

dr hab. Anna Zielińska, prof. UW

Wydział Pedagogiczny, Uniwersytet Warszawski

dr Katarzyna Brzosko-Barratt

Wydział Pedagogiczny, Uniwersytet Warszawski

TITLE: The Development of Teachers' Autonomy through The Analysis of the Polish Experiences

Teacher autonomy has been established as an essential feature of teacher professionalism and the continuous tension between teacher autonomy and tasks assigned by the state have been seen as a contributing factor in teachers' deprofessionalization. While the most widely accepted sense of the word is freedom from control from others (Anderson, 1987) research also points towards the capacity of self-directed professional action (Little, 1995) and the capacity of self-directed professional development (Tort-Molney, 1997). Considering the frequent changes of the educational system in Poland, including those of conceptual, structural and legal nature, many researchers have addressed the need to prepare autonomous yet not self-protective or self-determinant teachers (Radziewicz, 1993, Kwiatkowska, 1997, Popławska, 2001, Kubiczek, 2002, Družka, 2017).

The aims of study are how and to what extent do: the teacher advancement regulations and requirements support the development of teacher autonomy; the expectations and school culture promote teachers' autonomy development; and the practice teacher education support the teacher autonomy development?

The study is based on the data from three research studies utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodology in which the development of autonomy became a significant finding on three levels: institutional and professional regulations, school practice, and teacher education practice. These include research on: 1) national sampling concerning evaluation of advancement system in Poland (n=600), 2) the development of professional competence of novice teachers (n= 60), 3) pre-service teachers, mentor teachers and teacher educators (n=30)

The analysis showed institutional, organizational and contextual factors in teachers' professional advancement, school practice and in teacher education hindering the process of development of autonomy. The results from national sample, focus group and individual interviews indicate formalization, red-tape requirements, limited cohesion between university concepts and school practice were some of the impeding factors to teachers' agency and autonomy.

The presentation proposes some solutions strengthening the teacher autonomy both in in-service and pre-service teacher education as well as indicate the direction for further research.

