

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN GERMAN PSYCHOLOGY

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In agreement with international trends, psychology is one of the most highly demanded academic disciplines in Germany. On average, there are 8.5 times more applicants than available places (to compare: biology 4.6, medicine 4.2, pharmaceuticals 2.0). This has led to an especially high “Numerus Clausus” for the discipline, which can be studied at 49 universities across Germany. In addition, several private „Hochschulen“ or „Fachhochschulen“ are now offering BSc and sometimes MSc courses of typically more specialized applied variants of psychology. Roughly 35'000 students are supervised by some 2600 scientists (including >700 professors). Total faculty – 2606 (2002) and 3588 (2010). 2002 – 13.2 Students/Faculty 2010 – 9.6 Students/Faculty. Almost all institutions have now switched from the „Diplom“ to a BSc/MSc-structure. The BSc is generally seen as transitory stage, more than 90% of the students go on to an MSc in psychology, primarily specializing in clinical psychology/psychotherapy and economic psychology. The number of PhD's per year exceeds 500 and there are an additional 40-45 habilitations/year (in both cases mostly of the cumulative (publication-based) type. The percentage of females is 77.6 for students, 68.2% for dissertations and 45.2% for habilitations.

What are BScs doing next? 487 BScs (2012): 445 – MSc Psychology, 7 – other master, 8 – other studies, 14 – internship, 6 – working, 7 – not working.

Psychological research encompasses a broad array of sub-disciplines and topics that have witnessed an increase in third-party funding (primarily public peer-reviewed sources). In addition, the discipline is becoming more international. While the number of publications in German language remains at a high level, there has been a strong increase in English language publications over the past 10 years. In 2010 for the first time there were more than 10000 English language publications (36% of all psychological publications originating from Germany). The highest share of English language publications is found in general, biological and neuropsychology (80%), followed by differential, developmental and social psychology as well as diagnostics and methodology (30–60%); the lowest proportion is observed in applied disciplines (10–20%). International reception of German psychological research is expressed in a share of English citations of 72%.

The professional situation of psychologists is generally positive with a low unemployment rate in spite of a steadily increasing number of practitioners and researchers. A special situation has been created by the introduction of a psychotherapy law in 1999, that paved the way for the inclusion of over 30'000 psychological psychotherapists into the health care system. In the mean time, psychologists have become the largest group providing psychotherapy.

- Currently 22 training and research institutes psychological psychotherapy (adults).

- 8 training and research institutes for child and adolescent psychotherapy.

- Together over 2 400 therapists in training.

- Typically 1 200 patients per institutes and year.
- Number of Professors: 2000 – 589; 2010 – 719.
- Ratio Students/Professor: 2002 – 54,7; 2010 – 47,6.

Psychological Workforce

Total number of professional psychologists: 54 815.

Psychotherapy (Health Care) (Adults+Children) – 33 077 (some more private practice); 78% – psychological psychotherapists and 21,8% – medical psychotherapists.

Economy – 10 400 (come more employed).

Science – 3 588 (more employed).

Education – 3 500 (more employed).

Law Enforcement – 2 450 (more employed).

Traffic etc. – 1 800 (some more private practice).

Number of unemployed psychologists: 2000 – 3 000, 2011 – 1 500 (rate – 2,9%).

Number of Publications by Subdiscipline – 2010.

Clinical – 5 703	Educational – 1 003	Methods – 320
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General – 1 470	Development – 994
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Diff/Diag – 1 344	Work&Org – 896
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Bio/neuro – 1 079	Social – 435
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Share of Publications in English: 1998 (+0,5%), 2010 (+6,9%).

Current Trends:

- Ongoing professionalization of psychotherapy.
- Increasing overlap of bio/neuropsychology and clinical psychology.
- Increasing overlap between social and economic psychology.

New subdisciplines, e.g.:

– Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology (Bochum, Bielefeld, Marburg, Landau, Muenchen...).

– Genetic Psychology (Bochum).

– Economic Psychology.

New specialized MASc-programs, e.g.:

- Cognitive neuroscience.
- Social and economic psychology.

Farther away...

On the horizon:

- PhDF – programs.
- BSc with honours.
- Fast-track programs to PhD.
- “Direktstudium” in psychotherapy.

Open questions:

- Role of “Fachhochschulen”.
- Feasibility of parallel scientific and clinical training.
- Migration of economic psychology to economic faculties.
- Drift of bio/neuro.psychology out of psychological faculties.
- Different degrees of professionalization (clinical vs. other fields).