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Four Avenues in Constructing Counsellogy: The Contribution of Polish Researchers to the Rise of a New Field of Knowledge

Counsellogy is a young science of counseling. Following the chronology of the events involved, the article retraces the various avenues taken in the process of its emergence and development. Disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary avenues are listed, and some findings established through these approaches are cited. Revolving around these methodological orientations, the argument captures both the distinctiveness of counselling and guidance (i.e. the counsellogical research object) and its multiple connections with other areas of personal and social life as studied by (mainly) Polish researchers.

Keywords: counselling, guidance, counsellogy, disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to science-construction

The separation of counselling studies, which I prefer calling counsellogy, from other disciplines is not an exceptional development in the history of science and scholarship. In broad lines, new disciplines may arise in two ways. One of them involves the discovery of new, previously unknown phenomena, objects and/or patterns or, alternatively, new, previously unknown methods for analysing yet-undiscovered phenomena and laws, with a name being proposed for the emergent field. The other entails a group of issues being marked off by researchers who define themselves as practitioners of this discipline (Nowak, 1970, p. 19). As a science of counselling and guidance, counsellogy, which followed the latter path, is a relatively young discipline, given that it was symbolically founded in 1979, when the first nationwide seminar of the Counselling and Guidance in Contemporary Society series was held in Poland.[1] The general premises and directions of research on counselling practice

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[1] The following seminars were titled: (1) The role of counselling and guidance in optimising personality development and raising the educational culture of the public; (2) The social and individual relevance of counselling and guidance; (3) Theoretical and methodological issues in counselling studies; (4) The theory and practice of counselling: Development perspectives; (5) Counselling in the

that were established at the seminar proved a robustly debated theme, sparking a range of ideas about producing counsellogical knowledge. Over the six following seminars, researchers from a range of fields[2] adopted a basic shared terminology, identified initial patterns and offered scholarly depictions of varied counselling and guidance practices.[3] This did not mean in the least that counsellogy became a mature and commonly recognised science at the time. The name itself—*poradoznawstwo*—was an issue of some contention, and it took quite a while for academia to endorse it. This bore out (and still does) Jan Szczepański's observation that: 'The definition alone does not seal anything because no discipline is a precisely definable, fully formed, closed and unchangeable entity; rather, a discipline is a forever mutating system of views, theories, hypotheses and theorems, issues and questions that researchers seek to settle' (1976, p. 8).

This is entirely true about counsellogy, with some scholars claiming that '[g]uidance is not directly structured by any single discipline' (Vehviläinen, 2021, p. 294) and others insisting that counsellogy is an ensemble of discourses on an array of aspects in guidance and counselling addressed within multiple disciplines (Kargulowa, 2004/2011, pp. 20–1). Other young sciences have a similar status, as exemplified by gerontology (a science of ageing and old age), whose knowledge, as Marcin Muszyński (2020) insists, is co-produced along four avenues, specifically: disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. Since such avenues are not always as clearly delineated as in Muszyński's classification, misunderstandings and chaos are far from rare. Below, I will apply his investigations and findings to counsellogy and examine its scholarly status from these angles.

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face of complex human and global problems; (6) Counselling in the age of cultural transformation; and (7) The dramaturgy of counselling.

[2] Between 1979 and 1995, the seminars (first held biennially and then at longer intervals) were attended by a dozen or so psychologists, including Professor Marian Kulczycki, Zbigniew Skorny, Maria Porębska, Zofia Ratajczak, Katarzyna Popiołek, Henryk Kaja, Maria Straś-Romanowska and Dr Marian Jędrzejczak; other participants were educators, for example, Wanda Rachalska, Stefania Słyszowa, Teresa Hejnicka-Bezwińska, Teresa Kukołowicz, Bożena Wojtasik and Krystyna Ferenz; adult educators, such as Olga Czerniawska, Józef Kargul, Ewa Kurantowicz and Mieczysław Malewski; sociologists, including Maria Trawińska, Janusz Goćkowski and Kazimierz Frieske; and other researchers, such as medical doctors Włodzimierz Fijałkowski and Aldona Sito, linguist Jan Miodek, agricultural engineer Nikodem Sakson, lawyer Henryk Dolecki and culture scholar Adam Nobis. Foreign participants included Professor Brend-Joachim Ertelt and Dr Bernhard Jenschke (see proceedings from seminars 1–7, *Poradnictwo we współczesnym społeczeństwie*, Wyd. UWr.).

[3] The titles of subsequent seminars and the names of participants are listed in my paper on the contribution of Professor Olga Czerniawska to the construction of counsellogy (Kargulowa, 2021).

Counsellogy as a Discipline

The dictionary definition of 'discipline' holds that it is 'submission to regulations that organise relationships within groups of people; obedience, rigour, fixed order' and also 'a section, a branch of learning or technics, a field of knowledge, a science' or a type of sport (*Słownik języka polskiego*, 1978, p. 487). The division of learning into disciplines is supposed to arrange knowledge in an orderly fashion and synthesise it so as to facilitate understanding the world around. Regarding counsellogy as a scholarly discipline, we should thus perceive it as a structured system of knowledge, produced in a formalised, institutional manner. It should develop to meet the criteria set for all branches of learning:

> a) to possess its own object of research, which may be shared with other disciplines; b) to have its own body of specialised knowledge concerning this research object, which may not be shared with other disciplines; c) to rely on its own theories and concepts that effectively organise the specialised knowledge it has accumulated; d) to use its own specialist terminology fitting the object of research; e) to possess its own research methods for exploring the selected research field; and f) to boast an institutional visibility embodied in subject courses taught at universities, the establishment of specialised institutes, departments and faculties and the work of journals and scholarly societies. (Muszyński 2020, p. 16)

Obviously, it is not easy to meet all these criteria. Yet, if counselling could accomplish that, it would, as a discipline, mirror reality and be a complete, fully rounded and closed theory. This theory would both encompass the chronological timeline and firm definitions, and it would determine what were the norm and what fell outside of the norm. Such counsellogy would thus impose a certain view of the world and of counselling itself, establish the structures and functions of reflection and construct a metanarrative on the basis of three kinds of knowledge: (1) theoretical knowledge (specifying what counselling and guidance are), dominated by explicative knowledge, both explanatory (i.e. revealing cause-effect interdependencies and laws) and hermeneutic (i.e. conveying the meaning and sense of counselling and guidance, with their various images and interpretations); (2) methodological knowledge (specifying how counselling and guidance should be studied); and (3) descriptive practical/technological knowledge (specifying how counselling and guidance should be practised). That body of knowledge would concern one object of research, it would be neatly arranged, and it would have clear boundaries and structures. Focused on counselling and guidance as *the* object of research and adopting pre-defined assumptions and values, its researchers would use accurately defined notions, develop their own theories and rely on a specified methodology. In dealing with counselling and guidance as their research object, they would not look beyond this focus, in line with an imposed and rigorous order. Abiding by the principles, they would examine counselling and guidance as an unambiguously

defined and one-dimensional object, with their theories encompassing this object and nothing else.

In the first period of the development or separation of a new discipline, the approach outlined above may be highly desirable, perhaps even indispensable. It was followed when counsellogy was being constructed, though it was far less stringent. These efforts primarily involved defining the object of research—eventually framed as counselling and guidance in the sense of a social action, a form of help-provision, and a relationship and practice of coping, guidance-seeking and guidance-giving (Kargulowa, 1980; 2004/2011)—and key notions and terms, such as guidance, counsellor, counselee, counselling, counselling situation, self-help publication, counselling facility, etc. The understandings of these concepts were agreed upon, also with recourse to intuition and popular knowledge, and in this way a conceptual grid came into being that the seminar participants could use to communicate and assert their status as members of an emergent group of counselling researchers or counsellogists. In an early phase, when the positivist paradigm was in place and research on the whole abided by systematic, rather rigorously applied procedures expected to establish characteristics of participants in certain processes (here: counselling/guidance) and to correlate their behaviour with personal traits and/or external circumstances, counselling scholars opted for a somewhat different model, one more aligned with qualitative research. Even if they acknowledged that 'change processes in external reality (environment) and in the mental states of inner reality (personality) must be captured so as to allow analysing the interplays between the two' (Tillmann, 1996, p. 29), they anyway not so much sought strict correlations but rather availed themselves of so-called soft data generated in observations, interviews and self-reflection. Because everybody followed their own way, informed by their own experience, intuition, imagination, mode of thought, intellectual and even physical capacity, they were not severed from their contexts, which made their situation extremely complex. On the one hand, this situation was produced by the intricacies of counselling/guidance practice, in which they took part, co-producing and studying it; on the other, it was spawned by the intricacies of scholarship, which they co-constructed, depicting and interpreting their everyday pursuits. In terms of the categorisation proposed by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln, these predicaments were characteristic of the 'blurred-genres' phase of ethnographic research. As Denzin and Lincoln put it: 'This new perspective took cultural representations and their meanings as its point of departure (…). The central task of theory is to make sense out of a local situation' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007, p. 24). The structure of counselling conceived in this way is rendered in Figure 1 below:
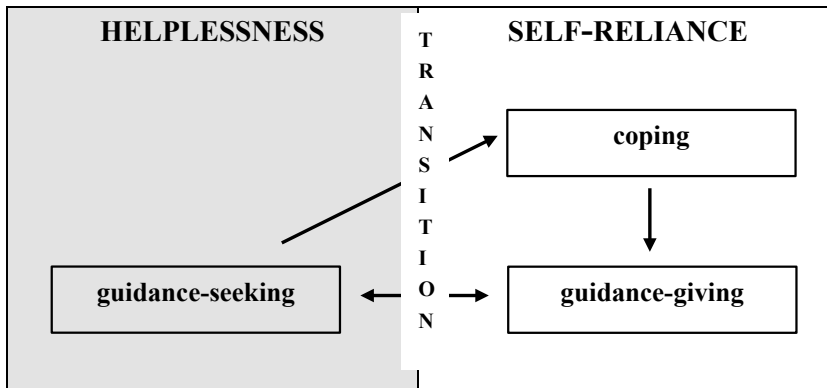
Figure 1. The structure of counselling (source: Kargulowa A., 2023, p. 16)

While these efforts did not yield knowledge based on strict and irrefutable cause-effect laws, they affected the way that certain patterns were identified and helped this group of researchers gain relative autonomy and build a community with a recognisable identity. With time, as systemic policies for science management changed and individual contingencies took place, this community became more diffuse, yet research on counselling and guidance continued and is still there, delivering a range of findings (Kargulowa, 2021). Below, I list some of the observations characteristic of counselling/guidance as a one-dimensional object of research:

➢ counsellogy possesses its own research object in counselling, which is defined by two binaries: helplessness/self-reliance and guidance-giving/guidance-seeking (Siarkiewicz, Słowik, & Bilon-Piórko, 2021, p. 329)

➢ the map of life problems relevant from the counsellological viewpoint encompasses four major types of issues:

◆ everyday living-related (financial, bound up with work; family-related—finding a partner, starting a family, having children; related to involvement in a social group, to friendships, to leisure and free time);

◆ essential (somatic, concerning health and fitness);

◆ mental (sustaining mental energy and eagerness to live; being in touch with things—realism; exchanges with the social world; proper attitude to oneself, introspection);

◆ integrity-related (defining one's supreme values in life along with the fundamental principles for enacting them; perseverance in the face of adversity and loss) (Kulczycki, 1998).

➢ in the counselling situation, 'when constructing the problem together, people come to realise their critical situation in life, and this may be a prerequisite for setting the ultimate task—the solution of the problem. To construct the problem means to agree on its meaning and relevance; this always entails an

encounter of two worlds—of the counsellor and of the counselee' (Szumigraj, 2009, p. 182);

➢ 'helping interventions do not merely aim to solve an individual's problem or problems; they also aim to arrange help-provision so as to enable the individual to discover their own resources, develop autonomy and self-acceptance, seek the meaning of life and attempt to achieve self-fulfilment, which is often premised on recognising other problems' (Czerkawska, 2009, p. 134);

➢ participation in a counselling situation can be treated as an opportunity for 'emancipation from' factors that make life and agency difficult and for 'emancipation for' the enhancement of the quality of life and freedom to be oneself (Trębińska-Szumigraj, 2009, pp. 166–7);

➢ depending on which conception of the human being (Kozielecki, 1976) is endorsed—psychoanalytic, behaviourist, cognitive-developmental or humanistic—counselling may take on directive, dialogic or liberal forms (Kargulowa, 2004/2011, p. 40) and, accordingly, seek to solve problems, explore them or support/assist counselees (Vehviläinen; 2021, p. 300);

➢ counselees can treat guidance as a resonant 'touch' or become dependent on counselling help ('an advice-holic') (Kargulowa, 2018b);

➢ 'in the model view, we seek advice of those who are able to cope themselves, to cope with other people, to cope with the entire non-human environment, or who are perceived as such by us or by others. In other words, coping can (should) be the result of seeking advice or the basis (condition) of counselling someone else' (Siarkiewicz, Słowik, & Bilon-Piórko, 2021, p. 329).

➢ before a counselee contacts a counsellor for help, they may experience a triple rupture in everyday life: first, when they try to handle their problems; second, when they realise that those are irresolvable to them without the counsellor's involvement; and third, when they accept help and experience psychological costs thereof (Kargulowa, 2004/2011, pp. 131–43);

➢ the necessity to use counselling may cause a helpless counselee to feel discouraged, experience anomie and fear stigmatisation (Wojtasik, 2009, p. 208; Kargul, 2018);

➢ the counsellor may extend help as an expert, an information-provider, a consultant, a reliable guardian or a laissez-fairist (Wojtasik, 1993, p. 57);

➢ the scope and the role of the counsellor's power in the counsellor-counselee relationship vary in conjunction with the intervention style (an expert, an information-provider, a consultant, a reliable guardian and a laissez-fairist) (Mielczarek, 2009, p. 363);

➢ in mediation, like in counselling, the personality structure of participants and the way the mediator conducts mediation are the major factors that affect the course and outcomes of the relationship (Dragon, 2018, pp. 155–6).

> ‣ a liberal counsellor is preferred in solving psychological/existential issues, while a directive counsellor is preferred in solving 'technical' problems (Wojtasik, 1993);
> ‣ using counselling/guidance involves either accepting or resisting the imposed regulations and principles of organised action; as such, it requires that the counselee exhibit a certain readiness to enter the counselling relationship (Kulczycki, 1998);
> ‣ there are three options for the development of the counsellor-counselee relationship; it may evolve into: co-operation, fight or the use of help offered by a 'bought friend' (Kargulowa, 2011);
> ‣ 'genuine dialogue in counselling and guidance is more that the words uttered. It also comprises whatever is going on in the relationship between the interlocutors' (Drabik-Podgórna, 2009, p. 121);
> ‣ the counselling situation is an opportunity for both the counselee and the counsellor to learn from each other (Minta, 2009, pp. 237–39);
> ‣ participation in the counselling situation, whether active or passive (watching counselling on TV) may be a form of non-formal or informal education (Zielińska-Pękał, 2019, p. 137);
> ‣ mediatisation has largely 'domesticated' counselling/guidance and converted it into 'self-counselling' (Zielińska-Pękał, 2019, pp. 28*ff*);
> ‣ counselling and guidance not only happen as part of the counselling relationship but also surface in other events and artefacts that change the way one perceives a problem, help one solve it and/or change one's way of living and lifestyle, and are at the same time acknowledged and used as 'guidance' (Siarkiewicz, 2010, pp. 155–80).

These findings, like those cited below, are only a sample of conceptualisations of counselling and guidance as a purposive action and/or a social relationship, which by no means represent the entirety of observations and conclusions offered by researchers of counselling and guidance practices.

Importantly, individual research conceptions of counselling and guidance were relatively early developed, including adult and gerontological counselling (Olga Czerniawska), family counselling (Teresa Kukołowicz and Maria Trawińska), vocational/career counselling (Wanda Rachalska, Marcin Szumigraj and Bożena Wojtasik) (see Kargulowa, 2018a; Szumigraj, 2011; Wojtasik, 1997) and then dialogic counselling (Drabik-Podgórna, 2009), existential counselling (Czerkawska, 2013), media counselling (Zielińska-Pękał, 2019), inter- and multicultural counselling (Bilon-Piórko, 2013; Słowik, 2016) and psychological and social foundations of counsellor practice (Kulczycki, 1998; Straś-Romanowska, 1996; Wojtasik, 2011). These conceptions have been refined and modified in further studies and in confrontation with more advanced frameworks, such as Gaston Pineau's 'experiential learning'

(2021) and Mark Savickas' and Jean Guichard's life design models (Savickas et al., 2014).

There are other signs of the autonomy of counsellogy. If qualitative and quantitative methods of the social sciences proved equally useful in counselling research (Kargulowa, 1989), the understanding of what counselling is has mainly been furthered by Elżbieta Siarkiewicz's (2010, pp. 35*ff*) immersive inquiry into the construction of counselling relationship as a relation of social resonance and into the concomitant inner processes of counsellors and counselees. Embarking on this inquiry, researchers so to speak mediate the relation between the world of science and the studied and co-produced social world. They are supposed not only to comprehend and explore their own 'lifeworlds' and the 'lifeworlds' of counselees but also to encourage them to be active and help them carry out 'biographical work' in order to improve their quality of life. Given this, immersion (absorption, deep penetration or rational insight, as Jürgen Habermas has it [2002, p. 49]) can be considered the basic, albeit not the only, research method in counsellogy conceived as a discipline.

The autonomy and tolerable maturity of counsellogy as a discipline is also evinced by the processes in which the knowledge of counselling/guidance became generative, that is, capable of producing objects and phenomena that it ostensibly only depicted. What I have in mind is the body of work of the researchers for whom counsellogical knowledge proved a road map for (mostly published) doctoral dissertations (Anna Bilon, Alicja Czerkawska, Violetta Drabik-Podgórna, Maciej Jeż, Alicja Kargulowa, Joanna Minta, Marcin Szumigraj, Ewa Trębińska-Szumigraj, Bożena Wojtasik, Agnieszka Zembrzuska, Edyta Zierkiewicz and others), *doctor habilitatus* projects (Kargulowa, Jolanta Lenart, Elżbieta Siarkiewicz, Barbara Skałbania and Bożena Wojtasik), professorial publications (Kargulowa and Magdalena Piorunek), books (Olga Czerniawska, 1977; Ewa Dębska, 2020; Kargulowa, 2004/2011; Marian Kulczycki, 1998; Barbara Skałbania, 2009; Aneta Słowik, 2016; Bożena Wojtasik, 2011; Zdzisław Wołk, 2006; Daria Zielińska-Pękał, 2019 and others), papers (e.g. Aszkiełowicz & Ładyżyński, 2020; Bilon, 2010, 2013; Drabik-Podgórna, 2013; Kargulowa, 2013; Lenart, 2016) and editing counselling-related conference proceedings and collected volumes.

As a result of research and reflexive inquiry, counsellogical knowledge, transmitted in variously labelled lectures, tutorials, workshops and field practice, was incorporated into university training for counsellors, mainly in education and psychology degree programmes (cf. Kławsiuć-Zduńczyk, 2020; Kola, 2020; Krawczyk, 2016). Institutes and departments with counselling, guidance or counsellogy included in their names were founded at universities. At the Institute of Pedagogy, University of Wroclaw, the UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Guidance and Counseling was established upon the initiative of Professor Jean Guichard and with a considerable contribution from Violetta and Marek Podgórny. The Chair holds international

conferences and workshops and arranges meetings with the world's leading coun-
selling researchers.[4] Besides, as noted by Jean Guichard, the Chair

> carries out a UNITWIN programme entitled 'Life designing interventions (coun-
> selling, guidance, education) for decent work and sustainable development,'
> which brings together some twenty universities. This group has organised vari-
> ous conferences and written many publications, including 2 books (Guichard &
> al., eds., 2016; Cohen-Scali & al., eds., 2018). All this has happened without any
> specific funding. The activities of the UNESCO Chair and the UNITWIN pro-
> gramme are carried out on the fringes of ordinary work of the involved organisa-
> tions. (2022, p. 143)

Also, the Counsellogical Society (Polish: Naukowe Towarzystwo Poradoznaw-
cze) was founded and began to publish the bilingual (Polish and English) *Studia
Poradoznawcze/Journal of Counsellogy* and to hold research seminars. Additionally
a Pedagogical Counselling Section was established at the Committee of Pedagogical
Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

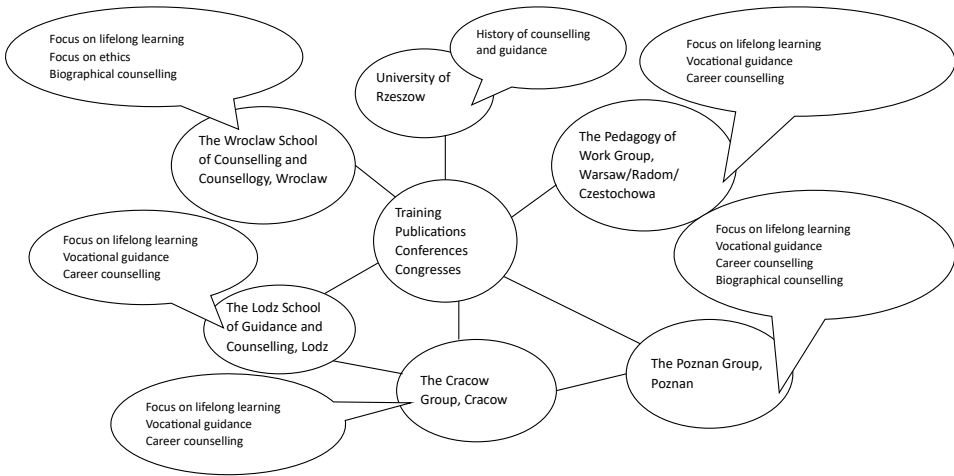Figure 2 charts Polish universities where counselling/guidance research is car-
ried out.

Figure 2. Counselling/guidance research hubs in Poland
(source: Szumigraj M., 2011, p. 160)

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[4]   So far the following international conferences have taken place: *Career guidance, counseling and dia-
logue for a sustainable human development*, 2013; *How can career and life designing interventions
contribute to a fair and sustainable development and to the implementation of decent work over the
world?* 2015; *Career and life design intervention for sustainable development and decent work,* 2016;
Guidance and Counseling for solidarity, social justice and dialogue in a diverse world, 2018; *The prin-
ciples and aims of guidance and counseling for sustainable development in turbulent times,* 2022.

As the chart portrays the status quo in the early 2000s, it does not include all the research hubs established since then or societies vigorously developing today. Those are represented, for example, by the University of Warsaw with its career counselling studies (Dębska, 2020), a series of publications of Poland's National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continued Education (Polish: Krajowy Ośrodek Wspierania Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej) (e.g. Czerkawska & Czerkawski, 2005: Minta, 2012; Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2003; Wojtasik, 2011), Torun's Nicolaus Copernicus University and Lublin's Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, where counselling for students is both practised and researched. The Association of School and Vocational Counsellors of the Republic of Poland (Polish: Stowarzyszenie Doradców Szkolnych i Zawodowych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej) is a robust organisation that annually holds nationwide training conferences on career counselling. There are also important local initiatives that contribute to the advancement of counselling/guidance and its study, such as the Imago Foundation (Górka, 2020) and Career Map (Polish: *Mapa Karier*), an Internet portal that provides virtual counselling-and-guidance support ((Piątkowski, forthcoming).

Granted, these developments and tangible products appear to speak to a considerable interest in the issues of counselling/guidance and a certain maturity and generative role of counsellogy as a discipline; however, the knowledge that makes it up cannot be said to be clearly circumscribed. Crucially, the research problems addressed in counsellogy are studied not only by counselling researchers but also by scholars affiliated with other disciplines and by reflective practitioners, interaction with whom has proven not only inevitable but also indispensable and science-fostering. Thus, counsellogy must be regarded both as a body of knowledge specific to a separate discipline and as multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge

The Multidisciplinary Construction of Counsellogy

Muszyński (2020, p. 18) and Stefan Nowak (1979, p. 19) state that the multidisciplinary production of knowledge involves a mutual recognition and openness of scholars who, though anchored in various disciplines of knowledge, deal with the same issue. They are bound by the principles of their disciplines, but because those are already well-established, they no longer need to work to entrench them and are therefore free to pursue their personal interests. Crucially, the multidisciplinary approach is about extending interpretive limits or complementing the knowledge of the discipline through the application of varied acquisition methods or multiple contextualisations, that is, through proposing different theoretical and methodological premises. This is what happened in counsellogy as research on counselling and guidance was carried out, to use Nowak's language, under various disciplinary labels, yielding a range of counselling/guidance-specific findings and discoveries.

In the early phase of the development of counsellogy, two major approaches to counselling/guidance as a defined phenomenon were clearly recognisable. Those were a psychological framework and a socio-educational framework. Psychologists primarily focused on the inner experiences of people in counselling relationships and sought to grasp their relevance to the personhood-forming processes of biographisation, autobiographisation and heterobiographisation (Conceição Passeggi, 2021, pp. 251*ff*). Education scholars, in particular social pedagogues and adult educators, mainly investigated counselling and guidance processes as a social action, biographical learning and learning of the self and examined the social contexts of counselling practice. The two types of inquiry were first carried out in parallel and were additionally buttressed by insights from research on legal, agricultural, medical and other counselling types, which was conducted in the corresponding disciplines. Even if researchers of law, agriculture and medicine remained specialists in their respective fields and tended to focus on instrumental aspects of guidance-provision, instruction and information, without probing into counselling/guidance as such, their observations proved useful in examining the contexts of coping, guidance-seeking and guidance-giving, helped discern the presence of counselling in broader social settings and encouraged interdisciplinary explorations. Across disciplines, counselling and guidance were conceived in a variety of ways; for example, adult education framed them as an educational event in lifelong learning; education science delved into the use of counselling/guidance as a method of education; psychology scrutinised them as an interpersonal relationship or a problem situation; sociology approached them as a social process or an institutional operation of a counselling facility; praxeology saw them as a purposive social action; ethnomethodology regarded them as a custom; ethnography examined them as a performative event or a biographical experience; culture research studied them as an element of lifestyle; philosophy reflected on them as a way of being 'in,' 'with' or 'for' the other or a resonant encounter; migration studies considered them in terms of support in floating; political science interpreted them as an instrument in the exercise of power; and social policy thought of them as a form of help-provision or social support (Siarkiewicz, Słowik, & Bilon-Piórko, 2021, p. 330). This survey of conceptualisations reflects Edmund Mokrzycki's belief that 'the study of the human being, society, culture, etc. is never devoid of empirical foundations as it is always underpinned by the rich resources of one's own mental and social experiences' (Mokrzycki, 2007, p. 158).

The multidisciplinary approach seems to be captured in the two observations below:

➤ in **socio-education:** counselling is present in a range of social actions and structures, including family life (Czerniawska, 1977), labour (Guichard, 2018), outplacement (Minta, 2003), tutoring (Zembrzuska, 2009), social welfare (Kłodkowska, ed. 2017), streetworking (Dec, 2012), coaching (Podgórny & Drabik-Podgórna, 2015), rehabilitation (Oleniacz, 2012), emigration (Słowik,

2016), mediation (Dragon, 2014), the provision of legal, medical, agricultural and other advice, and help provided by teachers (Gołębniak, 2009) and to teachers (Kwaśnica, 1994);

➢ in **psychology:** depending on their self-image and situation in life, counselees engage in the counselling situation with three attitudes:

   ◆ unsteady, in people who want to obtain help but are displeased by the necessity to seek it;

   ◆ coercive, in people who want a confirmation of their own idea about how to solve the problem, rather than seeking collaboration with the counsellor; and

   ◆ cooperative and receptive to change (Kulczycki, 1980, pp. 88–90);

➢ 'to establish a valuable orientation in life is the fundamental goal of all self-work and all cooperation between counsellors and their clients' (Kulczycki, 1982, p. 66)

All these mental experiences, social structures and actions, as well as a range of others, tend to be research objects of disciplines that possess their own knowledge resources, such as psychology, education, the social sciences, organisation and management studies, social policy, medicine, migration studies, research on the teaching profession and other fields, in which counselling/guidance is treated as one form of help-provision performed in the counsellor-counselee dyad in real life or online.

The Interdisciplinary Construction of Counsellogy

The situation is quite different in the interdisciplinary approach, which 'more often than not is adopted in team work dedicated to solving complex research problems. (…) Under such circumstances, research projects adopt shared premises, shared concepts/theories/models, a common conceptual grid and a common mode of analysis and interpretation' (Muszyński, 2020, p. 20; see also Tillmann, 1996, p. 29). Referred to as theoretical or methodological triangulation, the process of producing shared knowledge (Malewski, 2022) encourages researchers to cross the boundaries of their disciplines and look for new theories or new methodologies for the innovative solution of a given research problem. The advantages of this approach are foregrounded by Wojciech Doliński, who explains that:

> Exposure, without checks and defences, to immediate confrontation with (…) the unknown and the strange, resulting in allowing oneself to be amazed and surprised, offers plentiful opportunity for interactive negotiations of position (…). If this is the case for both parties and each partner, while upholding their own notions, also gives a thought to the opposite notions, an imperceptible and in fact involuntary transposition of viewpoints may eventually (…) help establish

a common language and draw common conclusions. The effort of transgression in the theory and methodology of research is well worth making because even if no shared conclusions are drawn, new and often yet-unrecognised vistas of research inquiry are opened up. (2016, pp. 9–10)

The negotiated shared procedures do not generate linear knowledge but foster a network of interrelated discoveries rendered in the form of hypotheses, laws, models and theories.

As the knowledge of a specific social phenomenon (i.e. the methods, organisational forms, aims, means, processes, effects, strategies of being, behaviour, experiences and actions of counselling stakeholders), counsellogy has been an interdisciplinary and inter-paradigmatic science since its beginnings. This is evinced both by its general definition as the study of coping (a psychological process), guidance-seeking (a social process) and guidance-giving (an educational/adult-educational process) and by the depictions of the relations, interactions, facts and phenomena involved, along with their micro-, meso- and macro-contexts (see the proceedings of the *Counselling and Guidance in Contemporary Society* seminars and Guichard 2018; Kłodkowska, ed., 2017; Siarkiewicz & Wojtasik, eds., 2016; Zierkiewicz & Ładyżyński, eds., 2014).

In integrating the general knowledge of counselling/guidance and in 'bridging the disciplines' that have been locked in multidisciplinary relations so far, counsellogists use not only their own findings and scholarship but also the insights of science studies and discoveries in philosophy, the humanities, medicine, the technical and natural sciences, etc., even if those tend to treat counselling marginally at best. Regarding methodology, it has been concluded that, given their complexity, counselling and guidance call for both interdisciplinary research (which brings together knowledge from various disciplines) and inter-paradigmatic studies (which rely on various assumptions and methodological solutions). This means that rather than developing a dedicated methodology of its own, counsellogy as an emergent discipline should make use of the methodological resources of the humanities and the social sciences. Mentioned above, immersion, the most useful research approach in counselling research, is indeed part of the methodological apparatus of these sciences. As counselling is practised across the range of levels (personal, micro, meso and macro) and its theory draws on a variety of sciences, sociological miniaturism seems another highly useful method. John F. Stolte, Gary Alan Fine and Karen S. Cook (2009) assert that this attractive and epistemically novel approach helps interpret institutional operations, social developments and individual processes and, as such, makes a major contribution to 'sociological social psychology': 'Miniaturism assumes that processes transcend levels' (Stolte, Fine, & Cook, 2001, p. 388). This has three major implications. First, the developments observable on one level can also take place on other levels; second, individual behaviour can under some circumstances be considered representative of bigger social entities, and then one

person's action can be construed as an action of a collective actor; and, third, situations are generalisable, which is useful 'for legitimating and justifying the value of both laboratory experiments and ethnographic investigations' (Stolte, Fine, & Cook, 2001, p. 389). With its focus on one thematic concern (in our case, people's helplessness or self-reliance or coping/guidance-seeking/guidance-giving), sociological social psychology on the whole does not venture to explore broader and more complicated issues, yet it affords researchers access to a rich ensemble of causative factors that trigger a given phenomenon (Stolte, Fine, & Cook, 2001, p. 390). In this way, it promotes an examination of social reality in terms of transcendence, representativeness and certain generalisation, which stimulates communication and understanding across the boundaries of individual social sciences, along with thinking beyond unidisciplinary modes. This being said, miniaturists face serious obstacles and limitations if they undertake to construct a separate theory. As enumerated by Stolte, Fine and Cook, '[t]he key constraints are: differences in content, differences in population and differences in process that arise cross the micro-to-macro span' (2009, p. 392). Hence, in constructing counsellogy, it is crucial to cross these limits and comprehensively depict processes of guidance-seeking, guidance-giving and coping in various historical timeframes and on various levels of social life. Taking as a starting point guidance-seeking, guidance-provision/reception or autonomous coping with a problem, whether understood as an event, an individual's way of being or behaviour, we can reveal psychological and social contexts of this phenomenon/situation and capture its cultural, economic and/or political entanglements on the micro-, meso- and macro-levels.[5] Clearly, it is an intrinsically interdisciplinary avenue, which has quite intuitively been followed in counsellogical research since its onset (Kargulowa 2023, s. 9–10). This research has also largely been based on philosophy as a general knowledge of the human being that reflects on the shallow and deep or 'intensive,' to use Anthony Gidden's term (Giddens, 1984; Bilon, 2013), rules of human existence.

This is in some measure captured in Figure 3 below.

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[5]   An interdisciplinary take on counselling and guidance is epitomised by Sanna Vehviläinen's definition, which holds that guidance is 'an institutional and collaborative activity that fosters meaningful processes of individuals and groups in ways that strengthen their agency and participatory sense. These processes may be learning, growth, developmental, work and life design processes. Agency is perceived as a relationship between individuals and society, and it is viewed intersectionally (i.e. considering various mechanisms of social inequality)' (2021, p. 296).
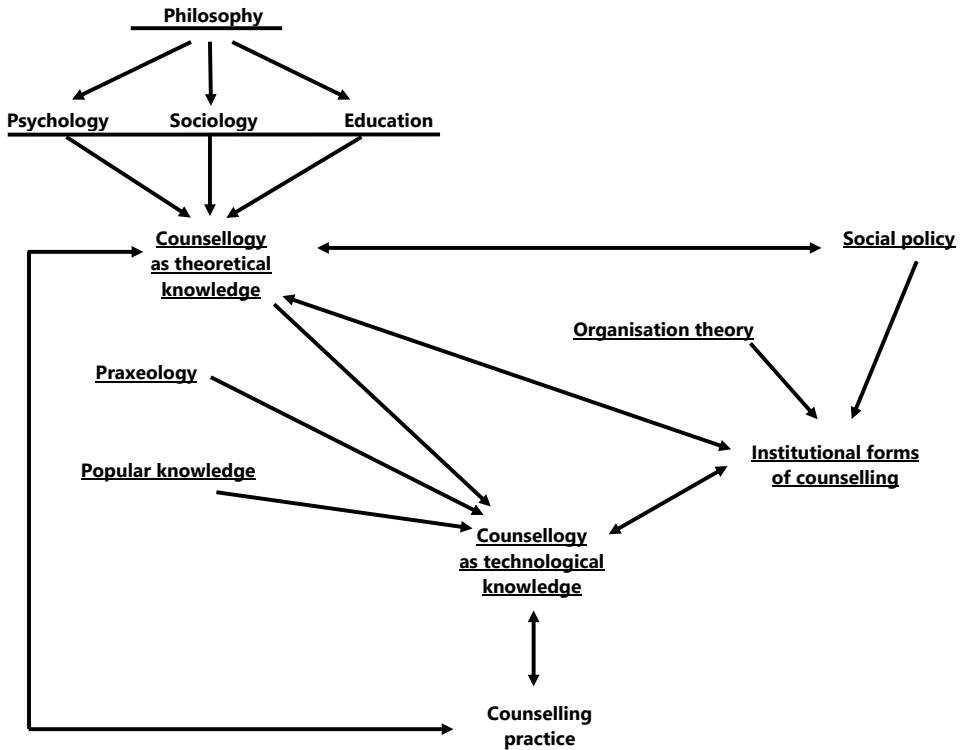
Figure 3. Interrelations of counselling and counsellogy
(source: Hejnicka-Bezwińska T., 1988, p. 76)

As this suggests, a combination of psychological, social and education sciences appears most promising for counselling research. With their interest in everyday life, social practice and self-reflection, these sciences employ a similar lexicon to depict phenomena, facts and processes in counselling/guidance, which are known as helplessness, self-reliance or coping, guidance-seeking and guidance-giving. The definition of counselling and guidance as coping/guidance-seeking/guidance-giving comprises terms derived from these sciences and seems acceptable to their researchers in discussing inter- and intra-social processes, that is, internal (experiential) and external (physical) contexts of counselling. In the interdisciplinary approach, the most characteristic findings include those that integrate this (and other) knowledge on issues such as the organisation of and transformations in social life, mental health, means of knowledge transmission with their advantages and risks, problems of care and education, politics, economy, etc. Some examples of such observations are:

➢ counselling/guidance as a social phenomenon has horizontal and vertical dimensions to it (Czerniawska, 1977, pp. 33–5).

> ‣ counsellogical research may study not only intentional actions that are conventionally ascribed to counsellors and result from their vocational role but also people's personal ways of coping with everyday issues (e.g. Czerkawska, 2009; Drabik-Podgórna, 2009; Szumigraj, 2009);

> ‣ the meaning of 'personal' counselling has transformed in social consciousness. Currently, the commercialisation of advice-provision has fuelled the perception of counselling services as commanding respect (having one's own financial advisor, image consultant, etc.), rather than only stigmatising the user; this change stems from the fact that access to advisory services is determined by financial resources (Kargulowa, 2018b);

> ‣ the counselling boom causes distortions of the counsellor role by creating conditions for abuse and unethical counselling practices (counsellors-cynics) (Kargulowa, 2004/2011);

> ‣ the counsellor-counselee relation is not always established in a traditional way, where the counselee approaches the counsellor for help, but may also occur incidentally in a variety of circumstances, becoming a specific change-sparking performance (Siarkiewicz, 2016);

> ‣ guidance can be used in an active co-construction in the counsellor-counselee relation, by reading a self-help publication or through watching instances of counselling on TV (Zielińska-Pękał, 2019; Zierkiewicz, 2004);

> ‣ the spatial design of counselling facilities has a cultural dimension to it and is relevant both to the organisation and to the course of help-provision (Mielczarek, 2011; Siarkiewicz, 2010; Skałbania, 2011).

These observations bring together knowledge from a range of sciences (the humanities, economic and political sciences), take into account the role of technical devices and grasp the mutability of everyday realities.

The Transdisciplinary Quality of Counsellogical Knowledge

Muszyński is certainly right when he remarks that 'transdisciplinarity transcends institutional, disciplinary and paradigmatic lines. (…) It brings disciplines into dialogue and explores the very practice of knowledge production' (2020, p. 22). It also establishes links between mutually remote aspects of reality and the forms and practices of knowledge production that underlie the genesis, existence and continuation of certain states of affairs. Doliński reminds that the point here is 'not really for researchers from different disciplines individually to contravene the principles of their fields, but for them collectively to find an element that all their sciences share or at least to define the common direction of further explorations' (2016, p. 9). The transdisciplinary mode of knowledge production aims to construct 'a theory that unites and gives coherence' to different lifeworlds and areas

of reality—a generative knowledge that promotes the engendering of objects and developments socially recognised as real and meriting study and that blazes new research trails. Muszyński argues that '[t]he search for unity takes place through critical, philosophical and supra-disciplinary reflection. These efforts accept that there are various perspectives and attend both to the visible and to the invisible and yet-unthought. On this take, reality is multidimensional and complex, unfolding on multiple interconnected planes' (2020, p. 22).

Muszyński discusses a number of tendencies in the transdisciplinary production of knowledge, with the latest of them involving not only the reconfiguration and re-contextualisation of disciplinary knowledge, but above all the reinforcement of its performativity by involving more actors in its construction and transmission. In the transdisciplinary model, the two latter processes are most relevant regarding counsellogy in terms of the production, social circulation and distribution of knowledge. Their activation and development can be grasped owing to the fact that the most general methodological principle endorsed by counsellogists insists on taking into account the active, dynamic, intense and resonant entwining of counselling with its social, cultural, economic and political contexts. As a result, the context is not treated merely as a background of counselling practice but as an actor that is interactively and inseparably connected to it through links based on the 'sensitivity' of this practice to changes at hand (Bilon & Kargul, 2012). This makes it imperative to attend to these changes and modifies the 'semio-technique' of counselling, to use Michel Foucault's coinage (1978, p. 94). At the same time, the context 'takes advantage' of counselling in sparking these changes. This is the case because counselling/ guidance, the research object of counsellogy both as an institutional social practice and as surfacing, so to speak, naturally in everyday interpersonal relations, is governed by a set of rules, including the general ones that are part of humanity's legacy, those developed by reflective practitioners and counsellogists and the local ones, upheld in a given setting/community. This practice generally abides by these rules and largely reproduces them. Research can capture this when the rules concern the practical consciousness of the participants in the 'counselling world.' All instances of transgression in the practical application of the rules may be a source of new theoretical and practical knowledge. Following Giddens, we may conclude that the consensus is that the structure of counsellological knowledge is specifically dual since this knowledge regulates counselling practice while at the same time practice helps (co)produce, verify and expand this knowledge. Given that counselling practice is a dual (personal and social) structure embedded in the general space of social, cultural, economic and political life (see Bilon, 2013), the structural duality of counsellogy as a science of counselling is enhanced and doubled, as Figure 4 below attempts to show.
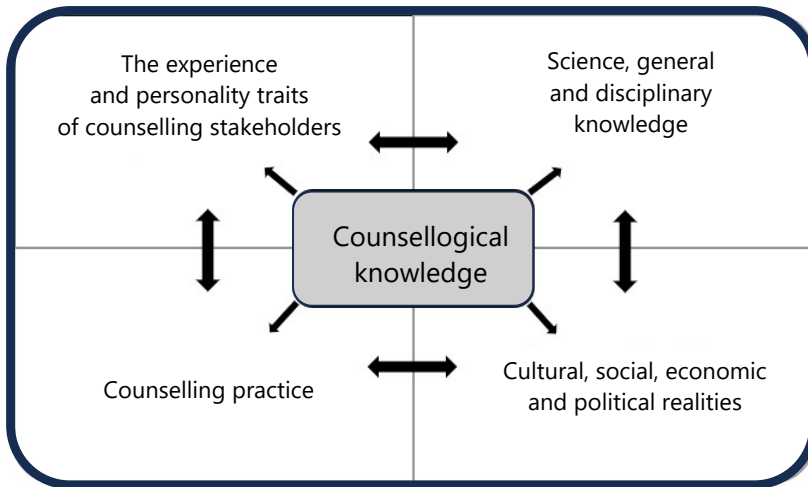
Figure 4. The generative function of transdisciplinary counsellogical knowledge
(source: Kargulowa A., 2023, p. 282)

Besides, counsellogy is transdisciplinary because it is a social discursive space that generates opportunities for communication and, above all, for learning, because its knowledge is constructed in (real or virtual) settings where researchers from various disciplines can meet, confront their ideas and integrate their findings. There are two reasons why counsellogy has this strong educational facet to it. First, a range of counselling/guidance types have developed in practice, from personal, vocational, family, medical, legal, linguistic and other sorts to expert counselling and guidance for organisers of social life on the national, European and global levels. All these types of counselling and guidance possess their own resources of specialist and disciplinary (media-studies, economic, political, medical, agricultural, etc.) knowledge that depicts and explains phenomena specific to respective disciplines. In discursive exchanges, researchers share not only methodological but also disciplinary knowledge. Second, given its very structure, the principles it endorses and the social mission it pursues (help in solving existential and livelihood issues: Kulczycki, 1998; Straś-Romanowska, 1996), counselling is a compilation of knowledge on education, that is, on human learning and teaching (pedagogy, adult education, psychology), and knowledge on therapy, that is, so to speak treatments for the soul, produced by humanistic applied sciences (such as psychiatry, speech therapy, geriatrics, interpersonal relations theory, theory of mediation and negotiation, etc.), which are often practised by counselling researchers. When views are being shared, this knowledge is acquired not only by the humanities scholars but also by researchers from the technical and natural sciences. Finally, counsellogy also uses popular knowledge derived from counsellors' and counselees' everyday life transactions. Looking at counselling through the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary

lens, one can see it as a hybrid of human emotions, experiences, actions, feelings, values, ideas, ideologies and material and non-material objects that promote the achievement of the main goal, that is, supporting people in their problem-solving.

In terms of knowledge constructed through a transdisciplinary avenue, counsellogy comprises the following observations:

➤ better educated people are more inclined to collaborate with counselling facilities and are more likely to use guidance in their caring and educational work (Kargulowa, 2004/2011, pp. 98–9; Wojtasik, 1993);

➤ the use of institutional counselling/guidance help is gender-dependent: in issues of child-raising, women consult counsellors more frequently than men do (Kargulowa, 2004; Wojtasik 1993);

➤ how a counselling facility is perceived depends on the setting in which it works and can vary:
  ◆ in the countryside, counselling facilities are treated like a diagnostic centre;
  ◆ in towns, counselling facilities are treated like elements of the local educational system;
  ◆ in big cities, counselling facilities are treated like an educational dispensary (Kargulowa, 1986, pp. 151–60);

➤ local entanglements of counselling/guidance not only affect what sense it is made of in the communities where it works but also modify counsellors' working styles and guidance content (Bilon & Minta, 2016, pp. 159–71);

➤ in postmodern social life, counsellors may adopt various working styles (scenarios), including:
  ◆ a mystic;
  ◆ an optimistic practitioner;
  ◆ a negotiator;
  ◆ a connector;
  ◆ an educator;
  ◆ a pragmatist;
  ◆ an anomic cynic; and
  ◆ a cynical 'player' (Kargulowa, 2004/2011, p. 171);

➤ the tasks appointed to counselling in its local settings depend on the goals defined by the 'facility owner' and express local and nationwide policies and economy (Bilon & Minta, 2016, pp. 159–71);

➤ the development of digitally mediated counselling may undercut direct, face-to-face counselling (Zielińska-Pękał, 2019);

➤ TV shows have yielded four portrayals of advice-seeking viewers:
  ◆ rebellious;
  ◆ disaffected;
  ◆ obedient; and
  ◆ co-operative (Zielińska-Pękał, 2019, p. 215);

➤ the 'concentration' of organised counselling networks may evince the authorities' concern with the wellbeing of citizens, but it may also help harness counselling/guidance as 'a subtle tool for the exercise of power" (Szumigraj, 1998);

➤ there is a triple enmeshment of Polish counselling:

'1) related to the embedment of central counselling management bodies in the ministries of education and labour, which results in:

◆ ambiguous goals, where counselling/guidance is bound to lifelong learning;

◆ organisation and funding policies, where counselling is mostly treated as secondary and marginal as compared with other pursuits of the ministries and local organisations;

◆ the differentiation of intervention rules and methods enforced by the 'owners' of counselling facilities.

2) related to potential clients' ambivalent attitude to counselling as a helping intervention and their less-than-trustful attitude to counselling institutions;

3) related to the instrumental treatment of counselling by the authorities, where its mission and the specificity of counsellors' work are overlooked' (Bilon & Minta, 2016, pp. 159–71).

Based on observations and corroborated by facts, a common finding is that an increased interest in counselling help is associated with an increase in social helplessness.

Conclusion

Science and scholarship are still compartmentalised into disciplines, which is particularly conspicuous in university teaching and structure, with its division into faculties, departments, institutes and subject courses. However, the dividing lines tend to be more and more commonly crossed by researchers even though they are institutionally affiliated with individual disciplines. A range of publications have arisen at the intersection of various disciplines, whose very names are compounds, such as 'sociological social psychology' above, which depicts the methodology of social miniaturism, or astrophysics, technoscience, biotechnology and others. If in 1988 Habermas wrote:

> Whereas the natural and the cultural or hermeneutic sciences are capable of living in a mutually indifferent, albeit more hostile than peaceful, coexistence, the social sciences must bear the tension of divergent approaches under one roof, for in them the very practice of research compels reflection on the relationship between analytic and hermeneutic methodologies. (1988, p. 3)

to withdraw from this position only later (Kaniowski, 1999, pp. xxxii–xxxiii), today the natural, technical and human sciences are developing in a far closer

symbiosis. Counsellogy may also serve as emphatic evidence for this tendency since its research object—counselling and guidance—has long abandoned its canonical form of a responsive counsellor-counselee relationship and is a unique, highly complex conglomerate now. Seeing this, counsellogy strives to address all the circumstances in which counselling/guidance appears and, if we conceive of social life not only as an organised mode in which a given community operates but also as a nexus of processes made up of human experiences, relations and actions, counsellogy undertakes to fathom a multifarious sub-process of this life. This sub-process is formed by both an organised and a spontaneous flux of empathy, resonance, human solidarity, one-of-a-kind social exchange, specific education and therapy, of which its 'fabric,' structure and functions are woven. The point is that from a holistic perspective, counselling denotes both institutional and naturally emerging help offered to people as they endeavour to manage their lives—assistance provided by a range of institutions, support groups and individuals who may be socialised and pro-social but not necessarily professionally trained and intervene via direct or Internet-, phone- or mail-mediated contact. Concomitantly and independently, contributions to counselling and guidance are made by sundry TV shows, radio broadcasts, Internet portals and plentiful self-help publications brimming with injunctions, advice and recommendations for anonymous audiences, users and readers. Committed to examining them comprehensively, counsellogists may seek to establish a separate discipline, but they fully realise that this discipline will never be a bracketed-off and complete body of knowledge. Consequently, in their efforts to capture the essence of counselling as a practice for the amelioration of people's personal and social lives, they rely on the legacy of more entrenched sciences, on observations of the world and on their own experiences. As a result, counsellogy develops as a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field. Because it is still a young science, counsellogy is certainly far more fittingly described today as an ensemble of various theoretical and methodological insights and findings, with fresh ones constantly cropping up, rather than as a generalised, homogenised and fixed body of counsellogical knowledge.

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