. After, I made a mental note to myself: "Work on this as a supervisee!".

Comparing experiences (working with the "Is")

After getting supervision I recognized behind my anger the disappointment about my unfulfilled expectations regarding professionalism. I even felt sadness about how the person handled their responsibilities as a training participant. I took my emotional involvement as a marker for a possible conflict of values. To put my irritation into contrast with situations in which I felt similar, I collected several encounters from my field notes. I covered a more diverse range to create some contrast with which to help me isolate some of the characteristics specific to the example in question. My selection of cases triggering similar emotions includes but is not limited to participants with

“extremist beliefs” (the person knows ‘the truth’ and wants to acquire tools only), with “calculating efficiency” (the person invests themselves as little as possible), with “personal validation” (the person loves how the title makes them feel), with “career strategy” (the person shows independence from employer), or with “escape opportunity” (the person does not want to be at work).

Searching perspectives (identifying 3rd persons)

I decided to approach the search for constellations in which the abovementioned perspectives of participants would seem more reasonable to me by looking at the kaleidoscope of positions I had the privilege of holding myself at one time or another. During these times I had probably collected enough experiences in the respective roles to be able to relate to the motives that kept triggering me. I made a collection of roles and put it in context of the roles’ associated stakeholders and their representatives. Resonating with the familiar sensation of the “Pang!” as an embodied marker representing potentially conflicting values, I searched for explanations for behaviour that would sting me otherwise.

How might training participants and supervisees see it? As a participant in trainings and as a supervisee, next to the group of my fellow participants in training or supervision, my central stakeholders would likely include the respective institutions and businesses, as well as trainers and supervisors as their representatives. In this role, I possibly have difficulty acquiring cases to meet certification requirements for documentation in time, and I feel helpless. Likely my job and my family ask a lot of me while I participate in the course, and I must work efficiently. Probably I am unaware of the exact regulations or finer points of documentation, and I might not even know that I am missing something. Maybe group dynamics or learning culture make it risky to discuss such problems in detail, so I am reluctant to ask, or they encourage generous interpretations of requirements, and I am unaware of follow-up problems, feeling justified. Thus, as a participant I might conclude that some creative handling of rules may be warranted.

How might supervisor trainer and supervisor of coaching supervisors in training see it? As a supervisor trainer and supervisor of trainees, next to the groups of my participants and of my fellow trainers and supervisors, my central stakeholders would likely include the respective certifying body with, for example, a representative of the ethics committee and the person in charge of accreditation of curricula. They would further include training institutions competing with the one I work for, with executives of various disposition, and competing colleagues I otherwise might sometimes cooperate with. In this role I am most likely not responsible for the rules themselves, and I might consider some of their details impractical. Probably the management of due process is time-consuming, but I am only paid for my time teaching. Maybe the institution cultivates “cooperative self-monitoring” within their groups, so I have only little insight regarding compliance. Possibly I somehow depend on positive feedback from my participants, so I might feel uneasy confronting transgression, or even refrain from putting rules into place at all. Thus, as a supervisor trainer I might conclude that enforcement of rules should play a much smaller part.

How might functionaries and volunteers of the certifying bodies see it? As a functionary and volunteer for certifying bodies, next to the group of my peers, which likely include a variety of members of the groups above, my central stakeholders possibly include the institutions and companies selling the trainings associated with the certifying body’s certificates, with representatives being their executives or other important employees of these companies. Also, some kind of umbrella organisation might be involved, and in this role, I would maybe be in contact with, for example, their quality assurance or marketing person. Most likely I would have to negotiate diplomatically the pros and cons of certain sets of regulations, weighing practicability, professional ethics, market dynamics, and personal investment in relationships and opportunities, as well as those of the institution that in fact pays me (in case I volunteer for the certifying body in question). Thus, I will likely opt for another round of re-evaluation of the rules if my heart still burns with activism, or I might resign in the face of the repetitiveness of political squabbles, settling for the

conservative wisdom of the same old. I even could, more or less reluctantly, make my employer's mission my own and soldier through whatever challenges their strategy dictates.

Reintegrating situation and identity

Having found alternate framings of my personal "Pang!", I feel distanced again from my own impulses of anger. Below them, another sensation has shown itself: it makes me sad to think that supervisors in training, like the abovementioned person in question, might be experiencing strong inner conflicts induced by the framework of the training itself, without feeling they have a place to externalise and share this. A setting for supervisor education that lacks the culture to address its own blind spots seems to me a contradiction in terms. I would hope to find ways for dialogue to ensure as much as possible a safe space in which participants can share their respective concerns. Obviously, this will not eliminate the risk of shame or fraud, but it might reduce some of the associated emotional stress. To facilitate cultivating such dialogue, I will keep searching explanations for and ways to deal with the dilemmas sketched above. I am looking forward to investigating appropriate areas of discourse, and I hope to find helpful follow-up questions I did not know I had.

Over the years I have experienced many different situations in various roles, and I have been told or heard of even more in others: As an active practitioner I enjoy the pleasure of dealing with variety of customers and clients, and with all that drives them. As a supervisor trainer I deal with participants, colleagues, owners of training institutions, and certifying bodies. As a coaching supervisor I talk to coaches and more colleagues. As active volunteer and functionary of certifying bodies I experience a fascinating spectrum of micro- and macro-politics, and as a participant in training, supervision, and coaching, I face my fair share of group-dynamics and its potential developmental dilemmas from that point of view, too.

One might just try and shrug off some the challenges I had the pain and the pleasure of facing as merely being expected parts of doing the business, politics, or ideology of supervisor training. Someone else could consider the respective attempts at flattery, bribery, negligence, nepotism, fraud, bullying, extortion, or threat as efforts to deal with cognitive dissonance. Sharing this is an attempt to reflect, to understand, and to make sense of the potential dilemmas inherent in supervision trainings to further the constructive development of its culture. And while it is not my intention to judge, I see shedding light on the inevitable judgmental aspects within personal self-stories of coaching supervisors as a contribution to this process.

Discussion and Conclusion

The above findings exemplarily show my process of reflectively working with the self. By acknowledging personal emotional engagement, and by working through its contextual entanglements, professional distancing more congruent with the respective roles lead to the development of my *haltung* in several aspects. As a practising supervisor trainer, for example, using the resulting insights in the field I make accessible to participants additional approaches to working through professional dilemmas. As a researching practitioner, my transformed *haltung* more easily allows for professional distancing required especially during reconstructive interpretation of my research data. The differentiation of values, roles, and stakeholders offers contextual perspectives on supervisor training. Models used to describe supervision refer to context, like the seven eyed model or the systemic context model (Schiersmann, 2013). It is in their abstract nature to fall short at this point. Identification and use of relevant contextual perspectives must rely on the inductive logic of case work (Hummrich, 2016).

The casework presented here makes use of this inductive modelling of context (Oevermann, 2010), focussing on the example of relative formalism and demonstrating the purpose of rules and regulations to be manifold. Since "the development of the formal attributes of a profession is bound

up with the pursuit of jurisdiction and the besting of rival professions” (Abbott 1988, p. 30), it might be painful for a practitioner to realize that the motives for personal identification with a certain aspect of a profession need mediation when facing contrasting motives from within this profession’s development. From widened perspectives, additional approaches to explaining some of the contextual dissonances identified above are offering themselves. Rules and regulations as standards, and thus as part of the quality insurance of a profession, might be considered as (i) as scripts for a social performance ritual, i.e., a „rite of passage“ (Bachkirova & Smith, 2015). Thus, sticking to the rules would need to be a performance credible enough to demonstrate practitioners’ ability to “walk the walk and talk the talk”. They also could be understood as (ii) a necessary guideline to navigate the grey areas between obedience to and defiance of rules to secure pragmatic functionality, leading to a culture of “useful illegality“ (Kühl, 2020) when facing the contradictions and impossibilities of strict adherence. They even might be seen as (iii) mechanisms to control market, product, and accessibility in the ambivalent constellations of “cooperation of competitors“ (Leonhardt, 2023). Considering these wider contexts of idealism, efficiency, formalism, and professionalism (Banks, 1995; Buer, 2011), both regaining professional inner balance, as well as reorienting Haltung might be considered not only part of the development of professional attitude, but also of the profession itself.

The case study illustrates how interpreting reflective documentation for clues relies on a selection of autoethnographic documentation for tangibility, how it makes use of cultural analysis in groups for intersubjectivity, and how it attempts contextual implication for explainability. It demonstrates the use of autoethnography and of hermeneutics as facilitators for personal transformation and in identifying contextual framings. Since a single case study focussing on the development of Haltung alone lacks comparability. Additional qualitative research into the individual and contextual dynamics that frame professional development of supervisors and of their trainers would be required. Nevertheless, practicing supervisors and supervisor trainers, as well as their participants, will likely be improving their own developmental processes if they cultivate working reflectively with autoethnographic documentations of their practice.

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