Dialectical Approaches in Recent Danish Critical Psychology

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Abstract

This article is a review of recent Danish PhD theses that takes a Critical Psychological starting point. The review is thematic and focus on how research approaches can be said to be dialectical and, consequently, what a review of such approaches can teach us about dialectics and tell us about recent Danish Critical Psychology. The conclusion centre on the reproduction and transformation of empirical research; understood as the fact that research is simultaneously an act of reproduction and transformation that takes place alongside the practice it is investigating and alongside other research projects and theoretical approaches. The key sections encompass a characterisation of dialectics and a review of how dialectics are practised in recent Danish critical psychology.

Keywords: Denmark, dialectics, critical psychology, practice research, conduct of everyday life, theoretical development.

Introduction

The title of this article finds its background in continuing discussions among a group of colleagues in a Danish inter-disciplinary and interinstitutional research community called "Praksisforskning i udvikling" (Developing practice research). The basis for the work of this community is German-inspired Critical Psychology. We have discussed the subject *dialectics*, we all agree that we are committed to dialectics, and though all of us are convinced that we are working in a dialectical manner, at the same time, we (the authors) find it challenging to describe and discuss the subject in question. This article is a review of recent Danish PhD theses that takes a Critical Psychological starting point. Our outset for writing a review of Critical Psychology in Denmark is a mutual wish to grasp these discussions and analyse the research in our community and that of others working in the field of Critical Psychology in Denmark. This review focuses on how research approaches can be said to be dialectical and, consequently, what this can teach us about dialectics and recent Danish Critical Psychology[1]. In a number of different ways, our conclusions will centre on the reproduction and transformation of empirical research; that is to say, the fact that research is simultaneously an act of reproduction and transformation that takes place alongside the practice it is investigating and alongside other research projects and theoretical approaches. This will be elaborated upon in the various sections below. The key sections encompass a characterisation of dialectics and a review of a questioning how the approaches and conclusions of the analysed theses become dialectic.

Method

Our primary analysis concerns the PhD research conducted in the period 2006-2010; thereby providing our international colleagues with an opportunity to gain insight into research that is for the most part only available in Danish. Seeing as Mørck and Huniche's previous review of Danish critical psychological research included work that was completed before or in 2006, our definition of recent research comprises post-2006 work (Mørck & Huniche, 2006, p. 55). The insight we aim to provide constitutes a regional contribution (in a geographical sense) to international reviews of critical psychological research, ARCP 2012. To be precise, we have chosen only to include PhD research with a German/Danish critical psychological perspective, and the decisive factor for including or excluding a particular thesis is whether or not it contains a reference to the work of Klaus Holzkamp[2], that is, whether or not Holzkamp is a key constituent in its theoretical groundwork. In addition, Nissen refers to a German/Scandinavian tradition of Critical Psychology that emerged from cultural historical activity theory and from the work of Holzkamp (Nissen 2008). The methods employed in this survey of Danish PhD contributions include a search in the Danish National Research Database and PsycInfo as well as a Google Scholar search. We have hand-searched the Danish-based international peer reviewed online journal *Outlines*,[3] focusing exclusively on this perticular period of time. For further insight into the topics revealed in the present analyses, we draw on a series of discussions presented in articles written by Danish scholars and published in English between 2006 and 2010. Rather than return to primary literature concerning Critical Psychology, we have chosen first and foremost to include and call attention to Danish contributions that continue central discussions in the field of Critical Psychology. The article opens with an introduction to Danish critical psychological PhD research published in the years 2006-2010. Following this is a description of three aspects of dialectics, by which we lay the theoretical ground for our analysis of the PhD research in question. The overall analysis demonstrates how dialectics is produced, reproduced and transformed, so to speak, when applied in research. Hence, it is our ambition in this review to take a dialectical view.

Introducing Danish critical psychological PhD research published in the years 2006-2010

Prior to this review, a number of articles written in English by Danish researchers have provided the international audience with an outline of Danish Critical Psychology (Nissen, 2000; Mørck & Huniche, 2006). However, to paraphrase Painter, Marvakis and Mos in their work on German Critical Psychology, characterising the tradition of German (and Danish) Critical Psychology is an ongoing and collective project (Painter, Marvakis, & Mos, 2009). The term *German/Danish Critical Psychology* refers to a form of *counter* psychology developed in Freie Universität in Berlin with Professor Klaus Holzkamp in the centre (Jefferson & Huniche, 2009; Mørck, 2006) and with contributions from a number of Danish scholars, such as Ole Dreier, Erik Axel and Morten Nissen. The term *practice research* is described as an approach from within and below (Mørck & Huniche, 2006; Nissen, 2009). With reference to Dreier, Nissen (2008) explains, on the subject of the German/Scandinavian tradition of Critical Psychology, "In its early conceptions, as I have partly sketched, the focus was mostly on individual subjectivity as understood in terms of participation in social practices. This emphasis still characterizes the situated turn in more recent Danish Critical

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[2] Klaus Holzkamp is acknowledges as one of the primary developer of Critical Psychology.
[3] *Outlines* provides a forum for theoretically and empirically informed debates about the relationships between individual subjects, social structures and historically developed cultural forms in and of practice.

Psychology" (2008, p. 60). Furthermore, Nissen draws attention to subjectivity, understood as situated local practices in connection with specific communities or collectives, because, as he argues, "[...] in the end, the only way to overcome a dichotomy of 'subject versus structure' in a theory of participation is to unfold the idea of the collective as itself a subject, a we [...]" (ibid.). On the subject of research with a critical psychological perspective, Mørck and Huniche conclude that "From this changed positioning, Critical Psychology in the Danish context tends to research how we are part of its dominating discourses, analysing problems and possibilities from various first position perspectives – including our own as practice researchers – trying to break with marginalising discourses, and engaging in developing alternatives in both theory and practice" (2006, p. 14). Schraube gives the following outline of a Danish/German critical psychological perspective based on Holzkamp: "Holzkamp's psychology tries to develop a knowledge of contradictions, analytical concepts enabling the social and societal mediatedness of the dilemmas in human subjectivity and everyday life to become the topic of psychological research" (2009, p. 303). In this brief introduction to Danish Critical Psychology, we will identify a tradition that is inspired both by the work of Klaus Holzkamp and by cultural historical activity theory and which focuses on 1) being an approach that originates from within and below, 2) understanding subjectivity as participation in specific, local, situated social practices, and 3) overcoming the opposition between subject and structure by way of the idea that the collective itself is a subject which we find to be a dialectical ambition. In the following quotation, Nissen shows how the three points must be understood as connected in the framework of Critical Psychology: "*In short, if we want to regain the idea of subjectivity as participatory, we must unfold the concept of collective subjectivity, even to the point of recognizing particular collectives as reflexive subjects; and the subject-perspective, then, must be reconceptualised as a recurrent collective process of transforming ideology*" (Nissen, 2012, p. 43, emphasis added). The above mentioned characteristics are all included in the term 'practice research' which will be elaborated upon below. For a more comprehensive overview of the historical development of Danish/German Critical Psychology, see previous reviews by (Mørck & Huniche, 2006; Nissen, 2000).

As far as our study can tell, in the period 2006-2010 a total of 10 theses, whose theoretical and methodological approach was closely linked with Critical Psychology, were defended in Denmark. Furthermore, the following theses that have not been included in this review was recommended for defence in 2011: Peter Busch-Jensen, *Fleksibilitet og fællesskab – frembringelsen af nye former for fælleshed i moderne arbejdsliv* (*Flexibility and co-operation – establishing new forms of solidarity in modern working life*) (2011) and Anja Stanek, *Børns fællesskaber og fællesskabernes betydning: studeret i indskolingen fra børnehave til 1. klasse og SFO* (*Children's sense of community and the meaning hereof: in the introductory period from child care to the first year of school and after school centres*) (2011). Below, you will find a brief presentation of the included theses' fields of research and their main thesis statement. Subsequently, the theses will be analysed and discussed in relation to their production of knowledge on a dialectical basis.

Author	Year	Title, university and department
Kousholt, Dorte	2006	*Familieliv fra et børneperspektiv (Family life from a child's perspective)*. Roskilde University, Institute for Psychology
Højlund, Irene	2006	*Gennem flere labyrinter (Through several labyrinths)*. Aarhus University, The Danish School of Education
Schwartz, Ida	2007	*Børneliv på døgninstitution - socialpædagogik på tværs af børns livssammenhænge (Children's lifes in residential institutions – social education across children's lives)*. University of Southern Denmark, Institute of Philosophy,

		Education and the Study of Religions
Ingholt, Liselotte	2007	*Fællesskaber, vaner og deltagelse. Et studie af unge på to gymnasier (Communities, habits and participation: a study of young people in two upper secondary schools).* University of Copenhagen, Department of Psychology
Mackrill, Thomas	2007	*The therapy journal project. A cross-contextual qualitative diary study of psychotherapy with adult children of alcoholics.* University of Copenhagen, Department of Psychology
Morin, Anne	2007	*Børns deltagelse og læring. På tværs af almen- og specialpædagogiske lærearrangementer (Children's participation and learning. Across general and special socioeducational learningarrangements).* Aarhus University, The Danish School of Education
Kristensen, Kasper	2008	*Hjemløshed og personlig livsførelse (Homelessness and individual conduct of everyday life).* University of Copenhagen, Department of Psychology
Kousholt, Kristine	2009	*Evalueret - Deltagelse i folkeskolens evalueringspraksis (Assessed – Participation in municipal primary and lower-secondary schools' assessment practices).* Aarhus University, The Danish School of Education
Petersen, Kirsten Elisa	2009	*Omsorg for socialt udsatte børn – en analyse af pædagogers kompetencer og pædagogiske arbejde med socialt udsatte børn i daginstitutioner (Care for socially marginalised children – an analysis of the competencies of social educators and their work with socially marginalised children in day-care centres).* Aarhus University, The Danish School of Education
Thomsen, Rie	2009	*Vejledning i fællesskaber - Karrierevejledning fra et deltagerperspektiv (Career guidance in communities – career guidance from the perspective of participants).* Aarhus University, The Danish School of Education

Fig. 1: An outline of Danish PhD theses with a critical psychological viewpoint, 2006-2010

This outline shows that the majority of these theses deal with participation in an institutional context and how this participation becomes part of the participant's everyday life. Some are concerned with the lives of children in different settings, for example, day-care centres and schools. Dorte Kousholt examines the ways in which children's everyday lives in day-care centres and in their homes affect their family life and, in addition, how the family affects the child's life in day-care centres. Furthermore, she undertakes to clarify how families organise a shared everyday life, considering and focusing on the participation of the children, and how this structure of a shared everyday life influences the children (2006). With her thesis from 2009, Kirsten Elisa Petersen studies social educators' competencies and pedagogical work with socially marginalised children in day-care centres. She poses the following question: "Which problems and challenges do the professionals find in their pedagogical work with socially marginalised children in day-care centres?" (Petersen, 2009). Both Kristine Kousholt (2009) and Anne Morin (2007) concern themselves with children in the Danish Municipal school, that is, municipal primary and lower-secondary school. Kristine Kousholt focuses especially on what we refer to as the normal area, making use of assessments and, self-assessments of the Danish Municipal School. Anne Morin undertakes to examine which possible influence children's participation in general and special pedagogical learning projects have on their individual learning process, as well as how the professionals substantiate their way of handling educational initiatives and how this affects the children who participate in the

given activities. In this area, focusing on children in residential institutions, we find Ida Schwartz' (2007) and Irene Højlund's (2006) theses. Schwartz' research project contains an analysis, from children's perspective, of socioeducational practices in a residential institution for children and adolescents who have been placed in care. Højlund focuses on the conditions that might be playing a central role in the effect-oriented research-based quality development of the environmental therapeutic work of children with psychosocial problems.

Viewing adolescents as participants, Liselotte Ingholt (2007) studies their formation of habits in upper secondary school. These young people's development of habits is examined closely in connection with their development of communities. Ingholt's study takes place in two schools whose way of organising school practice differs from one another. It is her explicit ambition to come to understand how each young person's participation is linked to the different institutional and organisational activities in his/her upper secondary school and to the development of particular communities (p. 26). Thomas Mackrill's study (2007a) involves young adults/students who grew up in families where one or both parents suffered from alcohol abuse and, therefore, the former now take part in therapeutic conversations. Mackrill's thesis is the only one that is based on articles and written in English. The others are monographies and written in Danish. The studies of Rie Thomsen (2009) and Kasper A. Kristensen (2008) focus on adults. Thomsen examines the form career guidance takes in a company that is in the process of shutting down its production and in a folk high school[4] where the students are in the process of choosing a higher education. Kasper A. Kristensen's research takes us to a different part of society when he studies the homeless in Copenhagen and their conduct of everyday life.

In addition to the above, several other interesting Danish research contributions that draw on Critical Psychology as their underlying basis will be included in discussions below where relevant. In particular, we have favoured articles that are available to an international audience.

We now wish to give a characterisation of what constitutes a dialectical basis and subsequently employ this characterisation in our reviews of the above-mentioned theses.

Discussions on dialectics

Studies of a number of works that deal (more or less) explicitly with dialectics constitute the foundation for this exposition and characteristic of dialectics. The exposition will take as its starting point two works by Wolfgang Fritz Haug and David Harvey, respectively, both of whom are inspired by Karl Marx. Via Haug and Harvey's points about dialectics we will draw a line to the dialectical understanding that can be found in the tradition of Danish/German Critical Psychology. In the exposition we will also touch upon the dialectical principles that Harvey presents, and we will use them in the structure of this article. As we see it, Harvey's principles should not be considered a mere neo-interpretation of Marx' 11 Feuerbach theses, as the former are significantly more elaborate and are not composed as a direct piece of criticism. However, there are clear convergences between Harvey's 3rd and 11th principles and Marx' 3rd and 11th theses.

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[4] Folk High Schools are residential schools providing general and non-formal education. The lengths of courses vary – from one week to up to almost a year – and are attended by adults of all ages. They are non-qualifying courses meant to broaden general, social and democratic competencies.

First of all, dialectics is a process, not an object (Harvey, 1996, p. 48). This poses a few problems for those of us who wish to examine and describe how dialectics can be understood. In the articles "Dialectics", with reference to Brecht, Wolfgang Frits Haug points out that "It appears to be almost impossible to speak about dialectics without speaking un-dialectically, and thus, as the dialectician Brecht warned, to transform 'the flux of the things itself into a static thing" (2005, p. 241). Marx's understanding of dialectics is based on Hegel's as "every form in the flux of movement" (ibid., p. 244). When we set out to describe dialectics in this section of the article as an epistemological basis and a research approach, we thus run into the problem that the very aspiration to write about dialectics is not especially dialectic, perhaps even the opposite, following Harvey's description of the reduction of dialectics to a series of principles on a list. "This suggests that the reduction of dialectics to a set of 'principles' might be self-defeating" (Harvey, 1996, p. 48). We do not intend to list a set of principles, but to describe what characterises dialectics. Whether that is any different is of course debatable; still, our agenda is to study and outline research for which the starting point is dialectical. In other words, our agenda can therefore be said to constitute an attempt to unfold and explore 'flux of movement', seeing as dialectical materialistic bases and Critical Psychology are produced, reproduced and transformed simultaneously when employed in a given context.

Harvey (1996) refers to the fact that Marx never created any dialectical principles; one had to follow his work in order to grasp his approach. However, a dilemma occurs, as a reification of the object (dialectics and research) at the same time enables a closer examination of the object in question. It is on the basis of this argument that Harvey nevertheless constructs 11 dialectical principles in his book *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. That is because the act of writing these dialectical principles down (and thus, in a sense, reifying something that is in motion) makes for a preliminary manoeuvre via which it becomes possible to examine dialectics in detail (Harvey, 1996, p. 48). If we wish to learn more about this phenomenon, to describe it in a different way, receive criticism and discuss this criticism, it is, however, essential that we are able to describe the phenomenon in the first place. This will be done in the following section.

Three characteristics of the concept of dialectics

Below we will characerice some aspects of dialectics central to Critical Psychology. We have divided our characterisation into three foci which we refer to as: *the mutual constitution between subject and society; the relation between reproduction and transformation; the internal conflict.*

The first characteristic of dialectics concerns *the mutual constitution between subject and society*.
What we refer to as the mutual constitution between subject and society is related to Harvey's (1996) 6th dialectical principle (which, in a sense, is connected to Marx' 3rd and 7th Feuerbach theses that also focus on the reciprocity between subject and society and the active subjective formation). Harvey argues that parts and wholes are mutually constitutive: "To say that parts and wholes are mutually constitutive of each other is to say much more than that there is a feedback loop between them. In the process of capturing the powers that reside in those ecological and economic systems which are relevant to me, I actively reconstitute or transform them within myself even before I project them back to reconstitute or transform the system from which those powers were initially derived" (1996, p. 53). As clarified in this quotation, the reciprocity between subject and society (part and whole) entails that it is impossible to view subject and society as two different entities that influence each other.

While societal structures create conditions that affect subjects in a number of ways, active subjects equally create societal structures. During these past decades, the critical psychological tradition in Denmark has experienced a movement away from what Holzkamp describes as "total societal structures" (Holzkamp, 1989) towards an understanding of so-called "structures of social practice". As a part of Ole Dreier's (2006) critique of Holzkamp's concept of total societal structures, he points out that such a conceptualisation risks rendering invisible the fact that "individuals in fact always are present within structures wherever they are" (2006, p. 4);[5] consequently, such a conceptualisation as total societal structure is in danger of becoming mere abstract assumptions. When Harvey (1996) emphasises, in this outline of dialectics, that parts and wholes cannot be understood in the abstract and beforehand, but must be connected to a particular analytical perspective, it is possible to understand it in relation to the concept of practice structures which, precisely, enables a concrete and situated analysis of parts and wholes, subject and society. Hence, in a more general sense, one can look at dialectics as an attempt to transcend the retention of objects and people, and at society and subject as something static and distinct. Marx's interest in dialectics reflects a break with a metaphysical way of thinking that he saw as a static way of retaining boundaries and, thus, a form of dualism that contributes to an understanding of objects as fixed (Haug, 2005, p. 241).

Hence, it is possible to think of dialectics as a possibility of transcending dualisms and, thus, as a break with the Cartesian tradition that does operate with (hierarchical) dualisms – such as: body/soul, thought/action, human/world, theory/practice – but due to the dynamic and materialistic elements in the dialectical tradition such fixed dualisms cannot be upheld, even if we often think about the world as based on them.

In connection hereto, Harvey introduces his 7th dialectical principle, stating that the idea that part and whole are mutually constitutive inserts an element of transformation into the relation between subject/object, cause/effect. "[I]ndividuals have to be considered as both subjects and objects of processes of social change" (Harvey, 1996, p. 54). The consequence of this is that "dialectics makes limited appeal to cause and effect argument and then only as a particular limiting case. Causal argumentation necessarily rests, for example, upon absolute not relational conceptions of space and time" (ibid.). The dialectical basis, therefore, points to transformations and to the connections between different aspects, but avoids cause and effect understandings.

With the mutual constitution between subject and society we wish to establish that Critical Psychological dialectical materialism comprises a *third* epistemological standpoint (see also Busch-Jensen, 2011). Simultaneously, the structures we are dealing with pertain to both subject and society. While other theoretical approaches "choose sides", so to speak, Critical Psychology takes up a third epistemological standpoint, defined by Dreier as follows: "Some believe that to include a subjective perspective necessarily leads to methodological individualism. This is not the case. The 'science of the subject', as developed in Critical Psychology, allows us to break out of that unfortunate trap by combining the subjective perspective of individuals with conceptions about the encompassing social practice in which subjects participate" (2003, p. 12). The dialectical approach describes this as a "both/and". Persons *both* live in and with concrete social conditions of life, structured in specific (and sometimes restricting) ways, *and* take part in creating and changing these very conditions. Holzkamp accentuates the necessary transgression of the postulate of immediacy, the latter

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[5] Translated from Danish: "… individerne faktisk altid umiddelbart befinder sig i strukturer, der hvor de er."

being the notion that people are subject to external conditions. Instead, Holzkamp points out that the person is not only subject to certain conditions, as demonstrated for instance in behaviouristic research, but also co-creator of these conditions. Following Holzkamp (1983), we find that the postulate of immediacy entails that the one part of the dialectical "both-and" is removed. The reciprocity is forgotten and focus is now exclusively on the person, alive under these conditions, thus omitting the person as co-creator of the conditions. Willis (1981), among others, shows that the person takes part in producing the limiting conditions he/she acts within and with and that this – inevitable – makes it more difficult for him/her to break with these conditions. Among other things, the presented theses examine how children participate in assessment practices, how young people participate in upper secondary school, how social educators participate in their work with socially marginalised children in day-care centres and how young people as well as adults participate in guidance and through their participation change the career guidance practice.

Due to the dialectical reciprocity between subject and society in Critical Psychology this approach is well-suited for analysing connections of various types. What different objects/statements/actions are connected to and what they must be understood in relation to will always be of interest. This generates concrete and practice-oriented analyses of problems and options. Problems are considered to be linked to places and to the significance of and actual communities in these places (Lave, 1988). The theses included are all engaged in different ways in analysing and trying to grasp the connections in people's lives. On this basis, a common critical potential in recent Critical Psychology can be understood in relation to this dialectical focus on connections. Critical Psychology gives rise to a critical stance towards understandings/theories/practices that conceptualise the person and his/her actions as detached and individualised which will be elaborated upon in the analyses of the theses below. The personal should according to the tradition be viewed via the social. If we fail to analyse what the individual is a part of, individual actions will look peculiar and mysterious (cf. Højholt, 2005 – on child perspectives). Ole Dreier is equally critical of what he calls "mainstream psychology", which insists on studying psychological phenomena outside the practice they are a part of. He argues: "The resulting knowledge is impersonal and decontextualised – it is about links between classes of variables rather than about persons in particular contexts. A general finding from this arrangement is an isolated generality which identifies general links and mechanisms in the formula: 'always when x then y'. … Since knowledge thus obtained is claimed to hold 'always when x then y', it is fixed and immutable" (2007, p. 189). In the words of Harvey, a dialectical approach, on the other hand, makes it possible to recognise connectedness and changeability (mutability): "I want to offer a dialectical way to emphasize relations and totalities, as opposed to isolated causal chains and innumerable fragmented and sometimes contradictory hypotheses proven statistically correct at the 0.5 percent level of significance" (1996, p. 7).

In Harvey's 10th principle, he continues, pointing towards dialectical research itself: "Dialectical enquiry is itself a *process* that produces *permanences* such as concepts, abstractions, theories, and institutionalized structures of knowledge which stand to be supported or undermined by continuing processes of enquiry" (ibid.). In this connection it is worth mentioning Kristensen and Mørck's concrete analyses of ADHD, as examples of contributions to a continuing inquiry with an alternative, more dialectical and situated perspective on ADHD (K.-L. Kristensen & Mørck, 2011). This also entails that one cannot see the researcher as an 'outsider'; he must be an active subject in the process which entails that research is also a practice (Borg, 2002; U. J. Jensen, 2001). This accentuates the aspirations to look at theory and practice in conjunction.

On this basis, Uffe Juul Jensen proposes "a philosophy just-in-time": "That is, a philosophy that can simultaneously (or maybe concurrently) play a constructive role in science and practice and be a critical reflection of actual science and practice, philosophy that changes through its participation in changing science and practice" (Jensen, 1999, p. 81). In the words of Harvey, inspired by Marx, "Marx similarly insists that only by transforming the world can we transform ourselves; that it is impossible to understand the world without simultaneously changing it as well as ourselves. Formal dialectical logic cannot, therefore, be presupposed as an ontological quality of nature: to do so would be to superimpose a particular mental logic on the world as an act of mind *over* matter. The dialectical unity of mental and material activities (expressed by Marx as the unity of theory and praxis), can never be broken, only attenuated or temporarily alienated" (Harvey, 1996, p. 56). Following Marx and Harvey into a Critical Psychological tradition, one might say that mind is not over matter and it is through our participation in what matters that our mind is developed. As such, one can view the aspirations Harvey communicates here as extensions to critical psychological practice research hereby envestigating what matters through engagement in practice. Critical Psychology offers a set of categories that can interact with practice, be tested and develop in interplay with practice and, thereby, become meaningful (cf. Holzkamp, 1983). It is in the interplay between category and practice the research that is based on Critical Psychology offers us new knowledge.

The second characteristic of the concept of dialectics concerns *the relation between reproduction and transformation*.

Harvey (1996) presents "Processes, flows and fluxes" as the first of his 11 dialectical principles. Later on in his exposition of his ideas, he explicitly accentuates that change and instability are the basis/norm of all systems – and that changeability and movement are the most important of all dialectical principles. As mentioned above, Haug (hand in hand with Marx) agrees, specifying that dialectics can be thought of as "every form in the flux of movement" (2005, p. 244). On the other hand, Harvey (1996) simultaneously points out that researchers who wish to work in a dialectical manner, equally, have to attempt to understand the more stable forms; if not, "flux" will become a sort of final unit (which we find to be rather paradoxical). As a consequence, it will be difficult to stop and understand concrete objects of study. As Harvey stresses, a number of relatively stable and inert power relations, institutions and structures exist with which we must link our understanding of flux: "Furthermore, while it is formally true that everything can be reduced to flows … we are in daily practice surrounded by things, institutions, discourses, and even states of mind of such relative permanence and power that it would be foolish not to acknowledge those evident qualities" (1996, p. 8). Consequently, researchers who want to work dialectically are interested in the relation between reproduction and transformation. Reproduction is moveability; a form of moveability by which one practice is constantly rebuilt and reproduced from its former form, with the variations, though, that are the unavoidable result of such constant reconstruction. In other words, the act of reproduction does not simply produce identical copies; it consists of active subjects' daily re-creation – and it is thus linked to the previous characteristic of dialectics concerning the mutual constitution of subject and society.

On his 2nd dialectical principle, Harvey writes that: "A dialectical conception of both the individual '*thing*' and the *structured system* of which it is a part rests entirely on an understanding of the processes and relations by which things and structured system are constituted. This idea is not intuitively self-evident since we are surrounded by 'things' that seem to have such a permanent and solid character that it is difficult to imagine them as

somehow in flux. […] Dialectics force us always to ask the question of every 'thing' or 'event' that we encounter: by what process was it constituted and how is it sustained?" (1996, p. 50). On this basis, regarding process and change it is possible for Critical Psychology, in an explicit and theoretically consistent manner, to include the subject perspective. One of the objectives of a dialectical analysis is to study what this human activity as well as human rights and reasons for participating in reproduction and/or transformation consist of. In this 9th principle Harvey argues that when change and instability are the basis/norm of all systems – and the most important of all dialectical principles – it becomes interesting to examine things that do *not* change: "The implication is that change and instability are the norm and that the appearance of stability of 'things' or systems is what has to be explained" (1996., p. 54). So, analyses on a dialectical basis must focus their attention on the powers that, despite all odds, stop systems from changing – or make systems look like they never change. In this connection it is worth mentioning Dreier's point that "[w]hen a social practice stays the same, it is because – intentionally or not – it is reproduced as the same" (2008, p. 22). Hence, it can be an objective of dialectical analyses to examine which powers and actions reconstitute a practice as 'the same' and on which groundsand human activity is a prerequisite in a social world (and the active subject is included in Harvey's 3rd principle, just as it is in the 3rd of Marx's Feuerbach theses).

Critical Psychology is historically-oriented (Tolman, 1991). This orientation is connected to specific views on flux and stability, on reproduction and transformation. It makes it possible to understand social development and its historical roots. This orientation is a way to reflect upon context as an aspect of subjectivity, as analyses of people in practices (Jefferson & Huniche, 2009). Hence, subjects and research fields should not be analysed only for their own sake, but as a part of larger social structures. This enables the production of general knowledge on the basis of individual cases (Holzkamp, 1983). The historical viewpoint is, at the same time, a part of Critical Psychology's critique of so-called bourgeois mainstream psychology, where one side of the condition/significance aspect is omitted and we thereby arrive at a postulate of immediacy (ibid.) – connected to the first characteristic above. Because, according to Haug, Marx's version of dialectics is counter to "any form of thought which, particularly when it turned its attention to human things, did not direct its attention to their becoming and passing away, conflicts and contradictions, relations of domination and their subversion" (2005, p. 241). This accentuates the fact that a dialectical way of thinking focuses on the creation and disappearance of things, on conflicts and contrasts, on relations of domination and oppression. That is to say, a dialectical focus facilitates an understanding of the movement of things. This is also the practice of analytical critical psychological research, focusing, in a range of ways, on opportunities and limitations, conflicts, contrasts, personal reactions to power relations and shared conditions. When critical psychological analyses take account of historical movements, the latter will equally facilitate an understanding of how particular (power) structures came to be – not as something stable and fixed, but something changeable – which, nevertheless, give the impression of being more or less fixed and stable.

On the subject of the historical perspective's connection to the opportunity to be critical, Tolman argues that "a recognition of the historical and societal embeddedness, not just of the subject matter, but of scientific theory and practice, is a minimal requirement for overcoming the blind reproduction of dominant societal priorities" (1991, p. 9). A dialectical focus on the relation between reproduction and transformation can thus contribute to analyses of social and historical embedments that might transcend given power structures. Attention to the historical development and the fact that it is possible to change practices are connected to the aspect of development in Critical Psychology and in practice research within a Danish context (cf.

section 2.1). This is depicted in Harvey's 11th and final dialectical principle. He refers to this as an exploration of possible worlds – which is embedded in dialectical thinking (1996, p. 56). This principle can be viewed in continuation of Marx's 11th Feuerbach thesis: "Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it."[6] It is also one of the ambitions of Critical Psychology to act in practice via the development of practice which, consequently, highlights the fact that the individual researcher is unable to determine the quality of his/her research; it will be determined in and by practice, that is, practice in a wide sense, including research practice (Busch-Jensen, 2011).

When dialectical research is engaged in developing and exploring possible worlds, it also involves an act of valuation – normativity – with regard to which direction the development should take. "Dialectical enquiry necessarily incorporates, therefore, the building of ethical, moral, and political choices (*values*) into its own process and sees the constructed knowledge that result as discourses situated in a play of power directed towards some goal or other" (Harvey 1996, p. 56). Values or goals are not abstract and detached, but situated in a concrete practice. The good part – the development opportunities – must be viewed in their concrete embeddedness. "Values and goals (what we might call the 'teleological' as well as the 'Utopian' moment of reflexive thought), are not imposed as universal abstractions from outside but arrived at through a living process (including intellectual enquiry) embedded in forms of praxis and plays of power attaching to the exploration of this or that potentiality (in ourselves as well as in the world we inhabit)" (ibid.). Normativity and "the good life" cannot be determined in an abstract manner and beforehand; rather, they are born from historically embedded understandings and practices, and they should be analysed as concrete and situated.

The third characteristic of the concept of dialectics concerns *internal conflict.*
Everything is composed of contradictory parts (Harvey, 1996). This characteristic is related to several of the above-mentioned arguments: for instance, the fact that human acts are linked to social conditions, and the fact that people are not simply subjected to social structures, but that some people's active resistance to parts of society, thereby producing new structures is the basis for social reproduction – cf. Willis (1981). Willis' analysis of why "the lads" actively reproduce themselves as part of the working class is connected to the notion that included in a dialectical process is its own negation. On the basis of Hegel's dialectical understanding, Bernstein argues that "One 'moment' of a dialectical process, when it is fully developed or understood gives rise to its own negation; it is not mechanically confronted by an antithesis" (1971, p. 20). Nissen writes in detail about this aspect: "In dialectics, this dynamic resolution, when a contradiction is neither cancelled nor retained, but developed and integrated into a new totality, is called a *sublation* [German: Aufhebung]" (Nissen, 2012, in press). With reference to Hegel, Bernstein discusses this disintegration/contradiction, using a contemporary master/slave relation (1971, pp. 26-27) as an example – which can also be found in Marx: "In his desperate attempt to become an independent self-consciousness, a true master, he has actually enslaved himself, made himself dependent on the slave for his own existence qua master" (ibid., p. 27). Paradoxically, to become autonomous, a person depends on others and the master cannot be free. We find analytical potentials in re-visiting this classical paradox. This entails focusing on the connections between for instance master and slave instead of focusing on the two in isolation. Hereby, we gain new knowledge of the parts that are connected. This characteristic of dialectics can be connected to Harvey's 4th principle which involves the opportunity to study paradoxes, dilemmas and conflicts – rather than unambiguity. It is equally connected to Harvey's 8th principle concerning transformative acts

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[6] http://www.marxisme.dk/arkiv/marx-eng/1845/tesfeuer.htm

– or what he also refers to as "creativity". Harvey stresses that creativity and innovation are produced by conflict; hence, to be something is to become something (cf. Mørck, 2006; Mørck, 2010 – about the epitome of transgressive learning as the partial transcending between a "troublemaker" and social worker which, simultaneously, questions the distinction between the two). From a critical psychological viewpoint, analysing paradoxes, dilemmas and conflicts might be an analysis' explicit aim (Mørck et al., in press), and it is an ambition that can also be found, for instance, in Axel's notion of conflictual cooperation (2002) and in D. Kousholt's (2006) conception of the family as a conflictual community. This ambition is discernible in critical psychological concepts such as standpoint and perspective, and it is evident, in the process in understanding, in a methodical preoccupation with people's diverse standpoints and different perspectives upon networks of practices, accentuating the conflicting elements in an individual's remarks, seeing as the person is in fact capable of taking up diverse standpoints, carrying out contradictory tasks linked to paradoxical practices, complying with contradictory terms and, in connection herewith, taking up contradictory perspectives (cf. Kristensen & Mørck, 2011 – about children in double bind situations). Furthermore, this includes a preoccupation with producing knowledge on diverse subject matters which can be said to differ radically from the generalisability principles of "hard" sciences and quantitative research. Both Dreier (2007) and Tolman (1991) call attention to the fact that if we only talk about general aspects, we will not gain any knowledge about all the things that differ. Hence, one of the agendas of a dialectical approach is to produce knowledge about all the things that differ. All the things that differ in empirical practice might be understood through the above mentioned characteristics: *The mutual constitution between subject and society; The relation between reproduction and transformation; and Internal conflicts.*

Our characterisation of dialectics above might seem somewhat abstract. In the following review of the selected theses we will analyse how a dialectical standpoint generates a series of research approaches and, subsequently, we will analyse how a dialectical standpoint becomes important in relation to the knowledge that is produced. Common to the theses is, by and large, the methodological approach which the Danish Critical Psychology tradition describes as practice research. The first part of our analysis, therefore, focuses on the Danish research community's notion of practice research, how it is carried out in practice and which discussions Danish researchers, by way of their research practice, give rise to.

Practice research and concrete approaches

Looking at recent Danish Critical Psychology we find variations in methodology, but we also find commonalities, including an important one that is emphasised in most of the publications: the concept of practice. A common feature of the selected theses is the fact that they work with the dialectically-oriented connection between theory and practice, establishing research collaborations and using them as a part of their scientific approach. Several of the theses describe the development of close working relationships across research fields/universities and practices. These are referred to as fundamental to a dynamic process, and the working relationship consists of a shared interest – a shared third standpoint (Forchhammer, 2001; Schwartz, 2007; Thomsen, 2009) – that both researchers and practitioners want to learn more about and expand upon together (cf. also Højholt, 2011). In a range of ways, these Danish researchers are preoccupied with developing research networks that embrace the unity of theory and practice. This approach is called practice research. This term is the product of a series of conferences on theory and practice for Danish and German critical psychologists in the universities in Berlin (Freie Universität) and Copenhagen during

the 1980s (Dreier, 2002; Mørck & Huniche, 2006; Nissen, 2000). The term practice research helps conceptualise critical psychological research as different from action research. The difference between the two was discussed in ARCP in 2000: Goodley and Parker explained the significant differences in the theoretical outset, but concluded that "The relationship between action and ideas is crucial, and the dialectical formation of theory and practice enable activists, practitioners and researchers to reconsider their often seemingly contradictory and counter-productive positions" (2000, p. 17). Common to the theses is the claim that a dialectical formation of theory and practice enables a development of both research practice and researched practice.

There are significant differences in terms of the intensity, length and content of the collaboration between researcher and participant in the selected projects. The projects that appear to attach greater importance to academic and conceptual discussions than to the collaboration include: Mackrill (2007a), K. Kousholt (2009) and Thomsen (2009). Examples of research that takes on an activist form include, for instance, Nissen (2009), Mørck (2010) and Mørck et al. (in press). Mørck (2010) and Mørck et al. (in press) provides an example of an intensive working relationship between researcher and co-researchers (participants in the study) (Mørck, 2010, p. 185; Mørck et al., in press). Jefferson and Huniche (2009) discuss the intensity, length and content of research collaborations based on Critical Psychology, focusing especially on field-based methods. Two Danish theses (Huniche, 2002; Jefferson, 2004) make up the starting point of a discussion of what it means to introduce anthropological field methods to the tradition of Critical Psychology. This generates further discussion of "the dangers of predefining and limiting the field to such an extent that research subjects are rendered one-of-a kind rather than persons in practice" (Jefferson & Huniche, 2009, p. 12).

In several of the publications, the idea of co-researchers becomes an aspect of practice research. Co-research can be understood as an aspect of the dialectical transcending of the dichotomy between theory and practice and as a critique of the traditional researcher who examines from the outside and from above, and, consequently, does not see his or her research as part of a practice. Therefore, co-research constitutes a movement towards a democratisation of research (Dreier, 1996). A number of the theses discuss how co-research should be understood in the projects in question as well as its limits. Thomsen discusses the researcher's dilemma in relation to "stepping in and out" of the role as researcher, and she argues that along with the accentuation of the concept of co-research, the researcher renounces the ability to be present in a role and is, in practice, forced to be present as a participant (Thomsen, 2009, p. 202). Furthermore, a number of additional concrete challenges are pointed out with regard to including participants as co-researchers. For instance, we do not always agree on the research objective (see for example Ingholt, 2007), and it can be difficult to maintain the desired and created subject-subject relation once the analytical process begins (see for example Kouholt, 2009, for a discussion). Nissen's discussion on objectification and prototype is connected to this emphasis (2009). The different ways in which the research projects include or exclude the participants as co-researchers and their aspirations to contribute in a direct manner to practice development reflect a broad understanding of how practice research as a dialectical approach can be carried out. Every time a research project is initiated, the researchers must consider whether it is possible or relevant to engage in specific working relationships with a shared objective regarding practice development, or whether practice development is produced via the possibilities that arise in the process or after the project has been completed (Jefferson & Huniche, 2009). The book *Forældresamarbejde –*

forskning i fællesskab[7] (Højholt, 2005) is noteworthy due to its insight into the research process from the viewpoint of both researcher and practitioner. In addition, through the research presented, the book provided insight into the perspectives of children and parents vis-à-vis problems with "parent cooperation" in day-care centres.

A number of the theses included in this analysis seek to shed light on *different perspectives* on one situation, by way of interviews, observation and cooperation with *different participants* in practice (see e.g. Højlund, 2006; Ingholt, 2007; D. Kousholt, 2006; K. Kousholt, 2009; Morin, 2007; Schwartz, 2007; Thomsen, 2009). In this connection it is also worth mentioning that interviews and observations constitute a recurring approach in the theses, although arranged in a variety of ways. To sum up the theses reflect a dialectical ambition to study differences and produce understanding of conflicts and conflictuality.

Through dialectical attempt to offer a number of understandings of a single situation, D. Kousholt (2006) gives an example of how different viewpoints on one problem are generated. These understandings become evident via the author's alternation between different perspectives upon one matter, that of the child, the parent and the social educator. An example of this attempt to alternate between perspectives is evident in her analysis of 'conflicts':

> The analyses have shown that it actually is problematic if parents feel that their children's needs 'drown' in practical issues. This suggests that the family is a community with different, but connected interests and considerations. In this chapter we have seen conflicts and conflict themes that, at once, require and generate a reorganisation of their everyday life. Recurring and rigid conflicts and conflict themes influence how parents regard the organisation of their everyday life. Conflicts can call for changes and for understanding and for meeting the children in a new way, possibly indicating that they want and are capable of something more. In that sense, conflicts are development-oriented and children in interaction with their parents move forward in their relating. At the same time, conflicts can be fixed, 'be the same as always', and stagnate children and parents in 'power struggles' and tests of strength (D. Kousholt, 2006, p. 230).[8]

This example shows how conflicts are a central part of family life and points to the fact that different subjects have different perspectives, positions and interests and how the subjects and their perspectives are connected in a shared life. Subjects can both reproduce and transform certain positions and conditions through conflicts. As such, this example is connected to all three of the dialectical characteristics.

A distinctive feature of the theses is that *the researchers follow the participants in their practice* across diverse contexts of acts and over a period of time (Ingholt, 2007; D. Kousholt, 2006; K. Kousholt, 2009; K. A. Kristensen, 2008; Morin, 2007; Schwartz, 2007), thus

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[7] Translation: Parent cooperation – researching in community.

[8] Translated from Danish: "Analyserne har vist, at det netop er problematisk hvis forældrene oplever at børnenes behov 'drukner' i det praktiske. Det peger på familien som et fællesskab omkring forskellige men forbundne interesser og hensyn. Gennem kapitlet har vi set konflikter og konflikttemaer, der både fordrer og foranlediger reorganisering af hverdagen. Gentagne eller fastlåste konflikter har betydning for, hvordan forældre vurderer hverdagens organisering. Konflikter kan kalde på forandringer, og på at børnene skal forstås og imødekommes på en ny måde, at de vil og kan noget mere. I den forstand er konflikter udviklingsrettede og bevæger børn og forældre fælles samspil fremad. Samtidig kan konflikter låse sig fast, "være det samme altid", og modstille børn og forældre i 'magtkampe' og styrkeprøver."

facilitating analyses of temporal aspects: reproduction and transformation. This is referred to as participatory observation, and it is argued that observations are highly useful for grasping other aspects of participation than the ones that are easily described and verbalised. Observations are expected to contribute to an understanding of how the individual is a part of concrete conditions and communities and how he/she is engages in a given community.

Discussions on context-sensitive research
The ambition to follow the participants in different contexts is connected to the dialectically-informed focus on connections and to Critical Psychology's critique of mono-contextual research (Dreier 1999) that ignores conduct of everyday life (Holzkamp, 1998). This consequently leaves psychology without a world (Holzkamp, 2012, in press). On this basis, Dreier makes it explicit that it is important that we break with the research form that studies people in a single context (Dreier, 1999, p. 83). According to Dreier, this is part of a critical psychological tradition that he characterises as studies of "persons in structures of social practice in order to identify their scope of possibilities and their reasons for participating in one way rather than another, including their reasons for taking part in changing these social practices" (2009, p. 207). (For Danish scholars who have produced English publications on this form of study, see for instance: Axel, 2009; Huniche, 2009; Højholt, 2008; Jefferson & Huniche, 2009; Mackrill, 2008; Mørck, 2010; Salkvist & Pedersen, 2009). All of the Danish PhD theses relate to Dreier's concept concerning decentred approaches and analyses. When D. Kousholt (2006) and Kristensen (2008) follow their participants for 24 and 48 hours, respectively, they meet this challenge literally. D. Kousholt (2006) observes children in child care, follows the child home and sleeps on a mattress in the child's room. Kristensen (2008) follows a group of homeless people for 48 hours, sleeps in a shelter with them and experiences (to some extent at least) the difficulties, challenges and joys of a life without a home. In some of the other theses (e.g. Morin, 2007; K. Kousholt, 2009; Ingholt, 2007, Thomsen 2009), the researchers work across contexts in ways which, for some, might look like the same context – for instance, when the researchers follow the children and young people around in their primary, lower and upper secondary school. In this example, the schools' walls mark the spot where the research in question physically stops. Some of the researchers (e.g, McKrill 2007a & b; Morin, 2007; K. Kousholt, 2009; Thomsen, 2009) openly discuss whether it is necessary to follow the participants in person, in basically all contexts, in order to meet the challenge of not merely studying people in a single context. In the words of Thomsen (2009):

> The fact that I am not physically present across contexts, those of work and family life, for instance, does not entail that a number of contexts are not available to me. It is a question of the scholar's attention to the interplay between contexts and his/her interest in asking about them in other contexts. Knowledge about numerous contexts is accessible via co-researchers' description of the different contexts they have participated in, seen from their point of view. Dreier argues that it is important that we break with the form that studies people in a single context, and I believe that there are a number of ways to enter into this break. We can physically move from one place to another, but we can also do research in a context-sensitive manner. Here, context-sensitive means the fact that the scholar is aware of and asks the participants how they connect to other contexts.[9] (p. 90)

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[9] Translated from Danish: "Det, at jeg ikke er fysisk til stede på tværs af kontekster, eksempelvis arbejde og familieliv, forhindrer ikke, at flere kontekster ikke kan være til stede for mig. Det handler om forskerens opmærksomhed på samspillet mellem kontekster og interesse for at spørge ind til dem på tværs. Viden om

Mackrill approaches this matter in a different way, arguing that in psychotherapeutic research a diary design might be useful (Mackrill, 2007b). The purpose of this design would be to access data about clients' lives outside therapeutic sessions. This reflects an ambition to following the clients across contexts; however, the methodology differs from the form where the scholar physically follows the client. While Dreier (2008) emphasises clients' physical trajectories through space and time, Mackrill (2007 a & b) focuses on the centrality of what he calls a persons' mental movements across context and time (ibid.).

Some of the scholars argue that what generates context sensitivity is their *physical participation in practice* (e.g. K. Kousholt, 2009; Morin, 2007), which implies that the insight the individual researcher gains, via his/her participation, into the concrete practice continuously contributes to the design of interview guidelines and further development of research questions and themes, and it enables the researcher to ask about the significance of the co-researcher's participation in other practices (Thomsen, 2009).

To sum up, dialectical standpoints influence, in a number of ways, how concrete approaches are constructed and how research practices are executed, and in the theses the individual approaches do differ from one another. However, all of the projects share the ambition to cooperate, in one way or another, with the participants in their research, to establish a range of perspectives upon one practice and to combine diverse methods, usually different kinds of interviews and observations. Below, we will analyse how a dialectical standpoint influences the production of knowledge.

Review of dialectical approaches in recent Danish Critical Psychology

In this section, the 2006-2010 theses' are studied and described. Initially, we will present a view of the individual thesis' contributions and, subsequently, point out how a dialectical standpoint, in different ways, is able to produce knowledge about the individual subject matters. Following this analysis, section 3.2 will consist of an analysis of the concept development that takes place across the selected theses. In section 3.2 our focus is twofold, studying and describing concept development in relation to the practice of the area under discussion as well as in relation to critical psychological research practice. This twofold focus seeks to adhere to the above-mentioned dialectically oriented ambition to generate knowledge that might contribute to the production of theories as well as practices (Bernstein, 1971; Jensen, 2001; Mørck & Nissen, 2005). The following analysis is composed of diverse concepts/themes that were highlighted above in the characterisation of dialectics. First, we will clarify the theses' focus on connections.

mange kontekster er tilgængelig via medforskernes beskrivelse af deltagelsessammenhænge, kontekster imellem, set fra deres ståsted. Når Dreier skriver, at vi må gøre op med at studere en person i én kontekst, mener jeg derfor, at der kan være flere måder at gå ind i det opgør på. Dels kan vi fysisk bevæge os på tværs af steder, men vi kan også arbejde kontekstsensitivt i forskningsprocessen. Kontekstsensitivt betyder her, at forskeren er opmærksom på og spørger ind til, hvordan deltagerne forbinder sig til andre kontekster."

Analysis

Connections

Common to these theses is the fact that they contribute with new knowledge about their subject matter by not focusing exclusively on that very subject.[10] The subject matter is studied in connection with societal structures and practices. Hence, the theses share a common attention to connections. It is therefore relevant to ask which connections the authors have kept in view and what kind of knowledge such an approach is able to generate. Thus, Ingholt (2007) makes it explicit that her ambition is to examine the dialectics between habits and communities, and Morin (2007) studies connections between general pedagogical practices and special pedagogical practices within the same context – namely, the Danish Municipal School. Mackrill (2007a) examines the connection between young people's participation in therapy and their participation in other contexts.

Focusing on D. Kousholt (2006) we will now elaborate, in more detail, on how a dialectical attention to connections might generate particular knowledge about a specific subject matter. D. Kousholt focuses on the numerous communities between children in child care and the conditions, potentials and limitations that are a part of these communities. Via this focus, D. Kousholt produces knowledge on how connections between boys' and girls' communities influence possible forms of participation in these communities. Considering the connections between the two communities, we gain insight into what it means to be a boy/girl in day care centres and at home from the perspective of parents, children and social educators, respectively. This is, thus, an example of the inclusion of diverse perspectives – not in order to decide what is right and what is wrong – but to produce knowledge by way of different standpoints and perspectives. This knowledge helps social educators in other places look beyond – not just the individual boy – but also beyond the boys' community and, instead, to focus on the connections between boys' and girls' communities, when he/she seeks to understand the actions of one particular boy.

Each thesis produces knowledge of particular connections, such as the connection between boys' and girls' communities. In a more general sense the theses can be said to strengthen the characterisation of dialectics that we among others refer to as the mutual constitution between subject and society. Society could be understood as the societal organisation of procedures and tasks in day care centres and residential institutions, in primary, lower and upper secondary schools, in educational guidance and therapy, and as the societal organisation of girls and boys in concrete contexts, influencing concrete individuals in concrete ways. The manner in which recent Danish theses work with societal issues can be seen as a movement from Holzkamp's (1989) total societal structures towards a break with 'structural abstraction', in the words of Dreier (2006).[11] Part and whole are not understood as static entities, but as moveable aspects, connected to the analytical view they chose to take (Harvey, 1996).

A decentred perspective

A decentred perspective (e.g. Dreier 2008) can be said to be another aspect of the dialectical perspective upon connections. The decentred perspective involves the way in which the object

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[10] This is connected to the decentred perspective discussed below.
[11] Here, it is worth mentioning Stanek (2011): one of the most recent contributions to this development. She works with a concept regarding 'children's closest sociality' – a concept that might make the dialectical understanding of the reciprocity between subject and society more concrete.

of study influences the lives of the participants. The actions of the people in the theses' empirical works are, thus, also regarded as connected, on the one hand, to their actions in other contexts and, on the other, to other people's actions and the practices they are a part of. The theses' analyses thus present the actions of these individuals as substantiated, and it is in this connection that one should understand Critical Psychology's ambition to analyse objects from a 1st person perspective. An effort that is common to the theses is the production of knowledge about the given object of study, whether it is guidance, therapy or special education. K. Kousholt (2009) writes about the ways in which assessment practices influence the interaction between children in primary and lower secondary school and how they are able to use these assessments actively in their communities. An example hereof is an incident where a boy from K. Kousholt's empirical work notes how he hypothetically could use a task, concerning participatory assessment, to give another boy a low mark and how he could thereby signal that he does not want to be his friend anymore. Thomsen (2009) examines career guidance at a folk high school and in a factory setting. Her interest is on whether and how participants in guidance practices seek to change and modify the guidance offered to make it more relevant in their everyday life, and consequently what could be learned from this. Her analysis shows that the participants move the practice from an individual set-up towards more collective modes of delivery. The new situations in which the career counsellor is a part of a community consisting of several participants at once create new possible forms of participation, for instance, participants listening to each other's conversations and thus get ideas for questions of their own.

Mackrill (2007a & b, 2008) demonstrates the ways in which young people in therapy use a number of strategies and their own participation in other contexts in order to feel better: a perspective that is also present in the work of Dreier (2008, 2009) and Højholt (Højholt, 2006, 2008). In her thesis, Schwartz (2007) studies socioeducational support for children and young people in residential institutions, focusing on the importance of this effort in the lives of these children and their parents. Like a number of the other authors, Schwartz follows the children/participants' everyday lives and their diverse commitments and forms of participation in the different contexts that make up their lives. Using this approach, the authors are able to produce a more detailed understanding of what life in a residential institution, school or day care centre means for the children (Schwartz, 2007; D. Kousholt, 2006; K. Kousholt, 2009; Morin, 2007) and how professional support in this connection constitutes, at once, the conditions and possibilities in these children's lives (Schwartz, 2007; Højlund, 2006). By not studying their subject matter in isolation, distinct from societal structures (Jefferson & Hunicke, 2009) and the consequences they have upon the lives of children and adults, the theses break with forms of understanding that focus exclusively on individuals. Schwartz (2007), among others, refers to an individualized approach as polarised treatments and socioeducational understandings that regard children's development as either the result of specialised intervention or as self development. Schwartz (2007) points out that the problems children and parents experience in life must accordingly be seen as connected to their participation in and across social practices that are related to societal structures.

Once again, we are faced with a consistent interest in dialectics between personal conduct and societal structures; and an interest in how this dialectical attention generates a series of knowledge contributions that can only be produced by being present in the places where societal structures or practice structures become part of the lives of the subjects and only by following these structures of significance across a range of connections.

Dilemmas

Even though all the theses, in different ways, are busy contributing to knowledge about practice as well as development of practice, the authors avoid to present specific method-oriented initiatives as a solution to complex problems. This is connected to the fact that societal structures are neither simple nor harmonious or comprised exclusively of existing politics in a given area. The authors stress and maintain that practices are conflictual (Axel, 2002, 2009), influenced by history, shared by many people and endowed different implications across local contexts. Hence, people's perceptions and stances are not unambiguous either, they are situated and conflictual. Therefore, the production of knowledge about practices and initiatives that aim to develop practices will also focus on practical dilemmas and paradoxes in order to make these visible and help practitioners handle them (e.g., D. Kousholt, 2006; K. Kousholt 2009; Ingholt, 2007; Petersen, 2009; Schwartz, 2007; Thomsen 2009; Højlund, 2006). An example of this is the arguments presented by Morin (2007). Her analyses show that the school's processes of exclusion and way of organising socioeducational work can be viewed in the light of dilemmas in general pedagogical practices. According to Morin, the processes of exclusion and the need for socioeducational work stem from a number of widespread dilemmas in general education and the difficulties regular schools experience in trying to handle the variation that is children's diverse approaches to tasks and learning as well as their diverse ways and possibilities when it comes to learning. In this light, Morin argues that in our reflections on how we might look for new possibilities and openings when we prepare useful socioeducational learning, it is not enough to turn our attention to the socioeducational effort. Rather, she argues that the challenge is to recognise that if we want to approach the inclusive school ideal we must, initially, deal with the dilemmas that are present in general education and in the organisation of the school, where the teachers' conditions and possiobilities for carrying out their jobs are so contradictory that their only real option is to isolate some of the pupils. Furthermore, it is pointed out that the development of socioeducational initiatives must focus on how transitions between general and special education are established in the organisation of special education, on how connections are established across different organisation and structures, and how schools can establish working relationships between class room teachers and teachers in special education that might contribute to this production of transitions, connections and contexts. The theses contain a range of analyses of practical dilemmas that make up the concrete conditions the participants are faced with in practice, conditions that cannot be suppressed by special initiatives or particular methods. Therefore, the analyses pay attention to dilemmas, conflicts, paradoxes and all the things that differ (cf. the characterisation of dialectics above).

Reproduction and transformation

Common to a number of the theses is a focus upon change over time and upon the fact that the participants in the studied practices take part in creating this change. The researchers seek to meet this challenge by being present in practice over time and, thereby, register how practices are changed or not and which (subjective) contributory causes may prevent such a change. Kousholt (2009) employs this perspective in order to demonstrate that a teacher's understanding of a child's performance in school might, in part, be influenced by inertia, but that there can be several movements in this inertia, and despite changes in the child's performance the teacher might have reason to reproduce specific views of specific pupils. This shows that reproduction is also based on the subjects' actions. This can be understood as

a contribution to the dialectical attention to the reciprocity between reproduction and transformation.

In order to give an example of the way in which transformation is expressed in some of the theses, we would like to draw attention to Ingholt's (2007) analysis of the Muslim girl Sarah's movements over a period of time. Ingholt points out that the Muslim girl, Sarah, 'goes to different places' and becomes attached to a number of ethnic Danish as well as Muslim communities. Paradoxically, Sarah's orientation towards her ethnic base constitutes a movement towards integration in the Danish society, seeing as a re-orientation towards Sarah's Muslim base makes her develop a more nuanced view of her own communities and those of others. We gain insight into this knowledge through a nuanced depiction of Sarah's patterns of movement over a longer period of time. In this connection, Ingholt does not actually point towards practice developing initiatives, but we believe this knowledge might contribute to the integration debate in Denmark – and in other countries; the fact that young people with a Muslim background do not necessarily become more integrated by mixing with ethnic Danes. New orientations with integration-related consequences might also arise when young people focus on their Muslim foundation. This is not to say that we should not integrate in a traditional way but that we have to envestigate what integration strategies mean for human beings' concrete life. Kristensen (2008) equally focuses on changeability, pointing out that the homeless' movement through the urban landscape is not predetermined. "They consist of personally selected paths, connected to the current practical circumstances" (Kristensen, 2008, p. 156).[12] Kristensen presents this point, that the movements of the homeless are not predetermined, as a break with previous research on homeless people that makes use of concepts such as 'routes' and 'rhythms' (ibid., p. 250). According to Kristensen, they do not produce a comprehensive understanding of the homeless' conduct of everyday life. Moreover, several of the theses – more or less explicitly – attach importance to a historical perspective, in order to be able to demonstrate how, for instance, institutional practices change and are connected to specific social structures. For instance, Højlund (2006) contributes to a historical comprehension of the development of practices in residential institutions over a period of time and, thereby, she contributes further to the understanding of how this practice works today, on the basis of which notions of efficiency and evidence.

Reproduction and transformation are clear objects of study in some of the theses and not in others, but they do share an approach that facilitates this very perspective via research that takes place over a period of time. Hence, it is possible to look at the theses' analyses as concrete contributions to a dialectical comprehension of the relation between reproduction and transformation.

General development efforts – connected to general criticism

By way of its dialectical basis, Critical Psychology is, as mentioned above, critical of analyses and practices that view the person and his/her actions as detached and individualised. Our analysis of the selected theses does not merely point towards general criticism; moreover, it demonstrates that general criticism can act as a basis for general development efforts. Efforts to develop practice are present in all the theses. The development efforts of the theses often interconnect and are presented as the importance of gaining insight into the concrete elements of practice that influence lives. For instance, by way of the knowledge Ingholt (2007) produces about concrete connections between the communities of young people and their

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[12] Translated from Danish: "De er personligt valgte stier, som er forbundet med de aktuelle praktiske forhold."

production of habits, she demonstrates that this knowledge can show us other ways of thinking about intervention practices. Ingholt points out "the opportunity to create general well-being via the development of structures that generate communities" (2007, p. 398).[13] For instance, rather than merely try to prevent people from smoking by the use of campaigns and information we need to try to understand how smoking influences young people's social lives. In her thesis, Schwartz (2007) points out that the thesis' own approach to understanding children's lives and problems could be used by the professional practitioners. It is thus highlighted that when social educators in residential institutions actually follow the children in their everyday lives in other contexts it might help make the problems stay concrete and, thereby, manageable (Schwartz, 2007, pp. 328-329), instead of abstract and impersonal and thus difficult to cope with. One might view Højlund's (2006) thesis as an outline of reasons with regards to which societal and historical powers have helped form residential institutions' treatment practices, providing them with a special rationalism and validity. Højlund argues that in psychodynamic environmental therapy's professional psychological content is closely connected to a medicinal rationalism which, in a sense, is expected to 'seep through' in practice. Practitioners seek to translate abstract values in their practice, but experience a series of problems and dilemmas. So the way in which practice is continuously rational and valid is equally surrounded by paradoxes, reproduction, and transformation. Petersen's (2009) analyses demonstrate that the professionals distinguish in the following way between the structures of children's needs: "the professionals distinguish between the fact that normal children should learn something about play, about learning and the development of healthy relations between children and adults during their time in day care centres, while socially marginalised children, who often live under different and more difficult living conditions, marked by care-related deprivation, put demands on the professionals when it comes to care in daily life in the day care centre" (2009, p. 219).[14] Thus, the professionals agree that 'normal' children should learn something about being together with other children, focus on friendships, bullying and the development of social competencies. Socially marginalised children should receive care, limitations and intensive adult support. Petersen points out that *care* become the psychological answer to relatively heavy social and psychological problems (ibid., p. 224). Furthermore, the analyses of the theses suggest that differentiation is a result of a specific understanding of differences, whereby we risk reproducing certain societal imbalances (cf. Højholt, 1993). Hence, in Højlund (2006), Schwartz (2007) as well as in Petersen (2009) we find instances of critique of what one might call attempts towards simple solutions to complex problems.

Schwartz (2007) demonstrates that there is a series of understandings of what comprises care. Here, emphasis is upon the development perspective: that the professionals gradually focus their attention on how the children's development opportunities are affected by whether or not their key care givers create continuity via cooperation (Schwartz, 2007, pp. 327-328). All of the professionals who take care of these children depend on each other in order to feel that they can handle the caring task, and in this connection, the very fact that they do not look at it as shared, seems to be a problem. As a shared development effort between Schwartz (2007) and Petersen (2009), one might conclude that if the act of caring for children who experience difficulties is considered a shared work effort, more than just a matter of the relation between

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[13] Translated from Danish: "muligheden for at arbejde med udvikling af den generelle trivsel gennem udvikling af fællesskabsdannende strukturerer."

[14] Translated from Danish: "de professionelle skelner imellem, at almindelige børn gennem deres liv i dagsinstitutionen skal lære noget om leg, læring og udvikling af gode relationer til andre børn og voksne, mens socialt udsatte børn, som ofte lever under anderledes vanskelige livsbetingelser præget af omsorgsmæssige afsavn, som stiller særlige krav til de professionelle om at give omsorg i daginstitutionens dagligdag."

the individual child and the professional and not as the only thing the child needs, then care might become more significant than simply the one psychological answer to complex problems.

Via Thomsen's (2009) analyses, new knowledge is produced about guidance practices that are based on an exploration of the connections between the influence guidance has on the participants and the way in which guidance is organised and changes in interaction with the participants. On this basis, the thesis specifies that guidance does not have to be exclusive or isolate itself in order to be 'good guidance' (good guidance might be the form of guidance that contributes to increasing the subject's possibilities vis-à-vis choosing an education or a profession) and that guidance does not necessarily have to be based exclusively on conversations; on the contrary, there is a lot of potential for development in guidance that are based on the community. This is an example of a case where, in order to develop a practice, one must have a notion of the intended purpose of the practice in question by which this theoretical stance is a normative one. In Thomsen (2009), the normative is put into words via an examination of instances where participants find guidance important and beneficial, thus making this form of guidance good guidance. As characterised in the dialectics section above, with reference to Harvey (1996), dialectical research implies some degree of normativity, created in cooperation with the participants in the concrete research project.

To sum up, having taken a critical psychological and decentred view upon diverse research fields, the theses consequently produce an assortment of knowledge. In the analysis above we established the following analytical categories: *connections, a decentred perspective, dilemmas, reproduction and transformation, general development efforts – connected to general criticism*. These categories are closely related to the dialectical outset common to the selected theses. The categories overlap when, for instance, a focus upon dilemmas emerges from an ambition to examine different types of connections. The theses share a decentred viewpoint via which they, to a great extent, examine the importance of connections, rather than objects in isolation. They concern themselves with understanding practitioners' dilemmas, and several of the projects tie their object of study to societal and historical structures or demonstrate that individual participants are involved in reproducing and transforming the practice they are a part of. In addition, the theses give suggestions for developing practices. These suggestions do not include individual methods, but rather suggestions for comprehensive practices and societal changes, in line with Critical Psychology's change and emancipatory potential (Holzkamp, 1972). Hence, we conclude that the theses share specific efforts and produce the same *kind* of knowledge, but not the same knowledge. Below, we will demonstrate how the theses, in different ways, contribute to the development of theoretical concepts.

The development of concepts in recent Danish Critical Psychology

Two kinds of development of concepts come about in the theses, and even though they are connected and, in many ways, with regard to their theoretical bases and in their results, we have chosen in our analysis to describe the development of concepts under two headings: *concept development in relation to the field of research* and *concept development in relation to critical psychological categories*. In our study of the theses we became aware of certain differences and therefore chose to make this distinction, which accordingly is founded on our concrete study of recent Danish research with a critical psychological basis. Concept development in relation to the field of research comprises the development of theoretical concepts that are closely related to the empirical practice that is the given thesis' object of

study. Some of the researchers have developed his/her own concept(s) with which to grasp the very thing he/she noticed in practice and thus might be expressed within Critical Psychology's theoretical framework. Under the heading *concept development in relation to critical psychological categories* we present insights into the researchers' discussions of concepts which, historically, have become a part of Critical Psychology's fundamental emphasis. In research which is based on practice, concept design takes place via discussions and detailed and clarifying analysis of established categories.

Initially, we will take a look at the theses' account of their contribution to concept development in relation to the field of research.

Concept development in relation to the field of research

Concept development in relation to the field of research is exemplified by K. Kousholt's (2009) concept situated cleverness. The concept situated cleverness consists of a conceptual as well as a practical development effort (cf. also the section on development efforts above) that is related to the empirical conclusions about the way in which cleverness is understood, produced and reproduced in the Danish municipal school. On basis of empirical findings in three different school classes, K. Kousholt (2009) finds that a view of pupils' cleverness as part of their personal characteristics is too limited. The children in these school classes takes part in creating different conditions for each other: conditions that make it easier for some children to give the impression of being competent as well as to practice and improve them selves. Paradoxically, the empirical material points to that it seems to be easier for some children to be competent when they do their school work at home rather than in class. Hence, situated cleverness points out that we create the conditions for cleverness together, and, therefore, cleverness cannot be studied solely in isolation. The concept development of situated cleverness is linked to the dialectical basis and the general critical potential of Critical Psychology as it is on situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991). On the one hand, focus is on whether or not individuals are involved in societal structures – in this case, societal school structures – that create certain conditions, and, on the other hand, focus is on whether or not individuals establish meanings across contexts; so in order to understand these developments one must keep the connections between them in mind.

This attention to connections in the development of concepts in relation to the field of research is also evident in Ingholt's research (2007). Ingholt gains insight into how we might come to understand the connections between upper secondary school students' development of habits and communities, and she does so by following the students across the school contexts and by creating a concept that might grasp these young people's *wanderings*:

> Including the days where their wanderings most of all seem like a sleepy 'going with the flow', they are in fact founded in previously outlined paths, structures and organisations. That is precisely why they go with the flow – and not against it. And there are areas in the school they 'usually' flow to, simply in order to quickly find their bearings. … On the basis of this wandering 'going with the flow', predictable as well as unpredictable incidents, experiences and meeting occur. … Including the days when the young people just saunter about, sometimes in the company of other young people, there is thus an open, exploring and explorative element to their wanderings.[15] (Ingholt, 2007, p. 255)

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[15] Translated from Danish: "Også på de dage, hvor vandingerne mest af alt har karakter af en søvnig 'flyden med strømmen', er vandringen forankret i allerede forstukne stier, strukturer og organiseringer. Netop derfor flyder

The word "usually" marks the habitual aspect of the young people's wanderings. Hereby the reader gains a practice insight into the young people's movements, their directions and communities. We see how the young peoples' wanderings are not just free floating but part of structural arrangements and we see how the young peoples' wanderings leads to both predictable and unpredictable events which links this notion to the dialectical characterisation of reproduction and transformation. In relation hereto, Kristensen (2008) produces the concept *personal movement*. In Kristensen's analyses this concept generates knowledge about the individual movements in the way in which one (the homeless person) lives one's life. Even though both of the concepts are dialectically informed it may appear as if Ingholt and her concept of habits points out the more routine wanderings in one's conduct of everyday life, while Kristensen points out the more changeable aspect herein. Common to these concepts is a dialectical focus on the relation between reproduction and transformation, and not simply as a matter of unpredictability and change, but equally of something that is repeated; and this will be a central theme in the following section on conduct of everyday life. The concepts "wanderings" and "personal movement" have both been developed in close connection to the theses' fields of research. Thus, they present possible ways of *conceptualising* young people's wanderings across different areas in their school and the homeless' moving about in the streets and grounds of Copenhagen. Simultaneously, the concepts are also closely connected to the researchers' methods and design. That is, in the theses, the wanderings and moving about of the researchers themselves make it possible to observe the wanderings and moving about of others. However, the concepts 'wanderings' and 'moving about' also lead us to concept development in relation to the critical psychological category, conduct of everyday life.

Concept development in relation to critical psychological categories

Central to a number of the theses is the notion of conduct of everyday life. As mentioned, the practice related concepts, *wanderings* and *moving about*, are both connected to a concept developed within Critical Psychology: that is, the concept "conduct of everyday life" (Holzkamp, 1998; Holzkamp 2012, in press). The production of "moving about", in particular, is based on a discussion – and a specification – of "conduct of everyday life", which functions as a part of this concept. We will elaborate upon this below. Holzkamp (1998) introduces the concept as a "subject-scientific basic concept" – closely connected to the production of knowledge about learning and conditions for learning (cf. Kousholt, 2009, above) and to the lack he identifies and criticises in "traditional psychology" – namely, "psychology without a world" (Holzkamp, 2012, in press). In its place, he highlights the need for a "world in psychology" (ibid.). Holzkamp makes it explicit that "'conduct of everyday life' is thought of as a 'communicative category *between subject and societal structures, and emphasis is above all placed on* the subject's space for action in relation to these structures" (Holzkamp 1998, p. 10).[16] Moreover, the dialectical mutual constitution between subject and society is present in this concept, and it can be employed in analyses of concrete relations

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man med strømmen – ikke mod den. Og der er steder på gymnasiet, som man 'plejer' at flyde hen forbi, bare lige sådan for at orientere sig. … Ud af denne vandrende 'flyden med strømmen' opstår der som regel både forudsigelige og uforudsigelige hændelser, oplevelser og møder. … Også på de, hvor de unge bare drysser omkring, måske i selskab med andre unge, er der således et åbent udforskende og eksplorerende element i deres vandringer."

[16] Translated from Danish: "'Livsførelse tænkes som formidlende kategori mellem subjekt og samfundsmæssige strukturer, og der lægges særlig vægt på subjektets handlerum i forhold til disse strukturer."

between reproduction and transformation, which is what both Kristensen (2008) and Ingholt (2007) do.

More of the researchers find the concept of conduct of everyday life very important and fruitfull. However, some of the researchers (D. Kousholt 2006; Kristensen 2008; K. Kousholt 2009) note that Holzkamp (1998) in his presentation of the concept of conduct of everyday life almost marks a duality between everyday life's repeatable structures on the one side and the actual life on the other side as inferior/superior and finds that the important concept is in need of futher development. In her concept development, D. Kousholt (2006) has drawn inspiration from Holzkamp's conduct of everyday life concept. She tries to transcend the above mentioned duality by using the concept pair "cyclical conduct of everyday life" and "articully significant conduct of everyday life", presenting it as follows:

> In this account, where emphasis is placed upon the family's conduct of everyday life, focus on the relation between the cyclical aspect of life and that which is 'particularly significant' instigates an understanding of families' ways of expressing the relation between everyday life and what *they consider important* for the everyday life and existence of this family and the special quality of life they attach to themselves as a family. Thus, I do not define in advance that which is 'particularly significant' and connected to special parts of life or events; instead, I am interested in what the families themselves find is of great importance, how they describe this and, not least, how they experience the fact that it stems from, is enhanced by and/or opposed by their everyday life. [17]
> (D. Kousholt, 2006, p. 38)

This quotation suggests a way of understanding Holzkamp (1998) concept of conduct of everyday life, whereby that the hierarchical division can neither be determined in an abstract manner, nor in advance which Holzkamp also mentions. Instead, the division is connected to what the concrete family attaches importance to. This can be understood in the light of a dialectical ambition to grasp what diverse aspects are connected to, how the concepts that are produced might be used in practice-related analyses of a number of matters. This point could be seen as a general point vis-à-vis concept development within the tradition of Critical Psychology and it is connected to the production of knowledge in practice and to the fact that the common good (development of availability) cannot be determined in an abstract manner and in advance (cf. e.g. Axel, 2007). Here, the concept pair is connected to families' ways of attaching importance to certain matters, seeing as this is D. Kousholt's (2006) field of research. She further points to the fact that families' conduct of everyday life should be considered 'a shared conduct of everyday life', in which the family is busy connecting their lives, exclusively and across contexts of actions; hence, the dialectical view upon connections actually comes into play in the development of concepts.

Schwartz (2007) and Kristensen (2008) use the concept of conduct of everyday life in their theses. Schwartz points out that a committed pedagogical interest in observing children's

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[17] Translated from Danish: "I denne fremstilling, hvor vægten er lagt på familiens livsførelse, inspirerer opmærksomheden på forholdet mellem den cykliske side af livet og 'det særligt betydende' forståelsen af familiernes måder at fortælle om forholdet mellem hverdagen og det, de ser som vigtigt for familiens hverdag og liv sammen og den særlige livskvalitet, de knytter til sig selv som familie. Jeg definerer således ikke 'det særligt betydende' på forhånd, som knyttet til særlige livsområder eller begivenheder, men interesserer mig for, hvad familierne selv tildeler særlig betydning, hvordan det beskrives, og ikke mindst hvordan de oplever, at det udspringer af, fremmes og/eller modarbejdes i deres hverdag."

conduct of everyday life and their diverse communities and contexts might be one way of transcending an individual-oriented treatment thinking which, at the same time, maintains a focus upon the problems children experience in life (Schwartz, 2007, p. 336). Kristensen (2008) gives a longer account and a detailed critique of Holzkamp's concept "conduct of everyday life", because conduct of everyday life constitutes Kristensen's main theoretical concept. Kristensen states that Holzkamp (1998), by way of his distinction between conduct of everyday life and actual life, *comes close to* creating a problematic dichotomy that limits the concept of conduct of everyday life to a mere question of how people organise and lead an everyday life. Kristensen, thus, argues that Holzkamp "reduces the significance and reason connected to the person's view of him/herself as a *living* subject" (2008, p. 45).[18] Kristensen argues that it is important in the analysis to view the homeless people's conduct of everyday life in connection with the experiences they have from previous aspects of their lives, before they became homeless, and on the basis of their hopes for the future. This is Kristensen's description:

> It is both a question of creating an everyday life for myself, but also of attaching an actual *direction* to my actions with given circumstances and to my participation in social contexts, or an *orientation in the course of my life* that is connected to the biographical importance I attach to the concrete situation. To 'lead' one's life means that people act with a direction or an orientation attached to their everyday movements, activities and contexts. Conduct of everyday life is not simply a matter of controlling one's life in the sense that one 'takes charge', 'gets a grasp of' or puts one's everyday life in order; it is about creating a movement and an orientation in one's personal life that aims to solve subjectively fundamental tasks and problems in that person's life.[19] (2008, p. 45)

Furthermore, Kristensen breaks with Holzkamp's focus on conduct of everyday life as something that should maintain a regular everyday life and, instead, places greater emphasis on the changeable, the different places and different communities, aspects which, to a greater extent, are visible in Kristensen's special empirical methods and is connected to his attempts to recognise other life processes that are often underexposed when the conduct of everyday life of "more normal" citizens makes up one's starting point (cf. Kristensen, 2008, p. 10). Rather than contribute to the separation, Kristensen (2008) (like D. Kousholt, 2006 and K. Kousholt, 2009) tries to unify the conduct of everyday life concept by following the dialectically oriented connection efforts. Kristensen's concept of the contexts of life constitutes one example of this effort: "One way to describe this is that the subject is present in a *context of life* with his/her social conditions. The subject can become aware of and act according to this context of life, and by way of one's conduct of everyday life this context can be maintained, changed or modified" (2008, p. 56).[20] Kristensen (2008) wants to look at

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[18] Translated from Danish: "forkorter den betydnings – og begrundelsessammenhæng, som er knyttet til personens anskuelse af sig selv som et levende subjekt."
[19] Translated from Danish: "Det handler både om at skabe mig et hverdagsliv, men det handler også om at give mine handlinger med aktuelle betingelser og min deltagelse i sociale sammenhænge en konkret retning, eller orientering i mit livsløb, som er knyttet til den biografiske betydning jeg tillægger den konkrete situation. At 'føre' sit liv betyder, at personer handler med en retning eller en orientering på deres dagligdags bevægelser, aktiviteter og sammenhænge. Livsførelse handler ikke alene om at styre livet i betydningen at få 'styr på', 'hold på', eller orden på et dagligliv, men også at få skabt en bevægelse og en orientering i det personlige liv, som sigter på at løse subjektivt centrale opgaver og problemer i personens liv."
[20] Translated from Danish: "En måde at formulere dette på er, at subjektet står i en livssammenhæng til sine sociale betingelser. Det er denne livssammenhæng, som subjektet kan opnå en bevidsthed om og handle på, og det er denne livssammenhæng, som livsførelsen kan forsøge at opretholde, ændre eller modificere."

conduct of everyday life as types of actions and in his analysis he presents three specific types of actions that are connected to the concept of conduct of everyday life. They include: "personal movement", "to order one's circumstances" and "self-understanding". Hereby we find that Kristensen contributes to a great extent to a clarification of the concept and a clarification of how the concept- conduct of everyday life- might be included in a dialectical tradition.

We have hereby demonstrated how the different theses discuss, challenge, varify and clarify the established fundamental concept 'conduct of everyday life' and how this clarification contributes to the ongoing development of Critical Psychology as part of a dialectical tradition.

Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to engage in an open-ended process of identifying, describing and analysing dialectical approaches in recent Danish Critical Psychology. This article is primarily written for international readers, unfolding Danish PhD research to make it more accessible to international scholars. With this article we do not claim to draw a complete map of dialectical approaches in recent Danish Critical Psychology. What we do hope to do is to contribute to discussions on dialectics among researches inspired by variations of Critical Psychology.

Our analysis of critical psychological PhD research done in Denmark in the years 2006 to 2010 shows that the researchers take dialectics seriously. On an empirical basis, a number of them design dialectically informed concepts that are able to grasp subject societal relations and the relation between reproduction and transformation and are linguistically available for participants in practice. For example, K. Kousholt (2009) develops the concept of situated cleverness, an example of an everyday concept that combines cleverness, which in school practice is connected to the individual, and the notion of something situated via which the understanding of cleverness as something that is fundamentally individual is dissolved and it becomes possible to view cleverness as connected to the conditions in different contexts. Additional concept developments related to the given research fields include wanderings and personal movement, both of which describe the subject's movements across different contexts; hence, in the research conclusions these concepts uphold a dialectical effort to accommodate practice and subjects' constant reproduction and transformation of societal structures. Our analysis clarifies that several of the methodilogical strategies have been inspired by the work on a decentret approach of the Danish scholar Ole Dreier. The development of concepts must be viewed in the light of an aim that is common to many of the researchers: namely to produce decentred analyses of practices, which according this research can be done in a number of ways. One option is to physically follow the participants across and in practices that are different from the one practice/context that is the actual object of study. We have identified what we describe as both physical and mental intercontextual movements.The physical is self-evident; the researcher observes the person in a number of contexts, "allowing subjects' lives to suggest the limits of the research field" (Jefferson & Huniche, 2009, p. 24). Thomsen (2009), K Kousholt (2009) and Mackrill (2007b) argue for context sensitive participatory observation, interviews or diary designs: the researcher examines the participants' involvement in concurrent contexts by asking the participant, when the opportunity presents itself, about the importance he/she attaches to the individual context and to other relevant contexts. This reflects an ongoing discussion among Danish researchers working with cross-contextual perspectives: How can this be researched and developed?

Thomsen (2009) argues that other contexts might emerge, but how does this happen and how does the particular context affect the emergence of other contexts?

Most of the PhD research defines itself as practice research. Mørck and Huniche (2006) concluded in their review of Danish Critical Psychology that practice research is often coupled with 'Bedingungs-, Bedeutungs- und Begründungsanalyse', and this remains the case in 2011. The selected theses practice, practice research in a range of ways; some approaches are somewhat activist in nature, while others are more theoretical. Together, the different approaches give a somewhat broad definition of the term 'practice research' in the Danish research context. All of the researchers break away from an understanding of practice research as a specified method; instead, the researchers are preoccupied with the ways in which this approach might support their shared dialectical stance. At the same time, we recognise some degree of homogeneity in the chosen approaches, based on the fact that the theses mainly use interview and observational methods, but in different ways.

The individual theses handle their aspirations to involve co-researchers differently. In most of the projects, some form of research collaboration is established, but they are often short-term and not a part of the analytical process. Several of the researchers discuss this very aspect, and on the subject of her research, Højlund (2006) points out that "hence, dialogue comprised the basis for all the practice research materials that were used in this thesis…, but the analysis has instead become a more traditional work with texts, documents and transcribed tape recordings of actors in residential institutions speaking to the microphone" (2006, p. 84).[21] We would like to end this article by emphasising Højlunds discussion of the fact that the research process is dialectical too and that the research collaboration was not simply made possible by the researcher's ambition to see it through, it equally came into being by way of interactions with the practice conditions and the conditions for the production of knowledge.

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[21] Tranlated from Danish: "udgangspunktet for alle de praksisforskningsmaterialer der anvendes i afhandlingen her, derfor har været etableret med dialogen som udgangspunkt …, men at den analytiske bearbejdning snarere er endt som et mere traditionelt arbejde med tekster, dokumenter og transkriberede båndoptagelser af døgninstitutionelle aktører, der taler til mikrofonen."

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