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## **The Possibility of *Bildung* in Professional Education: *Teacher Education as a Case for Study***

*It is widely accepted that being professional implies having a certain knowledge-based repertoire at your disposal, a repertoire that will make you able to meet the client-related aims and objectives given by society. I will not deny the importance of such a mandate for a professional. However, as I see it, by itself this may reduce professionals to mere expert-managers in public service. Being so, the professionals will not be expected to spend much of their time and resources questioning the moral authority involved in public aims and objectives, because this already has been worked out beforehand by the public authorities. What the professionals instead ought to do is to focus on carrying out those public aims and objectives in the fairest way. As long as such a well-founded fairness works there may be few objections to what expert-managers do. However, fairness is not an unbiased matter. When people have different values they may also choose differently. So, to my concern this approach becomes a problem when professionals by just following their pre-given mandate thus happen to humiliate their clients or cause them pain, or by doing so prevent them from developing what they consider to be essential. As I see it, a way out of this for professionals is to reformulate their conception of professionalism and recognise their sense of responsibility and morality, also across formal rules and regulations. This requires that professionals are able to state the reason for their professionalism, not only tell what their professional skills are. Furthermore, it requires that they are able to critically reflect over the premises for those reasons and to act accordingly; having in mind the needs of each client that one is set to serve. This calls for a multidimensional professional qualification and a many-facet critical-reflective approach. Here teacher education will be used as a case for study.*

The main objective for a teacher education is to see that coming professional teachers develop qualifications that will make them able to deal with the crossing needs and expectations of

their work. This requires different kinds of knowledge - knowledge about how to analyse the distinct needs of the pupils, knowledge about ways of helping different groups of pupils and knowledge about how to organise situations and institutional settings so that each pupil can get the best possible offers. Furthermore, it presupposes an awareness of possible moral dilemmas involved in making choices on behalf of the pupils. I will argue that preparing the teacher students for this implies taking care of certain dimensions of professional qualification. These dimensions of professional qualifications can be seen to be antagonistic but also to complement each other.

One is a *technical-instrumental dimension*. This has to do with the "tool" function and the means-end function of a professional qualification. An education will serve a tool function when it makes the students technically competent to teach pupils to write, to read, doing sums, finding out what things costs and so forth. Furthermore, knowledge about didactics and general pedagogy will make students able to arrange learning situations for their coming pupils. The qualification has a mean-end function in helping the coming professionals to develop a technical-instrumental repertoire that will make them capable to handle in principle any situation in their professional work. Here professional qualification has to do with developing a technical repertoire. It's meaning and relevance is connected with its prognostic potentials.

The expert knowledge of a profession may not just have a mean-end function. The professional qualification will have a broader scope when an *enlightenment dimension* also is part of the qualification. Then the above-mentioned concepts are not seen only to have a technical function. The concepts that constitute teacher education are in addition supposed to make the students able to critically analyse, interpret and understand different phenomena in life - how they may be connected to each other and influence each other, in the physical-material world, in the society and in the culture. Different theories and models imply different ways of analysing, comprehending, approaching and verifying matters. Correspondingly, what is true and right can be seen differently. The enlightenment-aspect implies having knowledge about this and being able to critically reflect on how it may affect the way you as a teacher approach the subjects in school and how you meet the pupils' questions for knowledge. Sometimes this implies that the traditions of the school's curriculum or the local

school cultures are challenged and their premises critically investigated. Then a cultural-critical approach is present. When any position is questioned the enlightenment dimension also implies a deconstructive approach. However, a critical investigation may also mean that the premises of the traditions are not challenged. Then we have to do with practical-traditional approach. The didactical implications of that will be discussed more thoroughly further on.

Professional qualification may as well incorporate *a personal formative dimension*. Whereas the former dimensions concern how a professional in different objectifying ways may describe the phenomena of life, this dimension deals with how the same phenomena can be made a matter of personal concern. A personal formative dimension is present when a qualification is not only supposed to make the coming professionals able to do something special, but also to *be* something special and thus capable of identifying themselves professionally, as individuals and as citizens. The *Bildung* tradition is to my concern here informative. The 18<sup>th</sup> century's German new-humanist Herder describes *Bildung* as "rising up to humanity through culture". Wilhelm von Humboldt (1969, 2000) adds that it also implies each person's "perfect individuality", which calls for "freedom of action and a variety of situations".<sup>1</sup> For a coming professional there may be ideals to copy or models to be inspired by.<sup>2</sup> A matter of concern is how the students make the concepts and dimensions that constitute the identity of a professional education part of their own professional identity construction. The above-mentioned technical-instrumental- and enlightenment qualifying aspects may be part of this. They are a source for different models and theories and may make way for different constructions of professional identity and for different conceptions of what it means to be a professional. Being able to state the reasons for one's conceptions of professional qualification and identity construction and critically reflecting on the premises for those reasons, means giving the personal formative dimension to professional qualification a *Bildung* perspective.

### **Ways of distorting a multidimensional orientation to professional qualification**

However, even if all the above-mentioned aspects are present in a professional education this does not necessarily imply that they are equally taken care of. They may all in a way be

amputated and absorbed into one dominant professional discourse. That may lead to a distortion of their original meaning. For instance a technical-instrumental way of seeing things may penetrate an education and set the standards for how the enlightenment- and the personal formative aspects are to be taken care of. An example is when the teacher educators see themselves only as unreserved agents for the educational system's objects and aims. Leaning upon such a perspective, teacher educators may claim that the moral authority of the educational system and the ethical premises of their own work need not be questioned, because the system already has defined the premises. So, the role of the teacher educators will be to see that everyone carry out their educational work according to given prescriptions. The students may on these premises have freedom to take care of their own formative learning and qualification - as long as they act according to what they are instructed to do. Another example of this predominant technical-instrumental orientation in education is when the logical systems of the subject matters - with its axioms, rules and procedures - set the premises for what is to be taught to the students and how it is to be taught. The central question for a teacher educator is then the technical: "How can I in the best possible way apply my expert knowledge?" The logic of the subject matters is then what is decisive. Students are seen as mere receivers of teacher educators' expert knowledge. This way the teacher trainers do not take into account how the students approach the subject matters. Establishing a dialogue between the teacher educator as an expert of subject matters and the students as learners may change such learning conditions. Becoming aware of how the students see things can make the teacher educators able to identify their own ways of seeing things as related to that, and vice versa. In that way a dialogue can make it possible to check out one's own understanding as compared to that of others and thus broaden the scope for a professional qualification.

The personal formative dimension and the *Bildung* aspect may correspondingly be made a too predominant part of a qualification. A personal formative qualification implies using the concepts that the education provides in a critical-reflective construction of one's own professional identity, and to learn how a change in concepts, models and theories makes way for steadily new reconstructions of professional identity. Taken to the extreme this implies making critical reflection the main engagement in education, claiming that such a reflection has potentials to correct all misunderstandings, false interpretations, false self-conceptions and so forth. By that, a formative professional qualification may catch the meaning of

thoroughly prepared ideological- and cultural-critical rationalisations. Which means that the coming teachers' own reflective development is no longer an extension of a practical professional discourse. The qualification has become a mere reflective project. *Bildung* has then lost its original meaning as a morally committed reflective practice.

### **Handling the dimensions of professional qualification in a late modern society**

An education may take care of all the above-mentioned dimensions of professional qualification and still be of little relevance for a professional in practice if it does not incorporate the special forms of knowledge and qualifications that is required in society. A late modern society brings certain challenges to an educational system, its formative qualification and thus to how the above-mentioned aspects are to be handled. The multiplicity of such societies implies that traditions often are questioned, especially that any one tradition should have a superior significance (Mead 1971). This concerns the handling of all the dimensions of professional qualification.

From different perspectives Jürgen Habermas (1974, 1984, 1987), Thomas Ziehe & Herbert Stubenrauch (1983, 1989) and Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens & Scott Lash (1994) describe how new possibilities for freedom come into being in late modernity in departure from traditional world views. Social and cultural variations among people make way for more disagreement about collective goals. Unlike in traditional societies, one cannot presuppose a common comprehension of concepts like independence, qualification, and professional self-realisation and identity formation. According to Habermas (1996), the individuals' well-founded points of view have, as results of such changes, become more important than ever. The diffusion in society of alternative regimes concerning knowledge, truth and ways of living (Toffler 1984, Mantovani 1996) may in education give rise for reflection and discussions about what is true and right, and how to make choices and realise oneself even under conditions that are not predictable. Definite means-end constructions may become a matter of dispute. Even so, some social groups may see the multiculturalism of the late modern society as a threat and seek to defend their traditional positions, pointing them out as the foremost ideals to be copied. However, what characterises a democratic pluralistic society

is that it gives room both for the traditionalists and the non-traditionalists. There may be groups that commit themselves primarily to traditional values as well as others that in changing times commit themselves to new impulses and seek to compose their identities in a crossing between the above-mentioned positions. If teacher educators in a pluralistic late modern society are to prepare a relevant qualification they have to take into account that the students may represent a great variety of worldviews and beliefs, and that they anyway as teachers are to participate in a multicultural society. Even so, a teacher education is supposed to pass on a certain culture of professional knowledge to their students and by that also make sure that the students attain a certain technical-instrumental repertoire that will make them able to handle professional matters in a technical-instrumental way. By inspiring the students to critically reflect on what is *not* made possible if one simply rely on such a technical-instrumental repertoire, teacher educators may as well make room for the enlightenment- and the *Bildung* dimensions in the professional qualification. In what follows I will more thoroughly discuss ways of doing this and later on return to what I see as didactical implications.

### **The possible role of the teacher educator in a multidimensional professional qualification**

The teacher educators are formally responsible for the students' professional qualification. By law and/or by curriculum they are instructed to stimulate the students in their formative education. However, the significance of the professional teacher educators as organisers of a critical-reflective qualification can be questioned. Professionalism in itself seems to be no guarantee in this matter. The professional teacher educator can, by exercise of his/her expert power, restrain the possibilities for critical reflection in professional matters and refrain from involving the students in discussions about their own professional qualification and identity formation. Even so, it seems important for the development of a multidimensional education that their professionalism is acknowledged. The complex special competence of professionals can make way for more manifold judgements of students' abilities and efforts than just curriculum instructions and bureaucratic and standardised procedures can give. This means better possibilities to take care of the variations in the students' needs (Freidson 2001), and by this make way for a development of each individual student's professional qualifications.

A formal education will always set up certain regulations when it comes to what the students should learn. Qua professionals, however, teacher educators are expected to have some freedom so that they can organise learning situations according to the students' special needs. Accordingly William J. Chambliss (1977) claims that a professional relation is to be described as a social relation where the performer agrees to set his strongly specialised skills at somebody's disposal - in exchange for the right to regulate his own special activities. Thus, professionalism implies a right for the professionals to decide - even when there are others who have jurisdiction. More precisely professionals' self-determination is related to: 1) their possession of a subject and pedagogical knowledge that students need to be familiar with, 2) that part of this knowledge is so specialised that it is not immediately accessible for those who lack the same qualification and experience, and 3) that this knowledge is so complex that it can not simply be transformed into standardised procedures and bureaucratic or layman decisions (Freidson 2001). Thus, professionalism becomes an important factor when one seeks to explain how teacher educators can act as organisers for students in their identity-formative learning processes.<sup>3</sup>

If all the above-mentioned dimensions of professional qualification are to be part of an education, teacher educators have to take care so that the students are not treated only as receivers of meaning and direction. This is because founding professional autonomy on reason and not only on expert status, implies that all involved will have freedom to investigate what is right or wrong. The opposite will be to try to influence the students to do what one as a teacher educator wants without taking into consideration the students' own rationality. According to Immanuel Kant (1788/2004) acting so implies not seeing the students as rational beings and as ends in themselves but only as means, thus basing oneself on a technical-instrumental regime. As Kant sees it, to be fully reasonable one should also be willing to accompany one's actions by the morally given principle that one shall make the maxim of one's actions into a general law. These principles can make way for several complementary orientations to professional autonomy, which however are not to be discussed here.<sup>4</sup>

In practice these principles will surely not suite every teacher education. However, a matter of concern here is not what empirically is the case. What matters is how a multidimensional

professional qualification can be provided for and according to that what kinds of critical-reflective approaches that may be called for. I will go further into this drawing mainly on Jürgen Habermas concepts of interests and his discourse ethics, as well as on the deconstructive traditions of Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty.

### **Ways of realising a multidimensional professional qualification - different approaches**

When the educational challenge just implies getting well-founded answers to given questions, it may be acceptable for professional teacher educators to act instrumentally, only using their expert knowledge. The case may be different in a multicultural society if there are conflicts and collisions between various interests, values and world-views. Accordingly, just referring oneself to one kind of the mentioned qualifying dimensions may give a too narrow scope for a professional qualification. Different approaches may here complement each other.

The teacher educators restrict themselves to a *technical* approach (Habermas 1974) if they only let their own expert knowledge or the authoritative aims and objects of the curriculum constitute "recipes" for the students to copy. The teacher educators' professional status is then related to their prognostic knowledge about how educational matters technically can be organised and solved. Even this may imply critical reflection. The students may learn critically to scrutinise how different analytical approaches and learning methods can supplement one another in the making of a more efficient and productive education. However, as long as goals, values, frameworks and strategies are taken for granted, this critical scrutiny is part of a technical approach thus bringing about the technical-instrumental dimension of professional qualification.

A *practical-traditional* approach has another scope: This approach does not get its sense from technical mastery. Meaning is not here related to a prognostic knowledge. Meaning is a matter of coming to terms with the professional knowledge that has been passed down. The existing norms and values in society and in teacher education give the frame of reference. These norms and values can be found in law, curriculum and regulations and in arrangements that have been established locally. Meaning is constituted when the teacher educators and the

students grasp the essence of this conveyed knowledge and applies it on themselves and their situation. On these premises they may critically discuss the relevance of different subjects and working methods, bringing in their own experiences. Questions may be raised to the actual goals and strategies involved in education and how they influence each other. This way the enlightenment dimension of professional qualification is brought into focus. However, as long as the premises underlying these goals and strategies is not a matter of discussion, I will inspired by Habermas (1974) name this a practical-traditional approach to professional qualification.

Such an approach may again be supplemented by with a *cultural-critical* approach.<sup>5</sup> When the teacher educators make use of such an approach they will stimulate the students' critical self-reflection and inspire them to critically reflect about the ways professional knowledge is organised in teacher education and to question what makes different practices legitimate. By means of different procedures one will then try to lay down what is true, right, trustworthy and understandable.<sup>6</sup> This way this approach also becomes part of what has been described as the enlightenment dimension of professional qualification. Having a cultural-critical approach as a point of departure, the students will be invited to discuss the ideological premises of teaching, training, education and profession - how it both can obstruct and stimulate the students' own critical-reflective learning processes (Habermas 1974. See also Carr & Kemmis 1986, Zeichner 1993). With such an approach the different ways of solving educational matters do not remain obvious and unproblematic. They are to be developed in a critical reflection between teachers and students, under conditions where the students are allowed to challenge the norms and claims that tacitly are presupposed. Thereby professional qualification is supposed to become a dynamic and ever changing autobiographical process that the students through discussions and deliberations may find their own personal ways of running through. The latter implies that the personal formative dimension of professional qualification also is part of a cultural-critical approach.

Such a cultural-critical approach may again be supplemented by a *deconstructive* approach (Derrida 1976, 1981, 1984, 1989, Rorty 1989, 1990). This approach gives room for more than arguments. Here to deconstruct means to let one's own constructions of subject matters, teaching and learning go for a moment, reflecting on all that is *not* made possible by one's

own way of seeing things. This can be supported by the teacher educators when they open up for the students' unforeseen comments, questions and wonders about their own qualification. This shows how professional knowledge can be de- and reconstructed in the tension between tradition and renewal. This is also a way of bringing the enlightenment dimension of professional qualification into focus. By making professional identity formation a matter for deconstruction, the personal formative dimension of professional qualification may as well be made part of this approach.

### **A multidimensional orientation to the didactical organisation of professional qualification**

The above-mentioned critical-reflective approaches (technical, practical-traditional etc.) are always working from within a certain historical/biographical horizon. Accordingly the mentioned types of critical reflection will first attain a concrete meaning in a pedagogical context when they are related to some specific pedagogical subjects and when they are set to take care of some qualifying dimensions (technical-instrumental dimension, enlightenment dimension etc.). As shown this may vary according to what pedagogical matters are in focus and what their objects are. Whether or not a multidimensional professional qualification will take place and on what terms it eventually does, will depend on the kinds of critical-reflective approaches (technical, practical-traditional etc.) that are involved in an educational process where both the students, the subject matters and the teacher educators are integrated parts. Here focus is especially on the role that the teacher educators may have in promoting a professional qualification, and what the premises of their work are. I will sum up the foregoing discussions by shortly describing how in my view the teacher educators in a formative qualification may handle the various pedagogical elements:

- if students in their course of study shall be able to develop a critical-reflective understanding of the professional relevance of *the subject matters* of education
- if students through their professional qualification shall be able develop a critical-reflective understanding of what it *personally* means to have a professional identity
- if *teacher educators* themselves shall be *models* or *copies* for their students in the students' critical-reflective qualification and identity formation.

Analysing this implies raising questions to:

- I.) what teacher educators can do to help the students develop a critical-reflective understanding of the *subject matters* of education.

According to what has been said this will take place:

- a) in a technical sense<sup>7</sup>: if teacher educators restrict themselves to let their own expert knowledge or the authoritative aims and objects mentioned in the curriculum constitute "recipes" for the students to copy. Knowledge has here a prognostic and technical function. As such it can also have a critical-reflective function when students critically learn to scrutinise how different analytical approaches and learning methods can supplement one another in the making of a more efficient and productive education.
- b) in a practical-traditional sense<sup>8</sup>: if meaning is not related to a prognostic knowledge but to the possible consensus between teacher educators and students about the knowledge that has been passed down. The role of the teacher educators is here to organise the learning so that the students can be able to grasp the essence of the authoritative knowledge and apply it on themselves and their own situation. This may imply critically bringing in one's own experiences and raising questions to the actual goals and strategies that are involved in education. However, with such an approach a prevailing understanding of educational matters is not challenged.
- c) in a cultural-critical sense<sup>9</sup>: if teacher educators organise for a historical reflective or cultural critical analysis and discussions about the possible relevance of the subject matters. Confronting the subject matters with different perspectives, conceptions, premises and personal experiences will do this. The purpose here is to develop the students' critical-reflective understanding of the principles and premises involved in organising subject matters.
- d) in a deconstructive sense<sup>10</sup>: if teacher educators arrange for an analysis where the central question is what is *not* made possible and thus oppressed by an authoritative way of organising professional knowledge. The purpose then is to stimulate the students' general power to raise questions and be wondering about what they learn (in focus is this and not to acquire some "right" or "better" ideological- or cultural critical recipes).

Turning focus in professional qualification from the role of the subject matters to the students, the foregoing may be supplemented by an analysis of:

II.) what teacher educators can do to help the students develop a critical-reflective understanding of what it *personally* means to have a professional identity.<sup>11</sup>

According to what has been said this will take place:

a) in a technical sense: if teacher educators restrict themselves to let the official authoritative aims, objects and instructions mentioned in point I) constitute "recipes" for the students in their own identity constructions. That is recipes that will tell them how they can make themselves into objects for the development of a critical-reflective professional identity. The critical reflexivity is then bound to the realisation of pre-given objects and aims and to how this can be done in well-founded productive or effective ways.

b) in a practical-traditional sense<sup>12</sup>: if teacher educators invite the students to critically compare their own personal experiences and knowledge with that of others and that presented in official plans, so to develop their professional identity. With a practical approach the participants are however not invited to challenge prevailing conceptions of how professional identity formation can take place. The purpose with such an approach is to get a more thorough understanding of prevailing views.

c) in a cultural-critical sense<sup>13</sup>: if teacher educators arrange for a cultural-critical reflection and discussion about the premises of professional identity, by confronting the students with different traditions and ways of conceiving the matters of self-development, self-understanding and professional identity.

d) in a deconstructive sense<sup>14</sup>: if teacher educators invite the students to be continuously suspicious and wondering about what they learn concerning the development of professional identity and self-realisation (and not just to look for any one "right" or "better" critical recipe). With such an approach the students are challenged to reflect on what is *not* made possible by any authoritative interpretation they are introduced to concerning professional identity and self-realisation.

Turning focus in professional qualification from the conditions for the students' identity formation to how teacher educators may act as role models, the foregoing may be supplemented by an analysis of:

III.) how *the teacher educators* can arrange so that they as professionals can stand forth as *models* or *copies* for their students in the students' critical-reflective qualification and identity formation. This is related to how teacher educators interpret their role as autonomous professionals and practise their qualified judgement professionally as someone to be copied or as models to be inspired by.

According to what has been said this will take place:

a) in a technical sense: that is when the teacher educators' role is unfolded only in a self-referential and monological way, as a professional individual autonomy. The students are then in their critical reflection expected to be followers of the teacher educators' ideas. And they are thus expected to learn to critically reflect about how to fill their role as teachers - according to prescribed objectives in the most productive and efficient way.<sup>15</sup>

b) in a practical-traditional sense: that is when the professional role is unfolded in a corporate dialogical way. With such an approach the students are given opportunities to draw on their own knowledge and experiences as a supplement to what the teacher educators suggest, in a critical discussion about what can make teaching better. Prevailing role conceptions are not challenged. The teacher educators will then be practising a corporate professional autonomy.<sup>16</sup>

c) in a cultural-critical sense: that is when the professional role is unfolded in a cultural-critical way. With such an approach the students are invited to discuss and criticise the premises of the teacher educators' autonomy and qualified judgements. The teacher educators will then be practising a deliberative professional autonomy.<sup>17</sup>

d) in a deconstructive sense: that is when the professional role is unfolded in a heterogenic way. The matter of concern for the teacher educator is then to try unreservedly to open up for the students' comments, questions and wonders about how a teacher educator's professional role possibly can be practised. The point here will be that even if the professional as a person cannot free himself from bringing some of his own perspectives and interests into a situation, he can show responsibility by aiming at doing so. The teacher educators will then be practising a deconstructive autonomy.<sup>18</sup>

### **Some concluding remarks: implications for a study of didactical approaches and possible dimensions in professional qualification**

By comparing how teacher educators initiate critical reflection within and across the mentioned didactical objectives (I., II. and III.), one can get a manifold picture of whether or not they arrange for a multidimensional orientation to professional qualification. A study of these topics may show that the teacher educators mainly are on the same level of reflection in their organisation of different didactical matters and in their arrangements for professional identity formation. The case may also be quite the contrary. A manifold critical reflection concerning the education's subject matters may for instance go together with a predominant technical-instrumental and controlling approach, when it comes to arranging for the students' development of professional identity. So, what is made into an ideal for professional qualification in one pedagogical context may be undermined by what is done in another. Likewise, an analysis may show that a favourable rhetoric about the necessity of a broad critical-reflective orientation to professional identity formation may be covered up by what is done in practice in the critical-reflective handling of subject matters.<sup>19</sup> This makes way for different classifications and conceptions of *Bildung* related to professional identity formation. An analysis of such matters may again give a point of departure for new analysis of the connections between professional strategies, different demands within the educational system and the social constructions of professional identity.

Here focus has been put on the possible role of the teacher educators in the professional qualification of students. How teachers relate to their pupils in primary or secondary school could accordingly have been analysed and empirically studied. This may again be compared with what the teacher education offers their students and what kind of educational relations there is between teacher education and primary and secondary schools.

By drawing on the mentioned theoretical perspectives it may also be possible to value, evaluate and compare the balance between normative knowledge-based aspects and technical-instrumental control elements within different occupational groups, both historically and

comparatively. In this way one might get an even broader picture of the conditions for professional qualification and identity formation among coming professionals. This may tell whether the scope of the professionals is mainly that of the system agents and to what extent it implies a sense of responsibility and morality for the clients also across formal rules and regulations.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The new-humanists were again inspired by the ancient Greek philosophers and their discussions about the reasons for personal upbringing and character formation and what role each person possibly could have in *polis* (Elias 1989, Gadamer 1975, Humboldt 1969, 1970, 2000, Klafki 2000, Lindberg 1999, Lindhardt 1999, Vierhaus 1972).

<sup>2</sup> I am here inspired by the double meaning of the term *Bildung – Nachbild* and *Vorbild* (Gadamer 1975: 11). A formative qualification may imply turning back in time aiming at copying certain professional traditions. Or it may imply searching ahead for some professional models to be inspired by in a formative qualification and identity construction.

<sup>3</sup> However, Julia Evettes (2003) claims that the reality of professionalism often implies that professional values are replaced with organisational values, which means management by bureaucratic and hierarchical procedures rather than by professional relations. She maintains that professionalism has become an effective mechanism for social control at micro- and meso- as well as on macro level. As I see it, teacher educators make no exception. The possibilities of having free, open and critical-reflective discussions with students are restricted by the system's regulations. It seems that state authorities in most Western countries to a considerable extent are engaged in trying to redefine professionalism to make it more commercially oriented, budget-focused and managerial. Accountability and performance indicators have to an increasing degree become professionals' work. Achievement targets are used to justify their receipt of public expenditure and professionals are measured and compared. Formulations in the curriculum that prescribe the content of teaching limit teacher educators' own decisions. A standardisation of tests and examinations implicate that focus is to be put on a limited assortment of the possible subjects that an education may want to choose. This as well limits the teacher educators in unfolding their didactical competence and even more hamper their ability to stimulate critical thinking among their students (Pink 1990, Raaen 2002), and thus obstructs the possibilities for a critical-reflective formative qualification. This does not mean that the teacher educators are entirely deprived of their professional ownership to their expert knowledge, power to define the nature of the subject matters and to control how learning shall be organised. Owing to their professional skills the teacher educators still can be able to function as models for the students in their formative qualification. Due to their analytical comprehension and specialist knowledge, the professionals will often make a difference when there is doubt or uncertainty about how to understand and interpret specialised, complex matters. This may also be the case when formal rules and regulations need to be interpreted, and when the task is to come up with a well-founded and adequate objective. According to Talcott Parsons (1951), the professionals' trust, autonomy and status are precisely related to the responsibility they have in these matters. Parsons maintains that this responsibility stems from their theoretical expert knowledge as well as from their trained competence and their helping approach (see also Merton 1982).

<sup>4</sup>Inspired by Kant professional autonomy can be seen as something that the teacher educators will be able to demonstrate when they - as a result of *their own* well-founded reason and willingness to act universally - approach the students as ends in themselves.

The premise for the autonomy is then a monological one. On the other hand, in accordance with Habermas (1984, 1987), professional autonomy is to be seen as a dialogical, deliberative affair and not only an monological matter. Focus is then on reasoning as a social act, a social act that comes into being *in relation to others* as an outcome of free arguments and deliberations. Thereby, reason is supposed to make way for a better understanding of one's own views as well as that of others. Others, like Rorty (1989), assert that deducing from universal moral principles, like Kant and Habermas do, will not make ways for more autonomy and self-development. According to Rorty the Kantian rational principles at best can be considered as an inspiration to extend and include others in our constantly ongoing wondering conversations. One needs to be sensitive to social contexts and to be able to notice and identify with pain and humiliation, Rorty maintains. Rorty (1989: 193) criticises Kant because he: "made 'morality' something distinct from the ability to notice, and identify with, pain and humiliation." As I see it, Rorty thus opens up for the tact dimension in critical reflection. Seen from a Rortyan point of view, the typical autonomous professional will be one who constantly challenges one's own conceptions about autonomy, professionally and identity formation by re-describing them, constantly seeking answers to what can be done and what is *not* made possible by the prevailing ways of seeing things.

<sup>5</sup> This is a reformulation of what Habermas (1974) calls an emancipatory interest. Unlike Habermas, I find it reasonable to regard this as an approach inside the community of language, and thus as part of what Habermas later names a discourse ethics.

<sup>6</sup> I am here inspired by Habermas (1984, 1987) discourse ethics.

<sup>7</sup> I am here inspired by Habermas (1974).

<sup>8</sup> I here lean upon Habermas (1974) discussions about the practical interest.

<sup>9</sup> This approach is regarded as part of a discourse ethics. I am referring both to Habermas (1974) and (1987).

<sup>10</sup> I am here inspired by Rorty (1989, 1990) and Derrida (1976, 1981, 1984).

<sup>11</sup> I find it relevant here to refer to Foucault's (1973, 1980, 1986, 1988, 1994) discussions about the normalisation of the individuals as citizens and his late works where he talks about the technologies of the self.

<sup>12</sup> Again I am inspired by Habermas (1974) conception of practical interest.

<sup>13</sup> I lean upon Habermas (1974, 1987).

<sup>14</sup> Again I am inspired by Rorty (1989, 1990) and Derrida (1976, 1981, 1984).

<sup>15</sup> My use of the term individual autonomy is inspired by Lortie (1969) and Berg & Wallin (1983).

<sup>16</sup> Again Habermas' (1974) reasoning about the practical interest is an inspiration.

<sup>17</sup> I here again lean upon Habermas (1974, 1984, 1987, 1996).

<sup>18</sup> In my reasoning I am here inspired by Derrida (1976, 1981, 1984, 1989) and Rorty (1989, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> In history it has been a constant disparity in education between the ideals of a *Bildung*-approach to formative qualification and the practice of *Bildung*. For the new-humanists it meant a *Bildung* for all people, not only for the few privileged. The ideas about this *Bildung* were however never in a consistent way realised like this. Already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century it became just what it was not meant to be, a social privilege for the well-to-do (Klafki 2000). A man of *Bildung* was in German universities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century associated with the idea of a well-rounded person, a man who had gained knowledge of a wide variety of topics that were deeply embedded in traditional high culture and approved by the elite. In France they were correspondingly talking about *culture générale*. In England and the United States the term used was liberal education. The cultural ideal was the educated man that was rationally autonomous, self-directed, unspecialised and fully human. This education formed the foundation of elite generalism, legitimising the exercise of control over political and economic enterprises (Rothblatt & Wittrock 1993). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century this *Bildung*-approach lost its status. Against this elite generalism it was asserted that occupational knowledge and skills are too complex to be managed by those who have only general knowledge and skills, however advanced (Freidson 2001). It was this view that got accepted

in the modern Western societies. This does not mean that the term *Bildung* has completely gone out of the educational vocabulary. However, still it seems to be a disparity in education between the original ideal of *Bildung* and the practice of *Bildung*. The importance of what can be called an *Allgemeine Bildung* has in many ways been stressed in official documents, apparently quite like the original version: Formative education concerns all. Student shall have say in the premises of their formative education. In a pluralistic society people need accept for their cultural choices. Individuals belonging to minority cultures must be acknowledged to have the same political rights as the majority culture(s) to practice what they see as their distinctive character. However, a favourable rhetoric can cover up what can be done in practice. Therefore, when analysing the didactical conditions for formative qualification it is relevant to take these matters into consideration.

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