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Anna Bilon's doctoral viva: *Poradnictwo kariery w Holandii – założenia, organizacja, perspektywy aplikacji w Polsce (Career counselling in the Netherlands: Assumptions, organisation, prospects of application in Poland)*, Faculty of Education, University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, 20 January 2014

Early in 2014, Anna Bilon had her public PhD. viva at the University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław. Her dissertation titled *Poradnictwo kariery w Holandii – założenia, organizacja, perspektywy aplikacji w Polsce (Career counselling in the Netherlands: Assumptions, organisation, prospects of application in Poland)* was written under the supervision of Professor Józef Kargul and reviewed by Professor Eugenia Potulicka (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań) and Professor Bożena Wojtasik (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław). In her dissertation, A. Bilon examined career counselling in the Netherlands, focusing on two basic questions: *How is career counselling in the Netherlands structured (how does it "arise"?)* and *What are the prospects of applying the Dutch solutions in career counselling in Poland?* Drawing on Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration as a research method and a framework in which to interpret her empirical research data, A. Bilon posits that career counselling is produced by both individual engagements and social structures. Hence, the structure of career counselling may be viewed as inherently *dual*. This duality was as one of the major premises in her research project, within which she explored the organisation and operations of career counselling in the Netherlands. Approached from the structuration theory perspective, career counselling involves, ultimately, a mutual relationship among social rules, resources and actions undertaken by individual subjects. The dissertation's outline was designed to reflect this assumption.

The research itself proceeded in three stages. In the first stage, the study focused on Dutch culture and society, which was a prerequisite to understanding and describing career counselling as a social process and grasping its place and role in

Dutch social life. In the second stage, the Dutch counselling system was examined, and in the third possibilities of applying the Dutch solutions in Poland were looked into. To accomplish her aims, A. Bilon resorted to the language of perspicuous contrast, a method developed by Charles Taylor. As at this stage she did not conduct a parallel survey of career counselling in Poland, she could not work within the framework of comparative education studies. Drawing on Taylor's language of perspicuous contrast, she highlighted the conceptual character of her analyses at this stage of her research.

Anna Bilon's PhD. dissertation consists of five chapters. In the first chapter, career counselling is analysed as a social process. Hence, the chapter attends to the social contexts of counselling and the impact of cultural difference on organisation of counselling worldwide. The chapter analyses also the scholarly discourse on the development of career counselling and identifies the current trends in career counselling research.

The second chapter describes the research methodology the dissertation relies on, explaining why and how structuration theory was used as a research method and an interpretive framework for empirical data.

The third chapter outlines the socio-cultural contexts of Dutch career counselling. Against the background of information on the Dutch state and society, the system of education, economy and labour market are described with which career counselling is interwoven.

The fourth chapter depicts the career counselling system in the Netherlands. The first part focuses on the rules and resources of the Dutch career counselling system while the second describes the Dutch counselling services and intervention strategies they employ. The chapter depicts also in detail a number of private counselling institutions, whereby it dwells on the entrenched Dutch tradition of private institutions contributing to public services. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the cohesion of the whole system.

The last chapter critically analyses possibilities of applying the Dutch solutions in the career counselling system in Poland. Like other authors, A. Bilon stresses that caution is necessary in any such attempts. The major conclusion of her research is that such a transfer is a challenge which involves both chances as well as obstacles and risks.

Both referees highly assessed Anna Bilon's PhD. dissertation, and her viva proved an important event for the entire community of the University of Lower Silesia. A. Bilon was repeatedly commended by all those present, not only by the referees, for her outstanding theoretical and methodological consciousness, perfect alignment of theory and research and originality of the study. Both referees agreed that the dissertation deserved distinction and formally requested that it be granted. Additionally, Prof. Eugenia Potulicka stated that the dissertation should be put forward for the Award of the Minister of Science and Higher Education.

Finally, the Board of the Faculty of Education at the University of Lower Silesia unanimously conferred the doctoral degree in the social sciences on Anna Bilon, an educator and a philosopher who insightfully probes into elusive modernity. Congratulations!

Translated from Polish by Patrycja Poniatowska