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Development and Autonomy. Conceptualising on the teaching profession in different national contexts

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1. Introduction

In this chapter I want to present considerations about teachers’ continuing professional development (CPD) and how it is related to the autonomy teachers have in their profession in different national contexts. These thoughts relate to my PhD thesis developed in several discussions with Eva Forsberg. This chapter aims to honour her as a very inspiring and influential person to my academic work.

One aspect of teachers’ CPD that is rather underexposed is the question of the impact of the context as Guskey already writes in 1995 and as it is echoed again in Bolam & McMahon (2004). Instead CPD is often treated as a phenomenon that is universal for all teachers in the world. The character of the field of research on teachers’ CPD as being fragmented in a plethora of often highly context-related individual studies could not contribute to a further conceptualisation of the impact of the context on CPD yet (ibid.). Mostly it is only stated that studies in different national contexts often produce the same results which is seen as prove that there exist universal principles [Sprinthall et. al., already in (1996), as example: Avalos’ review on teachers’ CPD from (2011) in Teaching and Teacher Education]. Consequently, models for successful school and teacher improvement are imported and exported as they were common goods from developed to the developing countries, whereas the respective status can be seen at the league tables of international large scale studies (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). When such models do not work out then, often teachers’ hostility against reform and change is blamed. This chapter tries to tackle this situation by considering guiding mechanisms that have impact on teachers’ CPD in different national contexts. The idea is to investigate crucial aspects of the teaching profession and examining then their impact on teachers’ CPD. Such an approach might contribute to an understanding of different CPD habits of teachers in different national contexts. In this chapter I focus on one very crucial aspect of the profession: Teacher autonomy. What teachers are allowed to do in their practice is highly context related. By comparing the professional development of teachers in Germany and Sweden as example of teaching professions having different kind of autonomy, I will argue for theoretical considerations – though on a very explorative level – on how particular teacher context related autonomy relates to their continuing professional development. The chapter starts with the presentation of my understanding of teacher autonomy as a multidimensional phenomenon. Then shortly both comparative cases, Germany and Sweden are presented regarding their specific teacher autonomy. In the third part German and Swedish teachers’ perceptions on CPD are presented as they appeared in my PhD studies. In the last part both sections are combined in the earlier mentioned aim of this chapter, a theoretical framework on the relation of teachers’ CPD to teacher autonomy.

2. Conceptualising teacher autonomy

The teaching profession, in particular, is marked by its dependency on or complementary relationship to an organisation: the school (Pfadenhauer & Brosziewski, 2008). Teachers’ work takes place mainly between their pedagogical classroom work and the expectations and constraints of local and national authorities. Consequently, teachers have to balance pedagogical practice with organisational constraints dictated by others. Here, teachers need a certain scope of action which they can use by applying own rules and regulation. They react to pedagogical problems in the classroom and balance these against their function of stabilising and developing society by the transfer of appropriate knowledge to pupils. The
framing of teachers’ work through the organisation of the school (system) and the handling of the contradictions in this configuration becomes an integral part of the teaching profession (Luhmann, 2002). Being a teacher therefore involves a constant trade-off. In my understanding, the scope that teachers have for dealing with this trade-off constitutes their autonomy. The scope of action is indeed built not on total freedom but on the capacity – provided by self-determined rules and regulations as well as resources – of the profession to handle the issues in an appropriate way. From the governance perspective, this means the opportunities teachers have to gain, maintain and control crucial aspects of their profession in relation to state governance. This conditions teachers’ actions. Moreover, a focus on governance regimes does not imply that the individual teachers in the individual schools act precisely in the manner intended by the regime of governance. It is simply assumed that they must relate to this given frame. Finally, Autonomy does not mean simply freedom, but rather “the quality or state of being self-governing”. More specifically, autonomy is “the capacity of an agent to determine its own actions through independent choice within a system of principles and laws to which the agent is dedicated” (Ballou, 1998, p.105). Consequently, an autonomous profession does indeed have rules, but the scope for shaping, maintaining and controlling those rules is elaborated in relation to state governance.

2.1. Two dimensions of the teacher autonomy

Recent research forward the analytical value of the dual or multi-dimensionality of teacher autonomy. Fredriksson (2010) proposes a vertical/horizontal distinction, describing the relation between teachers and institutions of state governance, and investigating teacher practice – or what teachers report as being appropriate practice. He shows that, for Swedish upper secondary teachers, increasing vertical and decreasing horizontal autonomy result in the fragmentation of the profession into different forms of professional identities. Frostenson (2012) suggests three dimensions of autonomy: a professional dimension which regards autonomy as characteristic of teachers as a professional group, a faculty or staff dimension which emphasizes the autonomy of a school organisation, including the principal and the whole teaching staff, and finally an individual dimension, which refers to autonomy that the individual teacher possesses. All dimensions can differ and must therefore be discussed separately. This is a useful and sophisticated distinction that also renders visible the fragmentation of the Swedish teaching profession. This model also covers the complicated relations in an individual school. Schools are understood as complicated social systems in which multiple actors, i.e. not only teachers, operate in different roles, and in which one’s autonomy may foster or inhibit the autonomy of others. Increased local autonomy, or school autonomy does not automatically equip teachers with increased autonomy (Salokangas, 2013).

Here I put forward a two-dimensional conception that can be adjusted to the issue of teacher autonomy as governance phenomenon in public mass education. This understanding has been developed in three works [(Wermke, 2013; Wermke & Forsberg, in print; Wermke & Höstfält, 2014)] in which we argue that there is an institutional dimension of autonomy, as it refers to the professional body of teachers, equipped by the state with legal rights and duties. This dimension corresponds to Frostenson’s dimension of “professional autonomy”. Secondly, I argue for a service dimension of teacher autonomy. Service – as we argue – comprises both the individual teacher practice in the classroom and also the practice of the school. It indicates simply the practical dimension of the profession – the contact with the client – and it incorporates the issue of school autonomy. However, as we did with the governance perspective, we look here at the rights and duties the individual teacher is equipped with by the state.

In other words, both the teaching profession as an institution and the professionals in their provision of service can be provided with a certain scope of action. I will refer here to the described dimensions as service autonomy and institutional autonomy. The distinction is
analytical in nature, enabling us to understand the differences between the relation of the state to its professional body of teachers and the relations of the individual teachers to the state and its professional colleagues, both in terms of rights and duties.

2.2. Restricted or extended service and institutional teacher autonomy

This chapter is restricted to the description of a governance perspective and focuses on opportunities for teacher autonomy. The teaching profession may, in the same context, have extended service autonomy and constrained institutional autonomy. This configuration can be reversed, or both dimensions can be either constrained or unconstrained, depending on the context. It then becomes necessary to distinguish between different qualities of autonomy, as I propose. In other words the teaching profession can be described as having either extended or restricted autonomy. Both restricted and extended autonomy are defined as two extremes on a continuum.

Extended or restricted service or institutional autonomy can be related to two forms of school governance, by 1) input or 2) outcome control (Hopmann, 2003; Recum, 2006). Alternative 1 means regulating the input of schooling and leaving the responsibility for defining and evaluating learning outcomes to a professional body of teachers in a regulated frame of schooling (input control). 2) means defining desired learning outcomes and the production of valid instruments for reliable measurement of their achievement by pupils (outcome control).

In the first type, in an input-controlled governance regime, teachers are supposed to gain competence in evaluating and handling all the associated risks through a state-regulated teacher education, and the state also regulates schooling through strictly earmarked resource allocation. Here, teachers are supposed to evaluate pupils’ performances autonomously against curricular goals. Evaluation of teachers’ work mostly occurs within peer groups in the schools, which means within the profession. Teachers in such peer groups use professional reasoning to legitimate their work. Consequently, a given society has to trust teachers and their judgements (Hopmann, Brinek, & Retzl, 2007). In decentralized and outcome-controlled conditions, the second type of school governance, teachers are expected to evaluate pupils’ performances in terms of an apparently well-defined problem definition (Hopmann, 2003). On the one hand, professionals outside the schools, such as scientific and administrative, formulate criteria and targets that learners are expected to meet with the help of teachers. However, since the input is less controlled, there are now diversified possibilities to achieve the goals formulated by others.

Furthermore, the two different regimes of governance are modes of reducing complexity in a mass schooling system. This is important for enabling the maintenance and control of equity in a meritocratic school system. The different ways in which the state reduces complexity affects teacher autonomy, standardizing the input into the school system, or standardizing the outcome to make it comparable, built on certain relational logics (Wermke 2013). The question is how standardization can be achieved by the state in relation to teacher autonomy: this leads to a distinction between responsibility and accountability. Governance by input control builds on professional responsibility, and governance by outcome control on the accountability of the profession to others. Both responsibility and accountability express a kind of control of the profession and constrain autonomy in different way.

Responsibility draws on the regulation by peers of whether or not teachers meet appropriate standards. The control is internal. These practices are established in a code of ethics, describing how a good teacher ought to be (Sabbagh, 2009), and are also displayed in a professional culture (Schein, 2005). Code and culture are often implicit (Terhart, 2008), but they exist and demonstrate teachers’ self-governance by the capacity to define their own standards. As mentioned above, here complexity reduction for the society is built on trust, trust in a teaching profession that regulates itself in some way, which means standards that allow them to deal with the risks they are expected to handle. Accountability means the
attempt to reduce the complexity of schooling by defining it in terms of particular standards, but not by defining the teaching profession itself.

However, the transaction costs in an outcome-controlled accountability system increase, because the system of determining whether the standards of learning are successful or effective becomes more complex. Legitimacy concerns efficient achievement of the external standards, but the standards have to be formulated, made measurable and agreed upon. Moreover, the number of stakeholders in the system increases because there is more than one way to achieve a standard. This increased complexity is, in the “responsibility” alternative, absorbed by a trusted teaching profession. However, the latter cannot be controlled in the same way (Wermke 2013).

In Table 1 I relate the considerations on school governance and standardization to different dimensions of autonomy, institution and service, in restricted or extended quality, from a governance perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The profession as an institution</th>
<th>The profession in service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restricted autonomy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- National regulated standards and measurement (product evaluation)</td>
<td>- Regulated application of resources, content of schooling and instruction, and teacher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accountability</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Legitimation through external standard achievement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- External control of achievement of goals and results</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(outcome control)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Extended autonomy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional sovereignty in defining standards of schooling</td>
<td>- Free choice over content of instruction, application of resources, and, teacher education when its suits the desired outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Legitimation through professional reasoning in a peer group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Internal control and standardization through collegiality (professional culture/code of ethics)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(input control)</td>
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</table>

*Table 1: Extended/restricted institutional and service autonomy*

As discussed, service is concerned with the practical dimension of the teaching profession, referring to what happens in schools and classrooms in direct relation to colleagues and pupils. The institutional dimension considers teachers as a professional group and focuses on their relation to other stakeholders in a school system. With reference to the teaching profession as an institution, I pay attention to definition and regulation of standards, accountability versus responsibility and finally legitimation and control. When it comes to the teaching profession in service, the focus is on regulation as opposed to freedom of choice over resources, content of schooling and instruction, and teacher education.

The *institutional autonomy* of the teaching profession is *restricted* in school systems that draw on outcome control, since other agents/professionals decide on what appropriate knowledge is and how it must be evaluated. Efficiency is thus the foundation of accountability. It describes the teaching profession’s relation to the state and society (Svenssson, 2008). However, in such configurations the individual teacher enjoys *extended autonomy* in constructing his or her *service*, in terms of freedom of choice of content and
methods as well as the means of teacher education. Indeed, the individual decisions must follow the rationale of efficiency in the achievement of goals and results.

Input controlling school systems are characterized by a teaching profession with extended institutional autonomy. The teaching profession itself defines standards. Teachers legitimate and motivate their actions through professional reasoning. The profession, by teacher educators, peers and principals, contributes on the other hand to a regulation of the members’ standardization. Consequently, the autonomous profession, as an institution, builds its status on the constraining of teachers’ service autonomy. Teachers are controlled by their peers through “collegiality” (Svensson, 2008). As described earlier, this comprises a “code of ethics”, and a “professional culture”, which means attitudes and experiences related to appropriate practice. The code of ethics is the foundation of the responsibility that describes the teaching profession’s relation to the state and society (Hoyle, 2008; Svensson, 2008). These are required to establish trust in the teaching profession and in predictability of its members. It must be noted that, even in this case, teachers also act in accordance with efficiency standards, defined by the profession as an institution. However, in such regimes the service autonomy is restricted. This means state regulation of the application of resources – for example by the earmarking of funding and distribution of teachers to schools – and also of the content of schooling as well as teacher education.

3. Two cases of teacher autonomy: The teaching professions in Germany and Sweden

3.1 Germany
The Federal Republic of Germany is made up of 16 Bundesländer (federal states), including five in the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Each Land has its own constitution and government, and responsibility for education essentially falls on the Bundesland. This results in some differences between the Länder, but the overall structure remains similar because of harmonization, primarily through the work and decisions of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. Today, trends and reforms almost always encompass the whole country (Cortina et al. 2003).

Teachers have autonomy in assessing and grading pupils’ performances. Teacher assessment practices are formed in collaboration with colleagues (Terhart 2008). Pupils’ learning is evaluated in comparison with peers in their own school. Two contextual explanations for this can be put forward. Firstly, the educational system has been determined by a Humboldtian Bildung-thought, which, simply put, is based on an educational idea that pupils should be encouraged to be reflective members of a common culture (Diederich and Tenorth 1997). “Every individual’s Bildung is highly idiosyncratic. Thus, it is very difficult to formulate universal ‘standards’, and there is no yardstick for rational, ‘objective’ measurement” (Spranger, in Lundahl and Waldow 2009, 372). That is why standards-based testing of pupils’ performances was for a long time not used in Germany. Moreover, teachers also enjoyed a high degree of pedagogical freedom in the classroom: through a licensed system of curricula in schools with professional freedom to translate state-regulated content into the pedagogical practice of the classroom (Lehrfreiheit) (Hopmann 1999). This system has been stable since the time of the Prussian school reform. Secondly, after living through two totalitarian regimes, this scope of action was enhanced for West German teachers. This freedom was also expressed in loose relations between policy makers, universities and politicians.

This rather autonomous teaching profession emerged in a school system characterised primarily by centralisation of resources. On the state level, ministries of education regulate curricula, funding, teacher training, employment of teachers, and allocation of resources to
certain schools. Teachers are thought to be capable of making a valid assessment of the learning processes of pupils in line with state curricula. This “trust” (Hopmann 2006) in teachers has been grounded in an exhaustive teacher education, based mainly on academic content knowledge in the subjects in the first part of an educational degree and on pedagogical and didactical education in teacher courses in the second part (Blömeke 2004). There have been many reform endeavors in recent years in several states, often related to large scale tests and New public management (see Wermke 2013). However, the teaching profession as such has been changed in that amount, as the amount and ambitions of reforms would imply. Teachers are still tenured civil servants. Although such reforms are intended to promote the results of schools through competition, results of standard testing are not public and there is no market-regulated school system where the schools receive resources based on the number of pupils enrolled. In addition, the reforms are keenly debated and it can be seen that a teaching profession, in terms of a new public management ideology, apparently does not work well for German civil service teachers (Terhart, 2011).

Regarding the autonomy model elaborated, the German teaching profession can consequently be characterised by restricted service autonomy and extended institutional autonomy.

3.2. Sweden

From 1990 until today, Sweden has implemented a series of educational reforms. Taken together, they have affected the structure, distribution, and content of student education, teacher education, and above all the governing, control and evaluation of education. On one level, the changes can be described in terms of decentralisation and democratization, while on another they have been characterised in terms of centralisation and de-professionalization. A prominent feature of the reforms was a shift in governance from the state level to the municipal level, and from detailed regulation to goal and result steering. This is accompanied by an increased focus on output and products at the expense of input and processes. There has been a major shift towards the marketisation of the school system. Today, many pupils, especially in upper secondary school, attend private schools which are paid for through a voucher system (Forsberg and Lundgren 2009).

Sweden has a tradition of close co-operation between policy-makers, education researchers and central bureaucrats in order to legitimate school governance and school reform through scientific research (the “iron triangle”) (Rosengren and Öhngren 1997). This, like the idea of constructing educational goals towards the actual requirements of society and the economy (Telhaug, Mediås, and Aasen 2006), is part of a social engineering perspective on both education and change. As before, curricular objectives stress democracy and equity as well as a complex view of knowledge. In the 1990s, teachers were expected to act as curriculum makers (Clandinin and Connelly 1992), deciding, together with their colleagues and pupils, what and how to teach. At the same time, the municipalities, directors of private schools, and teachers were held accountable for pupils’ performances and school results. In this way, responsibility and blame shifted from the state to stakeholders. Changes in governance also emphasised a need to increase the control and evaluation of outcomes (Klette and Carlgren 2008).

When results from both national and international tests pointed to declines in performance, the state introduced a number of new measures, including diagnostic instruments, earlier and more frequent use of grading and inter/national tests, inspections and school development support (Forsberg and Nordzell 2009). Again, curricula were changed – in line with the Swedish tradition – to prescribe what content to teach. In addition, criteria for specific grades in each subject were developed. More recently, inter/national tests, assessment, grading and inspection have been promoted as instruments for mapping the quality of the school system, to identify areas of improvement, and as devices for developing education practices (author 2011). Overall, teachers are expected to react to external pressure rather than to act as
curriculum makers. Together, these measures standardised content and the perspective on knowledge, and reduced teachers’ scope for action and their autonomy as professionals (Englund, Forsberg and Sundberg 2011). Teacher education in Sweden is certainly changing. The tradition of putting pedagogical knowledge ahead of academic content has been somewhat altered, and knowledge of assessment and evaluation are now being emphasised, the latter partly as a consequence of gaps identified in present teacher training courses.

Regarding the autonomy model elaborated, the Swedish teaching profession can be characterised by restricted service autonomy and extended institutional autonomy in particular after the reforms of the 1990’s. However, today Swedish teacher are jeopardized to be restricted in both service and institutional autonomy.

4. German and Swedish teachers’ continuing professional development

Here I present the most significant results of a research project, which draws on questionnaire study of 700 teachers in Sweden and Germany (Forsberg & Wermke, 2012; Wermke, 2011, 2012).

Teachers have certain attitudes towards sources of knowledge and they act as agents in their CPD. They choose certain offers and reject others. They also decide to undertake certain forms of learning: either alone or in courses, with colleagues or other persons. CPD cultures differ in several aspects significantly in Sweden and Germany. Regarding continuing professional development, it does matter whether a teacher is German or Swedish. The learning of German teachers takes place more often in isolated settings and short-term courses. Swedish teachers are more group-oriented and attend university courses for longer periods. Some knowledge sources for teachers’ CPD in the school system have a great influence on teachers. In both countries, teachers rely mostly on their colleagues. The results of the project are aligned to the findings of other studies, in particular regarding the CPD cultures of teachers in Germany.

Regarding other actors within the CPD context, however, highly significant differences exist. Swedish teachers are much more open to other sources. Teachers put more trust in institutions like the National Agency for Education and the universities. In Germany, these relationships can be described as rather lacking. German teachers only trust their colleagues and those sources that are close to them, which might generate a more conservative attitude towards the acceptance of research and reform. Furthermore, a producer-customer relationship in CPD apparently generates a climate among teachers that is more receptive to ideas from outside the school. This can be seen both for the relationship of the actors in the Swedish market-regulated CPD landscape and for the relationships between textbook publishers and teachers in Germany.

Regarding school governance, German teachers can be described as more autonomous. The impact of national curriculum tests and open, competence-based curricula is much higher in Sweden. Here, teachers wish to be guided much more in their CPD. Deficiencies in basic teacher education and needs for continuing professional development are not related to each other for German teachers.

Moreover, trustworthiness of a certain source of knowledge is a highly relevant predictor of a knowledge source’s importance to teachers in Sweden and in Germany, however, the strength of trustworthiness as predictor differs from source to source. In particular, trustworthiness is crucial to the importance of universities for teachers’ CPD. The same is true for the importance of institutions of school governance (NAE/Senat Dept.) as a source of knowledge. The established relations for textbook publishers and teacher unions and associations are strong, but weaker than for school governance and universities. For the
importance of the colleagues for teachers’ CPD trustworthiness obviously is only one among other important predictors.

In particular, for German teachers, trustworthiness of a source of knowledge is a stronger predictor than it is for their Swedish colleagues. Although trustworthiness does indeed play a significant role for Swedish teachers, the importance of a source of knowledge is obviously dependent on other factors that cannot be explained by the models presented here. The explanatory value of the analyses is thus increased. The findings lead to the conclusion that national context has great influence. German teachers demonstrate a need to trust a knowledge source more if they consider it important to their CPD. This is true for each tested source of knowledge. Even though trustworthiness of a source still has a relevant and significant effect on Swedish teachers’ CPD compared with their German colleagues, for them there is not the same need for trustworthiness of a source.

5. Teacher autonomy and development: A theoretical framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance of the teaching profession through extended institutional autonomy/restricted service autonomy (Germany)</th>
<th>extended service autonomy/restricted institutional autonomy (Sweden)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers develop for themselves, following the traditional cultures of the profession. This might accelerate the isolation that is already characteristic for the profession. Gap to agents in the CPD marketplace who cannot legitimate themselves as teaching professionals. Profession’s CPD is rather conservative</td>
<td>Greater responsibility for the teacher in service, therefore more cooperation in service, also in their CPD. More opportunities to react to occurring necessities for development in service. Greater receptiveness towards a wider range of opportunities to develop. Greater receptiveness towards knowledge that is not produced by the profession itself. Teachers judge state institutions and universities as very important for their work. This might also, along with insecurity, be due to a jeopardised profession and to the heavy load of own responsibility.</td>
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| When the autonomy of the profession is challenged, the profession can free up strength to defend the profession’s borders. There is a greater effort in CPD and in a renewal of professional structures and explicitness of professional knowledge of teachers. The profession might work as a shelter for change, “grey area autonomy” (Heinrich, 2007), because it protects from inappropriate expectations from elsewhere and fosters renewal of the profession’s conditions | The profession as institution cannot protect the individual teacher. Other professionals, such as administrative professionals take over the planning of CPD. In order to achieve necessary results and goals with schools, principals and superintendents govern teachers’ CPD. CPD might be an instrument for tightening the control of professionals formerly with extended autonomy. |

Table 2: Teacher autonomy and CPD

This chapter aims to develop further conceptualisations of teachers’ continuing professional development. In particular, the national specific teacher autonomy and its impact is the focus. It is argued here that autonomy as it is attributed to teachers by state governance could be described in terms of different qualities and quantities in time and space, and it conditions –
in Archer’s (1995) terms – different agents’ interactions in the shape and function of the teaching profession, including the issue of autonomy. CPD is seen as a means of interaction that elaborates or reproduces existing structures also in terms of teacher autonomy. Here, I will present some hypotheses which reason systematically on the relation between nation-specific teacher autonomy and teacher CPD. These are summarised in Table 2. The focus is on varying forms of governance by autonomy and CPD cultures likely to prevail in such contexts. These hypotheses might then be tested in other national contexts with the same conditioning structures for teachers’ work in terms of autonomy. We see two types of governance, the left column displays the German teaching profession, the right column displays the Swedish case.

If the teaching profession is characterised by extended institutional autonomy then CPD is influenced by professional cultures which teachers share. The teaching profession is responsible to state and society for performing its duties in the best possible way. Colleagues and principals, i.e. peers in the profession, monitor whether the individual teachers’ practice and development fulfil this responsibility regarding the dominant culture. Teachers who do not follow this are stigmatised as bad teachers. A source’s trustworthiness becomes an important factor when teachers judge appropriate knowledge for their development. An extended institutional autonomy is apparently characterised as a gap to stakeholders in the CPD marketplace that are not teaching professionals. This might make the profession more conservative and also contribute to its isolation. On the other hand, in times of reform, when the autonomy of the profession is challenged, an institutionally autonomous profession is free to defend the profession’s status and borders. This can result in greater efforts in CPD and in a renewal of professional structures and explicitness of professional knowledge of teachers.

If the teaching profession is characterised by extended service autonomy, but restricted institutional autonomy, then this has other implication for teachers’ CPD. Teachers have more opportunities to develop. The teachers in service might have more opportunities to react to their real necessities for development. Furthermore, teachers work more together. However, if such a system is regulated through accountability either by the state using national curriculum tests or by the marketplace, in which schools are selected on performance, then teachers’ service autonomy is at risk of becoming restricted. Visible efficiency becomes the guiding principle and CPD has to be subordinated to its logic. An autonomous profession as an institution cannot protect the individual teacher. Other professionals, such as administrative or scientific professionals take over the planning of teachers’ development. One characteristic of such situations is the detachment of principals from the teaching profession and their relegation to an administrative role. In order to achieve the necessary goals and results for their schools, principals as well as superintendents govern teachers’ CPD. Even in a CPD marketplace with a plethora of opportunities, the agents within it are not the teachers themselves, but administrative professionals such as principals and superintendents. It is also argued that a teaching profession with restricted institutional autonomy is more receptive towards knowledge that is not produced by the profession itself. Teachers therefore assess state institutions and universities as much more important to their work. This might be a sign of progressivism, or it might be, alongside insecurity, due to a lack of institutional borders. This leads also to a situation in which trust in and trustworthiness of sources of knowledge are not equally important for teachers’ CPD. Other sources are not questioned to the same extent. Relations to external experts are apparently seen as natural. The teaching profession as an institution is the key to understanding teachers’ CPD. The institution frames teachers’ service. Extended institutional autonomy might represent a better tradeoff for teachers in the long run, even if the extended service autonomy provided theoretically many more opportunities to work and develop. The former might protect them more from intervention by other professionals, and enable a kind of “grey area autonomy” (Heinrich 2007) even when the price was simply restricted opportunities to pursue development.

Furthermore, the theoretical conceptualisation considered the relation of a context-dependent two-dimensional autonomy that teachers have in practice – being conditional
structures – and teachers’ continuing professional development – expressing a possible agency. However, the design for measuring teachers’ CPD through their perceptions is highly exploratory. The aim was therefore not a comprehensive description of both cases, but an investigation of the analytical value of the relation between autonomy and teachers’ CPD in order to describe and analyse the influence of the national context on CPD. Moreover, this interest also limits the explanatory value of my considerations for the impact of smaller contexts such as the individual school or municipality. Interesting differences between national cases have emerged and been analysed in terms of different forms of teacher autonomy. I welcome possible criticisms concerning my hypotheses’ strength and would like to call for more research that proves and develops the causative power behind teachers’ CPD.

References


