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THE ROLE OF PLURALITY IN THE *DYNAMIC AND OPEN* CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONALISM IN ADULT EDUCATION. THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT THREADS OF PROFESSIONALISM FOR ADULT EDUCATION

Key words: professionalism, professionalization, own professionalism, adult education, Germany

Abstract: Understanding elements of professionalism is a central objective of continuous discussions in the discipline of adult education and related educational fields. The concept of professionalism is hypothesized to be the most important element of the development of the discipline of adult education and occupational fields of adult educators. Academic literature relating to professionalism in adult education has produced differing results which may correspond to the application of different theoretical approaches. This article examines the influence of major *ex-* and *internal* determinants of the concept. We reflect on scientific discourse as an internal determinant and aspects of educational policy and the societal framework as an external one. We begin our considerations with a brief historical description of different aspects of professionalization and actual attempts to develop professionalism of adult educators. In retrospect, it becomes apparent that the meaning of professionalism has converged to a limited perspective in present discussions. In the last decades, the discourse on professionalism relied on the political approach to promote learning as the key issue of modern society. Building on recent work, we provide some limited evidence to support the ‘*professional self*’ in the dynamic and open concept of professionalism. This article stands as a theoretical and critical note reflecting concepts of limited individual development. In contrast, we favour the development of the ‘*professional self*’ being an essential phenomenon of plurality in the field of adult education.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to investigate the actual importance of the concept of professionalism in adult education. The current discussion about

professionalism in Germany can be described as very close to ‘classical’ discourse, with different dimensions and connotations compared to the beginning of the 1970’s. We are going to demonstrate that the discourse about professionalism in adult education needs re-orienting. For quite some time, there has been a tendency according to which discussions about the concept of profession and professionalism have focused on economic and market trends (cf. Schmidt-Lauff, Gieseke 2013). Reasons for the continuing importance of this issue refer to internal and external demands (cf. Kraft, Seitter 2009; Schmidt-Lauff 2006). External demands are related for instance to social conditions and decisions regarding educational policy (e.g. *the concept of lifelong learning education reform*). On the other hand, internal demands include the heterogenous character of the discipline, e.g. the existence of different types of organizations (from public to commercial institutions), or the plurality of the heterogenic staff (from full-time employed to freelance adult educators) (cf. Tietgens 1988; Gieseke, Dietel 2012). This double-sided condition has affected the discourse about professionalism up to the present.

We are going to argue that the heterogenous character of the discipline is a challenge to develop a concept of professionalism that depends on plurality. Hence, our ideas on professionalism have a deep impact on how a professional adult educator is conceptualized. Even though internal and external influences may be barriers on the pathway to professionalism, we believe that we must emphasize the development of the ‘professional self’ being the heart of the professional movement in adult education. We are going to argue from the point of view of the professional self as the focal aim of professionalization.

Our argumentation is going to be developed in four stages. In the first stage, we are going to bring up basic lines of argumentation regarding the discourse on professionalism in adult education, with a focus on complex working conditions of adult educators (chapter 2). In the second stage, we are going to outline some important historical stages of the debate on professionalism of adult education, using the case-example of Germany (chapter 3). Afterwards, we are going to analyze very briefly the concept of competence, which entered the stage of discussion towards the end of the 1990’s (chapter 4). Finally, we are going to provide an outlook on the dynamic and flexible concept of professionalism, and present our thesis.

Basic conditions of professionalism in adult education

For more than fifteen years, the discourse on professionalism in adult education has been influenced by the Bologna reform and the European and German Qualification framework (cf. BMBF 2013). These political reforms use theoretical models which attempt to find ‘new’ formalized means to structure or standardize knowledge and abilities, e.g. instruments to measure competences (cf. Schmidt-Lauff, Lehmann 2012). In contrast, the lines of argumentation in

adult education, which was developed in the 1970's and 1980's, targeted the level of institutionalism as jurisdiction for adult learning. Currently, the discourse about profession and professionalism goes in the direction of a politically given imperative for action (cf. Epping 2010, p. 201), and the dissolution of concepts of profession in adult education (cf. Schütz, Nittel 2012).

In the meantime, working conditions of the staff in adult education have changed regarding their qualifications, types of job positions, and concerning a wide range of income rates. For instance, 45.5% of all adult educators have an academic degree, with 31% a specific degree in adult education (cf. Martin, Langemeyer 2014, p. 55). Apart from degrees in pedagogy, the staff also have degrees in music (16.3%), economics (6.6%), social work (6.1%) and English studies (5.3% (cf. *ibid.*, 55). Trainers in public adult education centres receive very low salaries (cf. 'Die Zeit' 2013, 77) compared to trainers who work for companies in the commercial sector (cf. Alfänger, Cywinski, Elias 2014, p. 71). The staff in most public funded institutions experience precarious working conditions and financial insecurity. This spotlighted fact illustrates very different social and financial conditions of adult educators, depending on different sections of adult education. Furthermore, there is a huge diversity of job positions in professional areas of action in adult education (cf. Schmidt-Lauff 2009). In Germany, there is a high number of freelancers on the 'micro-level', e.g. trainers (70%). The number of full-time positions on the 'macro- and meso-level' (the level of program planning, administration and management¹) has decreased over the recent years (cf. Alfänger, Cywiński, Elias 2014). In comparison to school teachers or the staff in social-pedagogical working fields, adult education consists of a number of rather heterogenous work places, with very different working conditions. These different working conditions can be considered as a difficulty to develop a coherent set of professional skills or professional movement (cf. e.g. Kraft, 2011; Dobischat, Fischell, Rosendahl 2010). It would be more constructive for a "fruitful" development of professionalizing adult education to accept common conditions as they are, and deal with them as a challenge.

From the point of view of academic discourse, a coherent profession in adult education, with a standardized professional training career, has not been established, and may be not even desirable. Nonetheless, it is perhaps time to begin a general reflection on the concepts of professionalization, in order to be able to capture a positive image and a realistic chance of self-development of adult educators in any field of work. Currently, professionalization strategies of stakeholders in the discipline adult education and in institutions obtain special measurement approaches for their staff to promote 'adult education

¹ Further information about the different professional areas of action in adult education can be found in e.g. Schmidt-Lauff 2009).

competences', e.g. didactical skills, skills of management, program planning (cf. e.g. Gruber 2004; Kraft 2006; von Hippel, Tippelt 2009; DVV 2014). Reasons for documenting and measuring learning outcomes can be found in European educational policy decisions at the beginning of the 2000s². Relating to the processes of Europeanization in political and economic areas, the educational sector has become more important. The main aspect of this political process was adjustment to the direction of self-learning responsibility (cf. Dohmen 2001). From the point of view of educational policy, the individual learner is instructed to engage in 'lifelong learning', in formal, non-formal, and informal ways, in order to be capable of being an active member of the European society (Commission of the European Communities 2000; Gnahn 2008; Annen 2012, p. 63 et sqq.). Instruments of individual development to profile competences are a result of this procedure of educational policy. The instruments define competences and profiles which depict how employees should be prepared for a specific trade or for employability in general (cf. e.g. ProfilPass 2014; Strauch 2008). By using methods of measuring competences and visualizing them for others, the learner gets an *illustration* and the 'status quo' of their own competences. The gap between the 'status quo' and implicit aims of the competence model shows which competences should be developed by the learner. The outcomes obtained using the methods of measuring competences provide the opportunity to compare profiles of competences of different individuals with one another (cf. Annen 2012). The situation for individual development seems paradoxical: on the one hand, the concept of lifelong learning emphasizes the fact that each individual is to be a self-directed learner who can choose between needed or wanted competences (cf. Dohmen 2001); on the other hand, individuals are forced to develop competences which fit to the needs of the labour market. The political efforts of the European Union highlight a contradiction between the normative structure of education and the learning responsibility for individuals.

The question of 'how it is possible to deduce the level of professionalism from competences measured, if there is still no base point of professionalism in adult education in the scientific discourse' arises with particular regard to instruments of measuring competences of adult educators.

² The European Heads of State and Governments adopted the 'Lisbon Strategy' with the goal that Europe should become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world until the year 2010 (cf. Europäischer Rat 2000). In 2010 the 'Europe 2020' strategy followed with the central objective to create 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' in the next decade (Europäische Kommission 2010). One of the main aspects of the strategy is to develop and/or support the quality of academic and vocational educational institutions (cf. *ibid.* 2010).

Historical stages of the debate on professionalization

In 1987, at the conference entitled ‘The End of Professionalization?’, Alheit came up with a diagnosis that professionalism as a topic of reflection had a new relevance in adult education. He stated: ‘There are strong reasons to re-think professionalism in adult education (cf. Alheit, Tietgens 1988, p. 25). His statement applies as much to the year 1987 as to the present day. However, what were the reasons behind his statement and for which reasons is the topic important in the present times? We are going to outline the development of professionalism and professionalization, highlighting significant stages of the professional process. This retrospective view can help us to comprehend and clarify the different dimensions which lie hidden behind the concept of professionalism. In doing so, we will be able to critically analyze actual definitions of the scientific discourse of adult education and the transfers of this discourse into the practical field of education.

In the early 1970’s, the discourse in educational science on professionalism and professionalization, which lasted up to the end of the 1980’s, focused on a coherent theoretical professional framework of adult education. Global educational reform influenced the entire education system and initially supported professional movements. The reform promoted and developed the sector of adult education and led to the recognition of the professional movement by the scientific field of adult education, which was established at that time (cf. Gieseke 1988, p. 235). The main strands of professional development included institutionalization (in the public and private sector), the expansion of adult education organizations in general and, accordingly, an increase in the number of staff at all organizational levels. The installation of professorships at German universities in the 1970’s and, thus, the establishment of degree programs with a diploma in adult education belong to the ‘success stories’ in the discipline (Faulstich 2004). These facts determine the discourse on professionalism in adult education up till now.

A variety of approaches and theories of professional development are currently being discussed in adult education. One important theory can be described as a ‘feature-related approach’, which envisages a profession to exist as a result of knowledge systematically attained in academic training, scientific knowledge, professional ethics and the autonomy of control of standards of professional practice and training (cf. et al. Combe, Helsper 1996, p. 19). Depending on ‘feature-related approaches’, some scholars do not regard adult education as an appropriate profession because most adult educators are not capable of displaying the features mentioned above (cf. further details e.g. Nittel 2000, p. 31). Another theoretical approach, i.e. the perspective of symbolic interactionism, presents professions as a concept of personality. It is in this concept that a professional has to balance both the self-interpretation of the individual, and the interests of collective stakeholders (cf. e.g. Daheim 1992;

Hesse 1972; Hartmann 1972; Schütze 1996, p. 183). In contrast to these two theories of professional development, the system theory in the meaning of Stichweh characterizes a profession in mutual reference to functional systems such as economics, law, or arts in modern societies. He defines professions as phenomena which are linked to the transition of society from a more corporative attitude in the pre-modern era, changing into a functional differentiated society in the present times (Stichweh 1996, p. 50). However, under these central stances, the question whether adult education is a profession remains an open issue. For more than 35 years scholars in the academic field of adult education have been using the concept of profession in a variety of 'contexts', e.g. for scientific or research-related guidelines, for ideological reflection and generalization abilities, for matters of legitimization of the whole field, and as a semantic basis and ethic orientation (cf. Schmidt-Lauff, Gieseke 2013). Henceforth, a professional theory may be a central reference point to define a professional, i.e. a 'knowledgeable, active, thinking and professional self'. From the perspective of the system theory in the meaning of Stichweh, the existence of a profession is a trait to define professionalism as professional action (cf. Stichweh 1996, p. 59). In adult education, the sequential professional process beginning with a scientific qualification, and then adding practical professional action was established as a normal pathway to professionalism (cf. Gieseke 1988, p. 236). The 'classical' theories mentioned above, illustrate the fact that adult education is professionalized only partially, i.e. the process of professionalization is still at a starting point; adult education is far away from being a fully developed profession.

Today's discussions are determined by aspects very different from those outlined by the classical theories of profession, even though the main lines of argumentation have been taken from such classical professions as medicine and law, which are in a constant process of restructuring (cf. Helsper, Tippelt 2011, p. 269). Perhaps the common models are obsolescent today since they actually do not fit to the structural requirements of a modern and 'reflexive' society (cf. Helsper, Tippelt 2011, p. 269). Nevertheless, maybe the classical concepts mentioned above should be preserved because they stand for a coherent social movement and include individual adult educators (cf. e.g. Schmitdt-Lauff, Lehmann 2012; Schmidt-Lauff, Gieseke 2013).

At the end of the 1980's, the supposition that many factors of professionalization were completed in the sense of professional theories became a striking point in the discussion. Nevertheless, the meaning of professional action remained an underestimated factor for professionalization at the same time (cf. Gieseke 1988, p. 237; Nittel 2000, p. 73). The starting question, however, still remains: How can we define and describe the pedagogical professionalism of adult education?

First of all, we have to mark (and this is the major thesis of our argumentation) that the category of professional development refers to

a complex construct which encompasses many dimensions, such as general interactivity and continuity. The term 'profession' consists of aspects such as actions, abilities, knowledge, skills and attitude, all of which refer to a specific way of general behavior of an individual person (cf. Nittel 2000, p. 71). In order to consider professionalism, two theoretical approaches have to be distinguished, i.e. the *difference* and *competence* theoretical perspectives (ibid. 2000, p. 74). Especially the second approach is commonly used in actual research studies aimed at developing professionalism of adult educators.

Moreover, we have to notice that the competence perspective is focused on the final point of development. What can be stated furthermore is the tendency to emphasize defining standards for professional activities, mostly in the field of action on the micro-didactical level. Yet the concentration on observing micro-didactical skills of adult educators tends to miss the key issue of professional development, because the situational conditions of concrete action cannot be collected and restored. A collection of competences with the help of competence models do not encompass professional behavior. The uncritical and unreflected application of competence models seems to be the main reason why debates on professionalism are related to economic thinking. Professional development seems now to be changed into matters which focus on the narrow perspective of specific work and the professional action of adult educators (cf. Nittel 2000, p. 73).

To sum up, we can state at this point that at an early stage of the scientific discussion professionalization was strongly linked to a political movement of developing the entire field of adult education after the Second World War, and establishing a democratic society in Europe. Academization was an essential part of this strategy. Tietgens, the main protagonist in the field of the 1970's and 1980's in Germany, argues that it is necessary to reflect and implement academic knowledge of adult educators in their professional action (cf. e.g. Alheit, Tietgens 1988, pp. 25-39). Yet perhaps personal attributes (such as self-concept, self-confidence, self-assurance and dynamic self-activity) are as important or even more important nowadays.

The concept of competence – the stage of discussion towards the end of the 1990's

All levels of education are involved in the discussion on developing competences in Europe: learners, educators and institutional circles (OECD 2003). At the beginning of the year 2000, decisions in the area of European educational policy influenced the structure of educational institutions (quality management systems), with consequences for members and participants (EQF/NQF-Europäische Kommission 2005). One aspect was adjustment to the direction of self-learning responsibility (cf. Dohmen 2001). According to the decisions of the political framework from 2009, the ambition is:

- to realize lifelong learning and mobility
- to improve the quality and efficiency of vocational education and training
- to foster justice, social cohesion and active citizenship
- to foster innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training (cf. Official Journal of the European Union 2009).

In conjunction with these ambitions, individuals are required to engage in ‘life-long learning’ and to make learning outcomes (potentials and ‘competences’) visible for themselves and other persons. Against this background, for more than fifteen years a large number of approaches have come into existence to measure, evaluate and/or make competences visible for users (‘lifelong learner’) and organizations (employment, commercial sector) (cf. Annen 2012). They are classified as ‘formative’ and ‘summative’, as well as ‘requirement-oriented’ and ‘individual-oriented’ methods (cf. for details e.g. Annen 2012, pp. 209-210). One of their general objectives is to provide quality standards in the field of education.

With regard to the historical stages of professionalization described above (the aspect that adult education does not have a position as a profession; professional associations and uniform regulations for access of activity), a difficulty to define professionalism remains. If the theoretical framework is unexplained, it is therefore difficult to define general standards of professional action (core competences) of adult educators. The current discussion in the discipline about a reference framework for competences is controversial with corresponding effects on open validation lines (cf. eg. Kraft, Seitter, Kollwe 2009; Nittel 2010). There are two theoretical approaches to consider professionalism and to explore professional action of adult educators. The competence approach has a significant role in contemporary research projects to either create, depending on theoretical assumptions, profiles of competences in adult education (cf. e.g. Peters, 2004; Research voor Beleid 2010; DIE-Qualified2teach; Sgier, Lattke 2012), or to examine cross-institutional and cross-regional systems, in order to foster competences of professionalization (cf. eg. Kraft, Seitter, Kollwe 2009; Gruber, Wiesner 2012). Many ‘instruments’ which were developed to analyze competences refer to a combination of normative institutional requirements and individual attitudes. Unfortunately, just these two factors cannot be measured or standardized at all. It is also striking that the validation approaches developed focus on the micro-didactical level of practitioners (cf. e.g. Böhm, Wiesner 2012; DIE-ValidPack; DIE-Qualified2teach, critical to it Schmidt-Lauff, Lehmann 2012). However, the professional field of action in adult education extends over further fields such as the ‘macro- and meso- didactical level (cf. *ibid.* 2012, pp. 26-27). The character of professionalism becomes constricted and reduced, and, therefore, an already achieved wide understanding of professionalism (cf. *ibid.* 2012; Schmidt-Lauff, Gieseke 2013). In a sense, the discussion on developing competences can be seen as a shift from the former historical stages.

The development of approaches to measure and/or evaluate competences of adult educators was preceded by a perseverative debate on the concept of competences³. The theoretical approaches in the discussions about the concept held in Germany differ from scientific disciplines. There is no consensus about the definition of “competence” in the scientific debate on adult education (cf. Kaufhold 2006), and not even in the European qualifications framework (European Parliament, 2008), which is a frequently quoted reference. Nevertheless, a more or less psychology-based definition of ‘competence’ has been used by policy makers, educators and academic scholars in recent years. A ‘competence’ means doing a job properly and combines attributes such as specific knowledge and skills, as well as personal qualities such as a high expectation of self-efficacy and self-awareness. The concept of ‘competence’ seems to envisage a modern individual, who acts independently and with responsibility for themselves. The psychological definition of ‘competence’ is not accepted by all scholars (Nicoll, Oleson 2013). Nicoll and Oleson, for instance, assume a competence to be an empty model to push through external demands. They perceive it as a ‘competence regime’, which derives from neoliberal and capitalistic thinking in education and the educational policy in Europe and even worldwide. The concept of ‘competence’ in their sense is chained to programs of promoting the economy in the EU and, therefore, refers initially to underlined societal and individual values of competition and enforceability.

Because the outcomes of their analysis differ from the classical tunes of empowering the individual by education, we have to ask how professions (such as adult education) can re-conceptualize a competence to support a more democratic idea of self-emancipation and personal self-fulfillment. The professional movement in adult education has used profiles and instruments to measure competences in order to foster professional skills and competences of practitioners. Many of those ‘technical, normative’ approaches (Gieseke, Enoch, Lehmann 2013) are funded by several state institutions and attempt to obtain a realistic image of daily tasks of a single adult educator. Many of these *instruments of measurement* attempt to certify adult education competences and try to define professional knowledge and skills. They foster the legal and professional sphere of adult education, which finally implies standardized competences that every adult educator should possess. The Kraft/Seitter/Kollewe research group obtains a nationwide institutional-crossover qualification and a certificate system to evaluate and validate qualifications and job experience (competences) of adult educators. The reference model proposed is a two-stage one that is based on the validation

³ There has been a long discussion in the disciplines of humanities and social science in Germany which has attempted to conceptualize the notion. For an overview of different positions and discussions see: Kaufhold, 2006.

model of Switzerland and Austria (cf. 2009). Nevertheless, the competence development programs promoted particularly micro-didactical skills and related management skills such as program planning, marketing and consulting. This leads to a risk that a strong orientation towards competence-orientated models focuses on the ‘methodical’ part of professional action, while ethical attitudes slide into oblivion. But the consideration of the interrelationship between scientific knowledge and professional experience in approaches developing professionalism has a subserve impact. (Individual) learning processes and attitudes are not immediately ‘effective’, ‘functional’ or ‘usable’; rather they will be also visible in unanticipated professional contexts. The programs needed to focus on materialized working processes and actual job requirements.

The more abstract idea of professionalism as an overall strategy cannot be captured by the concept of competence as concrete individual actions. This direction runs the risk of characterizing an adult educator as ‘non-professional’. The concept of ‘competence’ in a sense can focus on daily tasks, but then it always refers to the narrowed idea of professionalization. Professionalism as a dynamic concept of personal and collective strategy refers to overall principles, which are loosely intertwined with daily work.

Therefore, there is a need for the re-conceptualization of competence, which also refers to the overall strategies of professionalism. A competence, then, is not a material artifact of social action, but rather a combination of micro-political advocacy for education and general skills. A competence model referring to plurality should be conceptualized as a bottom-up development, and not as a top-down process, as enforced in the recent years by political stakeholders of neoliberal orientation.

The dynamic and flexible concept of professionalism (discussion)

Based on the heterogeneous character of the occupational field of adult education, it remains difficult to develop a ‘single professional identity of an adult educator’ (cf. Dobischat, Fischell, Rosendahl 2010, 173). Educational work (teaching and learning processes) are not standardized social actions, but rather autonomous actions of an individual, who has the ability to link scientific knowledge and experience to his or her own actions. At the beginning of this article, we have shown that professionalism in adult education was influenced by internal and external demands. Our implication is that both demands are responsible for the development of professionalism. In order to develop professionalism, it is necessary to reflect on decisions on educational policy, social conditions (e.g. European Qualification Framework, 2008; globalization tendency in different fields etc.) and particular job conditions (access to the occupational field, qualification background etc.). We support the concept which characterizes professionalism as being open and dynamic to detect and reflect critically on external and internal fluctuations. Approaches to measure

competences are rather a ‘technocratic’ way to develop professionalism. They may be useful to capture the demands of institutions of adult education, but an ‘individual’s professional self’⁴ cannot be developed using these methods (cf. Strauch, Jütten, Mania 2009). Approaches to measure competences may even be a barrier for further development of professionalism, due to strict regulations of their outcomes. In our opinion, it is more important to leave *space* to the adult educator as a *learner of professionalism*. Adult educators need time for development (e.g. professional training) and to *discover* their own thoughts, establish their own opinions and express them appropriately. With reference to both internal and external demands, professional adult educators have to create explicitly and implicitly their own ‘professional self’.

The concept of the self we have in mind relates to the definition of education as the emancipation and development of the self (*Bildung*). Adult educators should be capable of reflecting and creating educational concepts with reference to their individual attitude. Therefore, the staff should have a convenient framework (e.g. training programs) to transfer ‘learning outcomes’ in their daily professional action.

In terms of the historical stages of professionalization, we have outlined the diverse approaches and theories of professionalism. From the perspective of Stichweh (the system theory) for instance, profession is defined as a functional system. Although his approach shows how professions occur in the modern era, he does not adapt the concept of development and education (*Bildung*), which refers to the promotion of the ‘professional self’. Tietgens and Gieseke’s theory of profession of adult education, which refers to the beginning of the discourse in adult education, was based on classical concepts of establishing and maintaining professionalization lines, e.g. developing and expanding the institutionalization of the occupational field. Academization was essential to their concept of developing a professional field. This development perspective was important in the developing process of the discipline. Today, we have to widen this concept in order to integrate all educators and remodel the normative design of the concept of profession for the 21st century. The often stressed plurality of learning opportunities, the ‘new’ role of learners (the concepts of self-learning and lifelong learning) and the re-orientation of a professional adult educator can lead to an extended view. In our opinion, the concept of professionalism which is related to a profession theory highlights two aspects. Firstly, we state that determined skills are essential to be capable of working in different fields of adult education. Secondly, we think that the development of a ‘professional self’ is essential to promote learning activities of learners. Educational institutions (formation of a structure) and educational professionalism (formation of the self) are entangled factors, which provide a new perspective for the concept of professionalism (cf. Schicke 2012).

⁴ Further details on the concept of *identity, self* can be found in Straub, 1998, for instance.

Nonetheless, existing approaches to measure, evaluate or validate competences are useful to support professionalism in adult education (e.g. KOMPASS-Böhm, Wiesner 2012; DIE-ValidPack). They provide an impression of professional action in a given moment which can help reflection. Existing and upcoming national and international instruments to measure competences should be accepted by adult educators in all working fields of adult education. It is very uncertain whether the implementation process will be successful, or whether the outcomes will point in the direction of professional development. The crucial point is the connection of these instruments to involve individual attitudes and to create awareness for individual development.

Professionalism of adult education is to be understood as a relational, process-related concept with dimensions which are related to institutional and individual attitudes⁵. In conclusion, we can sum up our considerations with the following thesis concerning the ‘professional self’:

- (1) Professionalization/Professionalism is an unlimited and open process of individual development which cannot come to an ending point. Even though professional development objectives of a fully developed professional are state of the art, they simultaneously have to re-conceptualize and transform the idea of professionalism.
- (2) Professional development should not be grounded in the idea of a coherent profession, but it should rather be aware of a plurality of professional ideas which compete with each other. In conclusion, an individual adult educator should focus on personal fulfilment with regard to the field of adult education.
- (3) Numerous institutions of adult education, even in the private market, prefer a wide range of staff with less standardized career experience. Plurality in the training background and experience is highly accepted and needed. The plurality of the staff is therefore a pre-condition for the development of the ‘professional self’.
- (4) The ‘professional self’ consists of attitudes, motives and behaviours which are in balance, or sometimes in mutual conflict, with a) affiliation to oneself, b) affiliation to the learner, c) affiliation to the demands of institution or organization, d) affiliation to the demands of educational policy.
- (5) The central place of professionalism and the establishment of a ‘professional self’ imply individual education as a process of emancipation.
- (6) Institutions and organizations of adult education should refer to and foster the professional development of each adult educator. The institutions not

⁵ A detailed analysis on the discourse of professionalism in adult education can be found in the unpublished doctoral thesis of Ms. Annika Lehmann. She has identified strands of development of the concept of professionalism in adult education on a discourse-analytical approach.

only produce social plurality with their training programs offered, but eventually need the plurality of staff with different backgrounds and careers. Professional and organizational development are strongly interrelated processes.

- (7) The dynamic, open and flexible concept of professionalism must take into account the current and individual situation of each adult educator. The concept of ‘competence’ and existing instruments to measure competences should be revised and restructured in order to leave space for the development of the ‘professional self’.

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„Profesjonalne ja” edukatora doroslych. Pluralizm jako podstawa koncepcji dynamicznego i otwartego profesjonalizmu nauczycieli doroslych

Słowa kluczowe: profesjonalizm, profesjonalizacja, własny profesjonalizm, edukacja dorosłych, Niemcy

Streszczenie: Głównym celem obecnie trwającej debaty na temat profesjonalizmu w edukacji dorosłych i w dyscyplinach pokrewnych jest dotarcie do istoty tej koncepcji – jednej z ważniejszych w andragogice. W literaturze przedmiotu można znaleźć różne i korespondujące z odmiennymi teoriami poglądy na ten temat. W artykule analizujemy najważniejsze czynniki zewnętrzne i wewnętrzne, które miały i mają wpływ na koncepcję profesjonalizmu. Odnosimy się do dyskursu w literaturze przedmiotu jako czynnika wewnętrznego oraz do polityczno-oświatowych i społecznych uwarunkowań jako czynników zewnętrznych. Najpierw prezentujemy różne ujęcia profesjonalizacji, następnie odnosimy się do współczesnych procedur wspierania andragogicznego profesjonalizmu. Poczynione analizy pozwalają na sformułowanie wniosku, że współcześnie mamy do czynienia raczej z zawężonym rozumieniem profesjonalizmu. W ostatnich dziesięcioleciach dyskusja na temat profesjonalizmu bazowała na promowaniu edukacji jako kluczowym zagadnieniu współczesnego społeczeństwa. Opierając się na najnowszych pracach prezentujemy w skróconej formie ideę „professional self”, która wspiera koncepcję dynamicznego i otwartego profesjonalizmu. Artykuł jest krytycznym przyczynkiem do dyskusji na temat koncepcji indywidualnego rozwoju.

„Professionelle Selbst“. Pluralismus als Basis des dynamischen und offenen Konzepts von Professionalität der Erwachsenenbildner

Schlüsselwörter: Professionalität, Professionalisierung, Professionelle Selbst, Erwachsenenbildung, Deutschland

Zusammenfassung: Ein zentrales Ziel der anhaltenden Diskussion über Professionalität in der Disziplin Erwachsenenbildung und angrenzenden Disziplinen ist es, ein konkretes (genuines) Verständnis über das Konzept zu gewinnen. Das Konzept Professionalität lässt vermuten, zu einem der wichtigsten Elemente zu zählen, wenn es darum geht die Disziplin Erwachsenenbildung und das Beschäftigungsfeld für Erwachsenenbilder/-innen weiterzuentwickeln. In der Fachliteratur finden sich hinsichtlich des Themas unterschiedliche Aussagen, die mit unterschiedlichen the-

oretischen Zugängen korrespondieren. Der vorliegende Artikel wird daher die wichtigsten ex- und internen Faktoren untersuchen, die Einfluss auf das Konzept Professionalität hatten und haben. Hierzu nehmen wir Bezug auf den innerdisziplinären Diskurs als internen Faktor und beziehen ebenso bildungspolitische und gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen als externe Faktoren in unsere Reflektion zum Konzept mit ein. Zunächst skizzieren wir die verschiedenen zurückliegenden Professionalisierungsstränge und gehen daraufhin auf gegenwärtige Verfahren zur Unterstützung von erwachsenenpädagogischer Professionalität ein. Der historische Rückblick wird das eher verengte Verständnis von Professionalität in aktuellen Diskussionen herausstellen. In den vergangenen Jahrzehnten beruhte die Diskussion über Professionalität auf einem politischen Vorgehen, um Bildung als das Schlüsselthema einer modernen Gesellschaft zu bewerben. Aufbauend auf jüngste Arbeiten stellen wir in verkürzter Form Gedanken zum „*Professionelle Selbst*“ vor, das ein dynamisches und offenes Konzept von Professionalität unterstützt. Der Artikel ist als ein theoretisch kritischer Beitrag zu verstehen, der einschränkende Konzepte zur individuellen Entwicklung reflektiert. Und dem gegenüber die Entwicklung eines „*Professionellen Selbst*“ favorisiert, das als ein erforderliches/Phänomen in der pluralen „Landschaft“ der Erwachsenenbildung verstanden wird.

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