

## **Reflection - the core competence of supervision**

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This article<sup>1</sup> explains the reasons for which reflection and hence also supervision is increasingly gaining significance in the working environment, how reflection evolves, and why supervisors are specialists in reflection<sup>2</sup>.

### **A selection of hypotheses by way of introduction:**

- Rapid changes in the working environment lead to contradicting requirements and work orders. Profound changes in job profiles (professionalisation) put great pressure on professionals and lead to contradictions in professional self awareness.
- These conflicts cannot simply be solved by orders and rules. Cooperation and consideration on the part of all involved are required in order to deal with these conflicts. A need for reflection arises.
- Supervision is being implemented in an increasing number of areas to deal with and support this need for reflection. Meanwhile this phenomenon has spread throughout Europe.
- Supervisors are specialists in the area of reflection in working situations and professional action.
- The selective development of competence in reflection is an essential prerequisite to be able to act professionally in supervision.

The following article aims to prove these hypotheses using experience and observations made during my own activities as supervisor and with reference to relevant literature. Guidelines for the schooling of competence in reflection will round off my discourse .

### **1. Change, professionalisation and the need for reflection**

The examples listed here deal with changes in methods of working and attitudes to work, and with new demands on the employed due to changed working conditions. It is always a case of intense emotional and cognitive consideration of professional identity up to now. Not only should new actions and opinions be coherent, it should also be possible to reconcile and explain past action in the light of these new demands. Furthermore, the reasons for these changes in action must be conveyed to the environment rationally and comprehensibly.

The coming into being of the *probation service* as an already historical example for changes in the working environment and the implementation of supervision will be described in the following: "the legislative basis for a modern probation service was laid down in 1961. With the backing of Elisabeth Schilder, Sepp Schindler introduced supervision in the newly established all-Austrian "Association for Probation" in order to support the probation officers in their difficult task (double role) between control in the name of the law and therapeutic help for the individual. The probation officer's capacity to act is determined to a great extent by trust, which builds up throughout the contacts with his clients. (see also Schindler 1984)".<sup>3</sup>

In organisations working with the disabled, the need for reflection frequently arose in the transitory stage from the pioneer phase to a professional institution. Personnel, who, as dedicated human beings, took on tasks in care and organisation without special training, sometimes also as dedicated family members who relied on their experience as mother or father, came into conflict with the new requirements, such as specialised aid for their clients.

Craft tutors who relied on their experience as apprentice or assistants in various trades often found themselves confronted with demands for which they had no useful experience.

An example:

In his new job in the *care for the disabled*, a former truck driver, originally trained as plumber, is responsible for ten mentally and multiply disabled people. In addition, a number of these stem from difficult social backgrounds and show strong behavioural disorders. It is his task to organise adequate activities for these people, the workshop concentrates mainly on pottery (vases, ash trays) which are to be sold at Christmas markets. One of his clients is keen on woodwork, his greatest wish is to make a wooden car. In the course of conversion work there are also tasks on hand such as cleaning and sorting old bricks. The issues which preoccupy the attendant in supervision are “do I have to force the clients to work or to a certain workload? To what extent should I give in to clients’ individual recreational wishes? How do I deal with opposition – these are after all disabled people, they are not responsible for their behaviour?”

In team supervision, experienced colleagues and management always stress the importance of empathy and intuitive action. Whatever happens, force should be avoided. The clearly structured rules of order and delivery were replaced by an undefined task. Working hours are the only reliable structure. In the past it had been important to deliver ordered goods to clients at the correct point in time. Social contacts with clients were limited to the period of goods delivery and their content was easily understood. Now it was a matter of spending seven solid hours a day with ten very different people, of working together with them as a group, and of reacting pedagogically sensibly to the conflicts that arise within subgroups. Care timetables instead of order lists must be filled in and checked. In the course of supervision, I always try to seek links to other familiar roles, such as that of commander in the voluntary fire brigade. In this function, he is well capable of motivating people to cooperate of their own free will and reliably, and to react adequately to unforeseen situations.

Professional training in *care of the disabled* sometimes even increased the pressure to perform, as newly acquired knowledge and professional roles had to be “squared” with what had been done so far.

Similar conflicts arose at management level. Although they had seen themselves as administrators over a long period of time, they were increasingly being called upon to make decisions in specialised areas without the relevant training. In addition to this, they were confronted with a new generation of assistants who entered into service with a solid basis of training and practical experience, and who took a critical view of these management decisions.<sup>4</sup>

A need for reflection also arises out of the changed behaviour of clients and customers. *Administrative bodies* are turning into service organisations and contact with clients is based more on dialogue and becoming increasingly customer orientated. An ever larger number of *economic organisations* are selling “solutions” and service, no longer merely technical products. Communicative and social competence is being demanded from workers at all levels.

In schools, *teachers*, who find themselves suddenly subjected to assessment through feedback sheets, face self-confident pupils and parents. In order to avoid teachers feeling that they are being pressed into a student’s role, such new instruments can only gain acceptance if new roles and identities are developed for teachers for dealing with feedback. Being

*headmaster* in a school will rapidly turn from an honour into a nightmare, when one is suddenly confronted with a demand for management skills for which the previous role as teacher and the professional experience gained therein are not enough. Staff members are no longer colleagues, they expect advice, far sightedness and scope for development from their former colleague, but frequently also the fending off of the multitude of additional tasks which are increasingly being delegated to schools. Loneliness, which for the teacher in the classroom occasionally led to unburdening feelings of autonomy, now becomes a burden and a risk both socially and healthwise.

Well founded general professional training and additionally acquired specialised knowledge is often no longer enough when faced with the demands as *general practitioner*. Increasing experience and routine lead to confidence in action. This confidence is often undermined by patients who are self assured in their bearing towards the doctor, who come well-informed and often formulate particular wishes for their treatment. Doubt is voiced concerning routine prescriptions, there is increasing readiness to change practitioner and obtain a second opinion. University training did not prepare for these new challenges, the role of the lone fighter, highly developed in the course of a long study period, makes it difficult to develop new strategies and roles to come to terms with these new demands. Here also the ability to work alone becomes a risky burden for both patient and doctor.

Politics as a field of work is also subject to profound changes. “Spin doctors” and media coaches are called upon as advisers to be able to cope with merciless medial transparency. An increasingly demanding electorate is critically peering behind the facade, a wish for integrity and authenticity is present. It is possible to train and practise confrontation of the respective target groups with appropriate messages. The necessary authenticity for this however requires reflective inner processes. The roles which have been adopted must be reconciled with the own identity. Charisma, eloquency in dialogue or competence alone no longer suffice. All these abilities must be made use of flexibly and suited to the situation. In the course of a reflective process, the *politician* also needs to consider his profession in order to be able to react competently and autonomously to current demands.

Due to over aging in the population and decreasing birth rates, many European countries are faced with a dramatic fall in numbers among the young workforce. In the short term, new workers can only be gained through migration. In the near future, this will mean that many areas of work will face having to integrate workers from various cultures and working backgrounds to a much greater extent than at present. Here also a well-known conflict is in the process of developing. Often it will not be possible to solve the problems which arise with regulations, on the contrary, reflective competence on the part of all concerned will be called for. By concentrating on the factual conflicts at the workplace, prejudice against “foreign” colleagues may also be prevented.

What all these developments and the resulting questions have in common, is that the problems which arise cannot be solved by orders alone. They are beyond simple control mechanisms. Dialogue and reflective processes are always necessary here in order to include both sides, flexible and adequate action will be required. Constant learning through experience is absolutely essential. In most cases, this alone however will not be enough . It must be linked to new techniques, as practiced in courses, furthermore it must be reconciled with new attitudes. Personal and professional history must be integrated, so that “that which I was and that what I am now “ can exist together. The alternation between inner orientated and externally orientated processes requires special schooling. Supervision specialises in learning techniques to facilitate this process.

## Summary

The complex problems described above are not a result of personal deficit or personal failure. From the supervisor's point of view, it is about phenomena which occur due to a change in working conditions and the social and technical changes on which these base. They occur in professional groups, institutions, or even entire trades. The concrete supervisory process focuses on the significance of these changes, also for the individual.

This development is gaining momentum rapidly and is spreading increasingly to many fields of work.<sup>5</sup>

Graduates from supervision courses who, in the course of their training turn towards new fields of activity, frequently provide valuable advice and suggestions for the implementation of supervision.<sup>6</sup>

### **2. Reflecting - the core activity in supervision**

The verb "to reflect" was taken from the latin re-flectere, "to bend back, turn back" (or in latin "animum reflectere" "turning one's thoughts to something"). Other circumscriptions of the meaning would be "to mirror; to think about, to mull over, to ponder upon; to take something into account, to aim for something, to have one's mind on something."<sup>7</sup>

#### **How reflection comes into being:**

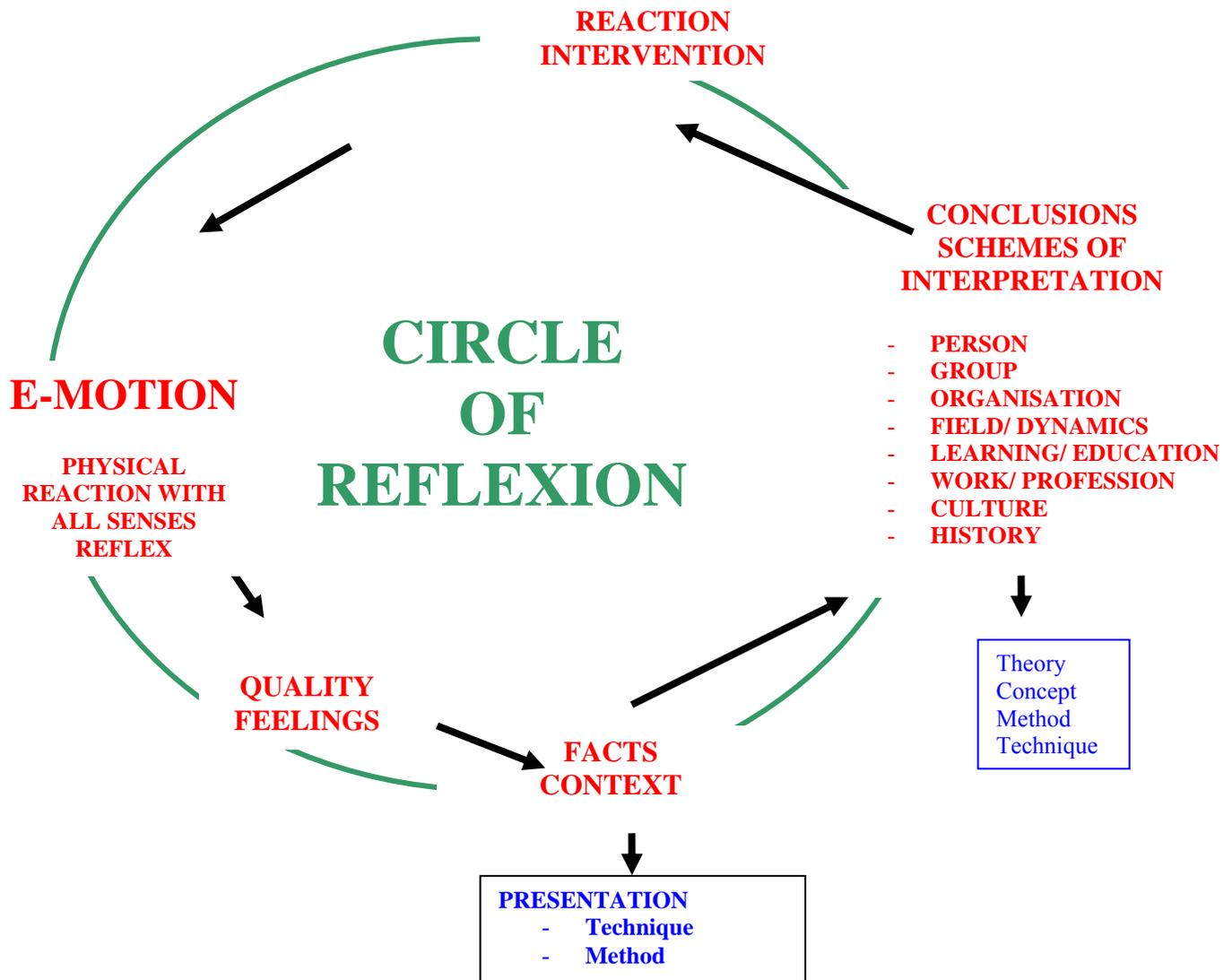
"This would be an unlikely conclusion, Hungertobel wondered. "Of course" replied Bärlach, but it is possible. You should take all possibilities into account."<sup>8</sup>

"Taking all possibilities into account", for me, this basic attitude of Dürrenmatt's Kommissar Bärlach characterises an essential supervisory attitude. Past experience and perception is tried and tested for various possibilities of understanding and explanation. It is like laying variously coloured filters over one and the same picture, lighting a stage from different angles, or choosing various "entry corridors".<sup>9</sup>

This process of "approach" to the understanding of a phenomenon can be divided into three steps:

- defining the facts
- discerning feelings and emotions
- reflection

This three-way division is based upon a psychosomatic model which relates to the body, the soul and the spirit. This will be further explained using the example above of supervision with a team working in the care of mentally and multiply disabled people:



### Perceiving emotions and feelings

Emotion in this context means immediate physical, sensual reaction to an event, to something related, to something seen, to the environment, people, a room or a situation. The human ability to feel these emotions enables us to attribute various qualities to these immediate physical reactions.<sup>10</sup>

An example: A request over the phone by a team leader initiated a physical condition of alertness in me, and awakened feelings of curiosity and interest. My physical reactions during supervision are completely the opposite, when the new colleague explains about a client's refusal to work. As he is disabled, there would not be much one could do about it. On the other hand, the situation required urgent action, as this client was also "infecting" the others in the group with his attitude, and chaos was spreading. These supervision sessions initiate extreme physical tiredness and phases of disorientation and "fogginess" in me. Feelings of panic begin to surface.

### Defining facts

In supervision, facts are what is visible to others, can be read up or proved through statements by others.<sup>11</sup>

Example: I was called upon as supervisor by the team working in a workshop for the mentally disabled. The number of people in the team is determined by a personnel plan. Organigrams and job descriptions determine responsibilities. Some work orders are articulated, others follow tradition. The lay out of the premises or their interior encourages or limits certain encounters. Actions are carried out. Decisions are made.

### **Practising reflection**

The facts, emotions and feelings are tested on the basis of certain concepts and theories in order to be able to understand the situation presented by and experienced with the supervisees. These conclusions are intended to open up new perspectives or reinforce decisions made previously. It is important for the supervisor to discern the correct moment and the correct way in which to present his sentiments and ideas to the supervisees, so that they will be accepted as supportive and helpful.

An example: The feelings of panic make me think of the client, who feels irritated by the new workshop tutor. He is overburdened by the workshop tutor's indecisive behaviour. The workshop tutor too is in a similar situation. He is not used to the unforeseeable outbursts of emotion on the part of the clients. He feels more relaxed when he is able to instruct familiar activities of workmanship. He is obviously unfamiliar with the "psychological language" used by the other team members. I can see that in the current working situation, the need for security and the wish for guidance for "working with feelings" have priority. I try to seek analogies between his current situation and situations in his previous career and encourage discussions on concrete expectations on what is to be done.

The following schemes of interpretation or "entry corridors" have established themselves as vital for the process of reflection on working situations. The process of reflection requires corresponding knowledge and competence in the following areas:

- The person (The human being as an individual. Theories of development. Theories of personality.)
- The group (The human being in a group. Group theories. Group dynamics. Rank dynamics. Typical phases in groups. Coming to terms with fear in groups. Mass psychology)
- The history of the learning process (Individual history. Development of knowledge in the profession and in the field of work. Knowledge management in the organisation. Learning theories. Learning concepts.)
- Counselling<sup>12</sup> (Concepts and models. Ethic standards.)
- Field and Field dynamics (Knowledge on the field of work in which supervision is taking place. Historical development of this field of work. Typical behaviour of clients and professionals in this field of work. Laws. Taboos.)
- Organisation (Theories of organisation. Laws in organisations. System theories)
- Employment and professions (Behaviour of human beings in a working context. The status of professions. Functions and professional role.)
- Culture (Culture theories. Ethnopsychanalytical concepts. Interculturalism.)

- History<sup>13</sup> (Contemporary history. Dynamics of history. Concepts of public space. Conflict studies. Forms and structure of power. Collective coming to terms with history.)

### **Supervision and the ability to “instrumentalise”**

The term “instrumentalise” often means using something or someone to one’s own advantage. In this context, “instrumentalise” means the ability to make oneself and one’s own abilities available for processes of reflection. The process described above, that is dividing comprehensive experience into three steps of determining facts/ observing emotions and feelings/ reflecting, requires specific skills. Drees uses the term of instrumentalisation<sup>14</sup>. Supervisors make themselves available as an instrument of work and perception as a person, with their ability to witness and empathise, their own particular history and experience. It is matter of developing the so called “third ear” in order to be able to hear what has not been said, or what was meant in a different way, of reading between the lines and hearing the background noise.

This ability of self perception and self reflection helps to attain at once distance and peace in action and proximity to the events. I should be able to put myself in a position which enables me to observe my own doings and perceive what others are doing at the same time. De Roos calls this ability subjectivisation.<sup>15</sup>

### **3. Personal requirements in supervisors**

Three aspects can be discerned as essential abilities for supervisors intending to learn the craft of reflection and guidance for reflection:

- The human being’s genetically defined neuronal endowment.
- An individual’s personal history
- Education and training.

These are the crucial requirements in order to gain reflective competence in the areas of perception/attention/observation and when dealing with or interpreting what was perceived/noticed/observed, and to develop the ability of subjectivisation (Sitjtze de Roos) or instrumentalisation (Alfred Drees).

### **The human being’s genetically defined neuronal endowment**

Cognitive neuroscience is currently one of the most fascinating areas of science. Various specific activities in the brain can be displayed using different depictive methods. The discovery of so-called mirror neurones is of particular interest for our topic<sup>16</sup>. These are areas of the brain which enable us to perceive what others are feeling and thinking and to interpret it. This region of the brain is activated when another person moves, or even if we merely hear the noise which accompanies a movement. The movement is imitated in our own corresponding regions of the brain. All of us are familiar with the phenomenon that we automatically take on the same stance as the supervisee during the supervision sessions, that we lead our hands to our mouths at the same time, or yawn together. The colloquial expression “be moved to do something” thus attains a neurological explanation. Interesting perspectives for counselling, supervision, psychotherapy and learning open up in practise through the implementation of these realisations. This innate ability can be trained and put to use deliberately. If for a brief moment I adopt the breathing rhythm of the

supervisee after she has just rushed in, I am entering into an intensive exchange process. I am in emotional contact with her, have some notion of her hurry, and can consider in peace what use I am going to make of this realisation. As a rule, this procedure facilitates the supervisee's arrival, leads to visible calming and therefore rapidly creates a feasible working basis. Sometimes I find it important to give up the position which I have adopted unconsciously, a mirror image of my supervisee. This brings me once again closer to my own perceptions, I take up my own stance, which in most cases also leads to a new flexibility in thinking. These considerations can once again be integrated into the process of supervision. My "solution" can on the other hand lead to a new "posture" in my supervisee. Various investigations have shown that communication happens to a great degree para- and non verbally<sup>17</sup>. The reason for the effectiveness of nonverbal communication lies in the mirror neurones. The root cause of various profound communicative disturbances could also be located in these neuronal regions.

### **Personal history**

Mankind's innate ability for feeling for others, for empathy, is formed and characterised by each individual's personal development. Choice of vocation and personality have been thoroughly investigated and well documented for the area of social work and psychotherapy<sup>18</sup>.

Gerhard Wittenberger wrote as follows on the vocational choice of supervisor: " In my opinion, the vocational choice of supervisor is linked to the candidate's high sensitivity, his interest for conscious and unconscious needs in other people. Genetically this interest is the result of a type of relationship with the mother or parents, the narcissistic balance of which depended on a certain manner in which the child behaved "correctly". The child developed an astonishing ability to satisfy its mother's need intuitively, and so secure itself "love", that is its parents' narcissistic attention. It felt useful, and that in turn gave it's existence security. ... But precisely the development and perfection of this particular sensorium will help the child to survive and will permit the adult to practise a profession such as that of the supervisor."<sup>19</sup> Since supervision is rarely the first vocational choice, a general profession will have been taken up previously in most cases, for which empathy is an important factor.

### **Training observation and reflection**

Supervision means looking closely in order to gain an overall picture, as well as taking in the details. I have repeatedly found both the following concepts helpful.

**Microanalysis:** In child therapy, *Daniel Stern*<sup>20</sup> focuses closely on short scenes and sequences: Who did what, how, in what order, what were the feelings involved, who said what to whom...?

In this concept, a short moment in time is observed closely in detail. For supervision, this means having selected situations recapitulated again precisely and in great detail. I have experienced repeatedly that this approach both slows down the speed of recapitulation and at the same time often unveils a whole new panorama. In these scenes, frequently chosen intuitively, actions and processes emerge clearly, such as they occur similarly in a larger context or in the organisation as whole.

**Phenomenon of resonance:** The dictionary defines resonance as covibration, echo, appeal, understanding and effect. The expression "resonance phenomenon" was coined by *Heinz von Förster*, in a discussion with *Mony Elkaim*<sup>21</sup>. The origin lay in the phenomenon that feelings which occurred in counsellors and supervisors are often feelings also described by patients

and consequently helpers. These feelings are then connected to respective patterns of behaviour. On the one hand, these feelings are related to the supervisor's own personal history. On the other hand they have a function and meaning for the understanding of the other person and their system. It is not only a matter of perceiving and understanding the function of feelings which usually irritate such as anger, but also of paying attention when feelings of great well being or happiness occur. Looking into these feelings and reflecting on them is often a key to understanding a situation or a problem brought up by the supervisees.

### **Guidelines for training perception and reflection**

Supervisors will develop inner guidelines for questioning in order to focus observation and permit reflection according to the considerations above on procedures which encourage reflection.

Determining facts:

Who took part? What was said? Who talks, and how much? What was left unsaid? What actions were taken? What sort of institution is it? What written guidelines are there? How is the organisational structure? Who is responsible for what according to organigrams and job description? Where is the establishment? How is it equipped? What impression does it make? What is the usual seating order?

Perception of emotion and feelings

What do I feel, what feelings come up in me? What sensations does the supervisee initiate in me? How do I feel on the premises? Do memories come up of similar situations in a totally different context? What I would like to do most is run away, hit, take him or her in my arms...? In what state of mind am I – wide awake, absent, disorientated? What physical symptoms make themselves noticed (headache, falling asleep, butterflies...)? I whistle a tune suddenly/afterwards – what tune?

Reflecting

What is my opinion? What conclusions do I draw? What new questions arise? What insight have I gained concerning my learning requirements, my strengths and weaknesses? What would be the next steps? My gain in insight in retrospect, from a distance? What significance do these emotions have regarding this field of work, this position, the task? How do I interpret my feelings in the light of what I have been told? What would be typical for this type of organisation, the clients, the cultural background of the persons in question?

Summary

Reflection is the supervisor's key competence. This is based on the ability to instrumentalise. This ability is part of a person's innate cognitive skills. It is shaped by personal, individual history. Later on this ability is trained, at first probably unconsciously, then deliberately. A series of concepts serves as blueprints for the interpretation and understanding of working situations and conflicts such as they have been perceived. Supervisors volunteer themselves as media of communication in the exploration and handling of scenes from every day working life. By their contribution, they support the supervisees in discovering and developing their own reflective competence.

#### 4. Distance as a prerequisite for the effectiveness of reflection

The production of reflection was described above as a gradual dissociation from comprehensive experience. This dissociation takes place within the supervisor. In order to allow for different aspects of reflection, outer dissociation will however also be necessary. Supervisors come from outside the system, and are only temporarily part of the system under supervision. This brings about spatial, social and cultural distance to the system under supervision.

Bodenheimer explains this necessity “as arising from a basic principle, which states that a fact cannot be explained from within the system in which we are confronted with it. Any sensible interpretation – or extension of meaning – must be understood in essence as *inter – pretatio* that is as a transfer from one system to another system... whoever does this, the *inter-pres* is a mediator, who, if we are talking about the interpretation of divine words, sees himself as *presbyter*, builder of bridges (pontifex), as moving between systems and mediating between them.”<sup>22</sup>

In 1978, Jager wrote the following about supervision in psychiatric hospitals: “As far as the supervisor is concerned, it is of great importance for the staff of the therapeutic unit that he is not drawn into the network of this community, but is able to observe it at a distance from outside.”<sup>23</sup>

Inge Tutzer puts it as follows: “It seems important to me to enter the other’s space for an exchange, in order to be able to experience strangeness and approach with all senses. This is after all a general characteristic of supervision.”<sup>24</sup>

In the 24 years which lie between these two statements supervision has become an integral part of a variety of professional areas. Supervision, and its particular exponent of coaching is being used on different levels of the hierarchy to broaden the professional horizon. Remote observers have become “travellers in the service of work related reflection”. Professionally cultivated “strangeness” allows for the inclusion of cultural and historical dimensions in the process of reflection. A decisive factor for the analysis of this aspect is knowledge acquired in the course of Europisation of supervision.<sup>25 26</sup>

#### Summary

Distance is a characteristic of supervision. It is a prerequisite for the enhancement of meaning to take place. “The methodical craft of supervision consists of building a bridge between considerations on communicational processes in the working environment or the organisation, and the presentation and experience of these issues and the emotions linked to them in the supervision system. Feedback takes place between the systems, from the supervisory system to the working system and vice versa.” (Gotthardt-Lorenz)<sup>27</sup>

To be able to understand a working environment which has become more complex requires suitably modern instruments. Because of its independent and remote position and the emotional and cognitive observation of working processes and situations, supervision is able to continue evolving methodically, equivalent to changes in the working environment. The supervisees undergo a similar process of learning and development. This mutual learning and development of competence, always in contact with and relating to the working environment and to social and personal reality has led to supervision becoming a European success story.



©Ćiril Ćiro Raič – Mostar<sup>28</sup>

The metaphor of the bridge appears regularly in connection with supervision. Here I would like to use the image of the bridge of “Stari Most” – the “old bridge” of Mostar<sup>29</sup>. It expresses much of what is important to me as supervisor and as a European. “Stari Most” connects different cultures and religions, as well as differing values. It makes possible personal encounters. The image of “Stari Most” stands for the overcoming of an abyss and the encouragement and facilitation of exchange. Another aspect is the look at collective history. The fact that “Stari Most” was reerected under involvement of all concerned in an interactive and reflective process after being purposely destroyed is an act against resignation in the face of traumatic historic experience.

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Angela Gotthardt-Lorenz and Helmut Haselbacher for their important suggestions for this article.

<sup>2</sup> Gotthardt - Lorenz Angela: Die Methode Supervision – eine Skizze. In Pühl Harald: Supervision und Organisationsentwicklung. Published by Leske und Budrich, Opladen 2000

<sup>3</sup> Sauer Joachim: Zur Geschichte und Tradition der Supervision in Österreich. In Luif Ingeborg: (Hrsg) Supervision- Tradition, Ansätze und Perspektiven in Österreich. Published by Orac, Vienna 1997, pg. 33

<sup>4</sup> Tatschl Siegfried: Organisationssupervision und Organisationskompetenz als Antwort auf Herausforderungen des Wandels von sozialen Organisationen. In Luif Ingeborg: (Hrsg) Supervision – Tradition, Ansätze und Perspektiven in Österreich. Published by Orac, Vienna, 1997

<sup>5</sup> See also: Buchinger Kurt: Supervision in Wirtschaftsunternehmen. In Supervision vol. 2/2002, published by Votum Verlag, Münster 2002

<sup>6</sup> See also contributions in Reichel Rene., Dvorak Karl (Hrsg) Sozialarbeit und Supervision. Liebesbeziehung und Vernunfttehe. SOZAKTIV, St. Pölten 1998

<sup>7</sup> Duden (1989): Das Herkunftswörterbuch. Mannheim

<sup>8</sup> Dürrenmatt Friedrich: Der Verdacht. Published by Benziger, Zürich 1952

<sup>9</sup> Gotthardt-Lorenz Angela, personal impartation

<sup>10</sup> For a closer look at this distinction see also Damasio Antonio R: Ich fühle also bin ich. Die Entschlüsselung des Bewußtseins. Published by Econ Ullstein, Munich 2002.

<sup>11</sup> See also the concept for the development of quality by the frey Akademie, which focuses on verifyability as the key issue in quality analysis: QAP Qualität als Prozeß. Dornbirn 2001

<sup>12</sup> See also Petzold, Hilarion G.: Interdisziplinär beraten – sich ergänzen: Überlegungen zu Beratung als Disziplin und Praxeologie in der modernen Wissensgesellschaft. Düsseldorf/Hückeswagen. In [www.fpi-publikationen.de/supervision](http://www.fpi-publikationen.de/supervision) - SUPERVISION: Theorie - Praxis – Forschung. Eine interdisziplinäre Internet Zeitschrift – 02/2003

<sup>13</sup> See also: Die Beschäftigung mit der Geschichte. In Tatschl Siegfried: Wenn Supervisoren reisen. Was bei europäischer Arbeit von Supervisoren und Supervisorinnen entsteht. Erfahrungen und Reflexionen anhand des Projekts HASI. In Supervision 1/2003, published by Beltz, Münster 2003, pg. 10

<sup>14</sup> Drees Alfred: Intuitive Dialoge in Therapie, Supervision und Beratung. Lecture at the 2<sup>nd</sup> world Congress for positive psychotherapy, Wiesbaden, 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> July 2000

<sup>15</sup> De Roos Sijtze: Skills and methods of observation in supervision and coaching. Lecture in the course of the ÖVS meeting, Salzburg, 2003.

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<sup>16</sup> „In the early nineties, scientists working under Vittorio Gallese at the University of Parma, discovered cells in the brain of macaques in an area named F5, a part of the premotor cortex, in which actions are planned. These neurons discharged when the monkey reached for an object – and equally so, when the monkey saw that the team supervisor was reaching for the object. Gallese termed these neurons which reflected another’s actions “mirror neurons”. We can discern from our fellows’ mimicry and gestures how they are feeling and what they are thinking. From this, we can predict their next moves, and therefore motives for moves of our own. A simple example: A man lowers his eyebrows – he must be angry – he may want to hit me – I had better run away.

We understand what is going on inside someone else’s head by simulating it ourselves. It could by all means be called “aping”. A charming precursor is a baby’s reaction to a tongue stuck out at it: It sticks it’s own tongue out.

Mirror neurons are therefore closely connected to learning. And also to language: The F5 region in monkeys, where the first mirror neurons were located, is seen as an early form of the Broca region, one of the areas for language in the human brain. F5 is responsible for movements of the hands – one of the arguments in support of the theory that the development of speech was built up on gesticulative precursors, that speaking through the hands preceded speaking through the lips. In one of Gallese’s papers, it was shown that a link can already be found in monkeys between hearing and communication through gesture: he discovered neurons in F5 which also discharged when the monkey merely heard the sound accompanying a gesture. Mirror neurons are not only found in the premotor cortex. In patients who were subjected to brain surgery while fully conscious, the Canadian physiologist William Hutchison discovered neurones in the cingulate cortex (where some scientists presume the location of the “self”, as it is active when something is done of one’s own accord), which discharged when the patient was pricked in the finger, but also when the surgeon pricked himself in the finger. Pity neurons in a stricter sense, so to speak.

It seems essential for neuronal mechanisms of pity that areas in which action is planned or represented are connected to areas in which feelings evolve, in the limbic system therefore, which also includes the notorious amygdala, the “seat of fear”.

Scientists in Los Angeles and Rome successfully proved such a connection: with test subjects, who were shown faces expressing emotion. Some subjects were asked to imitate the expression, others merely to observe it. The result: in both cases, the network of cerebral areas in which particular activity could be measured – through magnetic resonance spectroscopy – was almost identical. The connection between premotor centres – particularly mirror neurons – and the amygdala runs through the insula, an area which also seems to be connected to speech.

This paper, which was published online in PNAS (online 8.4.), in which the flow of information through the areas of the brain is reproduced in greater detail – confirms a concept by the German psychologist Theodor Lipps (1851 – 1914): “Empathy” as Lipps called it, bases on “inner imitation” of a person’s action into whose situation we place ourselves.

The “chameleon effect” shows that the boundaries between inner and active imitation are blurred: Sympathetic people unconsciously imitate behaviour and facial expression of those with whom they are sympathising. This presumably reinforces sympathy: Darwin already knew that not only do feelings influence mimicry, but also the other way round. Whoever manages a smile, will make himself feel better.” Die Presse, Vienna, 12.04.2003

<sup>17</sup> „The results from investigations show that only 7% of the effect of a message bases on the words used, 38% on the way in which these words are articulated (paraverbal communication) and 55% on body language and mimicry (non verbal communication).“ in Herbert Frank: Fit

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für fremde Kulturen: Interkulturelles Training für Führungskräfte. Published by Haupt, Bern, 2002 pg. 38

<sup>18</sup> See also Schmidbauer Wolfgang: Die hilflosen Helfer. Über die seelische Problematik der helfenden Berufe. Published by Rowolth, Reinbeck bei Hamburg 1977

<sup>19</sup> Wittenberger Gerhard: „Über die Verwundbarkeit in der Supervisionsausbildung. Aspekte angewandter Psychoanalyse.“ In FORUM Supervision Nr1, Münster 1993

<sup>20</sup> Stern Daniel: Die Wirklichkeit zwischen Mutter und Kind. (Audiokassette erhältlich unter [www.auditorium-netzwrk.de](http://www.auditorium-netzwrk.de)) Workshop in the course of the 2<sup>nd</sup> world congress for psychotherapy. Vienna 2002

<sup>21</sup> Elkaim Mony: Wenn du mich liebst, lieb mich nicht. Lambertus, Freiburg im Breisgau 1992  
Elkaim Mony: A systematic approach to the therapists's feelings. (Audiokassette erhältlich unter [www.auditorium-netzwrk.de](http://www.auditorium-netzwrk.de)) Lecture in the course of the 3rd world congress for psychotherapy. Vienna 2002

<sup>22</sup> Bodenheimer Aron Roland: Warum? Von der Obszönität des Fragens. Published by Reclam, Stuttgart 1984, pg.17

<sup>23</sup> Jager Elisabeth: Die therapeutische Gemeinschaft. In: Hans Strotzka (Hrsg): Psychotherapie: Grundlagen, Verfahren, Indikationen. Urban und Schwarzenberg, Vienna 1978, pg. 386

<sup>24</sup> Tutzer Inge: Erfahrungen aus der Internationalen Supervisionsgruppe. In ANSE website: [www.supervision-eu.org](http://www.supervision-eu.org)

<sup>25</sup> Tatschl Siegfried: Wenn Supervisoren reisen. Aao

<sup>26</sup> Freitag-Becker Edeltrud: Im Dialog mit der Andersartigkeit. In Forum Supervision, Nr.22, „Supervision in interkultureller Perspektive“, October 2003  
Hrsg. Gerhard Leuscher / Gerhard Wittenberger, Fachhochschulverlag Frankfurt 2003

<sup>27</sup> Gotthardt-Lorenz Angela. Aao.

<sup>28</sup> I am very grateful to Ćiril Raič for placing this photo at my disposal. Zahvaljujem gospodinu Ćirilu Raiču za fotografiju Starog mosta.

<sup>29</sup> For a long time Stari Most, the old bridge in Mostar, was seen as a symbol of communication between different peoples, as well as a picturesque motif and destination. The static achievement of 1566, of erecting a single arched bridge of this dimension (height 28m, width 21m) in stone, deserves as much admiration as the graceful aesthetics of the architecture itself.

The destruction of this piece of cultural heritage during the Bosnia war of 1993 shocked the world. The international community made the reerection of the so-called “Old Bridge” possible, this also involved salvaging the original stone blocks from the bed of the river Neretva. See also the book from the exhibition at the Vienna Museum of Art: The bridge of Mostar / Die Brücke von Mostar. Vienna 2003

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