11 Negotiating professionalism

Emerging discourses of teacher professionalism in Norway

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Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the rapidly expanding discourse on teacher professionalism in Norway, why this expansion has taken place, and what has characterised the generation and reception of this discourse over the last two decades.

In recent years, a range of policy initiatives, in Norway as well as worldwide, has aimed to strengthen teachers' performance following a questioning of their credibility and legitimacy as a profession. These policy initiatives have, on the one hand, increasingly held teachers accountable for their performance and professional development efforts and, on the other, intensified the production and use of research. While the teaching profession often resists the former development, the latter appears to be something that most actors in the educational field value (Dahl et al., 2016). However, the kind of knowledge that teachers should prioritise and use remains contested, since the call for 'research-based knowledge' challenges traditional notions of teacher knowledge as highly experience-based and contextual (Larsen, 2016). Related to such contestations is the question whether professional autonomy has decreased because of bureaucratic control in terms of accountability and the use of external evaluations and research.

The policy initiatives in the preceding paragraph can be described as 'professionalisation from above' (McClelland, 1990; Evetts, 2003; Dahl et al., 2016) – government initiatives that are employed to convince professionals to perform in ways seen as appropriate and effective. In the Nordic and German contexts, however, profession-building has historically been characterised by an interconnectedness of impetuses from 'above', i.e., from the state, and from 'within' the professions themselves (McClelland, 1990; Larsen, 2016). These terms are often used in combination with sociological theory on professions which emphasises the 'gold standard' of an occupational group: its scientific knowledge, autonomy and responsibility (Freidson, 2001). 'Professionalisation from within' is usually employed to describe the profession's initiatives to develop and to construct an identity in ways that can secure and maintain its autonomy and discretionary power. However, several studies have concluded that the teaching profession is socialised into – and, in fact, often asks for – bureaucratic support in its work (Hopmann, 2003; Mausethagen and Mølstad, 2015).

In Norway, policymakers have emphasised the combined power of strengthening teachers' knowledge base through reforms to teacher education whilst implementing national and local quality assessment systems that hold teachers and education leaders increasingly accountable for their performance – a development that is seemingly influenced by Finnish and Anglo-American exemplars (Mausethagen and Smeby, 2016). Policy initiatives have encouraged greater research orientation in teacher education and the creation of partnerships between schools and teacher education institutions (Lillejord and Børte, 2016). Over the past decade, Norwegian teacher education has been extended to a five-year master's programme, PhD programmes have been established, and national and local development programmes have increasingly involved teacher education institutions in supporting schools in their work. This has led to a distinctive combination of academisation and practice orientation, where policies have increasingly positioned the educational sciences as the profession's core subject (see also Chapter 7). Moreover, teacher education policy processes in Norway have been found to rely more heavily on political actors and political conditions than on academic expertise (Afdal, 2013; see also Chapter 13 in this volume).

In this context, the term 'teacher professionalism' has been increasingly employed in education policy, among researchers and within the teachers' union. Although in everyday speech the term is often used normatively to describe a kind of standard for 'good work', several authors have shown how professionalism has been used in various ways over time, from requesting changes to defending the status quo (Ozga and Lawn, 1981; Evetts, 2003; Hilferty, 2008). Teacher professionalism should therefore also be seen as a *discourse* that actors seek to employ in different ways and for different purposes (Evetts, 2003; Mausethagen and Granlund, 2012). Discourses are defined as ways of talking about and understanding the world (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999). They are created and maintained by actors in institutions who influence and transform those institutions through the dissemination of ideas, values and practices. A discourse-inspired analysis primarily examines how such meanings appear through the use of language. The shaping and reshaping of discourses are important tools in policymaking and the formulation of strategies (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999).

In this chapter, I will analyse both the generation and the reception of the discourse of professionalism. I will focus on the generation of this discourse in education policy and within the Norwegian teachers' union about 20 years ago, and its role in shaping a new teacher identity. To do this, I will look more closely into the reception of this discourse in teacher education institutions and thereby elucidate the epistemic aspects of professionalisation efforts by asking: What characterises discourses on teacher professionalism, and how are they used by different actors? What does the rapidly expanding discourse on teacher professionalism in Norway reflect, and how is it reflected in teacher education?

To answer these questions, I will first outline the generation of the increasingly hegemonic discourse of teacher professionalism. Thereafter, I will focus on current discourses in teacher education, before turning to the role of the discourse on teacher professionalism, in particular, seeking to understand recent developments in the educational field in Norway, with a brief review of research in other Nordic countries.

The emergence of a discourse

In Norway, there has been a substantial increase in the use of the terms ‘profession’ and ‘professionalism’ since the beginning of the 2000s (Mausethagen and Granlund, 2012). In a 2012 study, we found that constructions of teacher professionalism were produced both by the government and from within the teaching profession, but were utilised first by policymakers before the profession developed its own discourse of professionalism. As the new century progressed, educational policymakers and the national teachers’ union, *Utdanningsforbundet*, increasingly used the term ‘professionalism’ in their documents, and by 2009, it had become a prominent term both in government white papers on teacher education and in the policy documents of the teachers’ union. For example, while the term was used only twice in white papers in 1995, it appeared about 100 times in 2002 and 220 times in 2009. In union documents, the term did not appear at all in 2002, but was increasingly used throughout the following decade. However, there were differences between government and union views on the characteristics of teacher professionalism. While the government emphasised accountability, research-based practice and specialisation, union documents highlighted research-informed practice, the use of discretion, responsibility for educational quality, and professional ethics.

Three areas of discursive ‘struggle’ between education policymakers and the teachers’ union were evident. First, the union strongly resisted accountability policies, a position that must be seen in the light of international and national policy trends toward increased external control of teachers’ work (accountability). In terms of increased emphasis on student achievement and teacher accountability, the accounts centred on a more narrow and instrumental view of learning, emphasising how external control could lead to the de-professionalisation of teachers. Second, the teachers’ union sought to redefine the notion of research-based practice from the more evidence-based construction of research favoured by policymakers. Thus, in 2009, the union strongly emphasised that teachers’ knowledge needed to be based on research *in addition to* experience-based knowledge. This discourse advocated a form of ‘research-informed’ practice, which emphasised teachers’ discretion in deciding what research to use and how to use it. Third, the union aimed to elevate teacher education to the master’s degree level, and was here ahead of the government. More academic competence was presented as enhancing trust and legitimacy.

The union’s responses to education policy discourses can be seen as a way of discursively negotiating with the government about the meaning of teacher professionalism. Instead of merely resisting the policy discourse, the teachers’ union acted proactively by emphasising trust and legitimacy. In particular, a prominent aspect of this response was to highlight research-informed practice and take responsibility for quality. Arguably, by being proactive and constructing itself as future-oriented, the teachers’ union backed claims for autonomy over the profession’s knowledge base and work situation, an approach that may be particularly important in a context where there is increasing focus on accountability. This can be interpreted as an attempt to gain discursive control of the term ‘professionalism’ and to ascribe a meaning to it that differs from more control-oriented

constructions of professionalism and professional responsibility (or accountability) promoted by policymakers.

The discourse of professionalism was produced first by the government, after which the teaching profession developed its own version when faced with demands from outside to 'professionalise'. Clearly, aspects of the sociological theory of the professions resonated with the union, such as the emphasis on professional discretion and autonomy, and was used actively in the construction of union discourse. Locally, however, teachers might place emphasis on other aspects of professionalism than the union, or teachers might be little involved in union work, and not relate to this discourse at all. Also, the union did not discuss possible alternatives to external control, and thus it could be questioned whether the emphasis on responsibility, research-informed practice and ethics was sufficient to maintain and strengthen public trust in, and the legitimacy of, the teaching profession. On the other hand, one might also question whether trust in the teaching profession in society has indeed weakened. For example, a recent study from Norway suggests that trust in teachers is quite high (Helland et al., 2016), and is in fact considerably higher than implied by the policy discourse, which has specifically pointed to teacher education as responsible for decreasing trust in the profession.

The discourse of professionalism in teacher education

How is the discourse of teacher professionalism constructed in teacher education today, ten years after this discourse suddenly became virtually hegemonic? As teacher education lies at the intersection between policymakers and the profession in creating the knowledge base for future teachers, and given that both sets of actors agree that strengthening teacher education is imperative to develop the profession, it is of interest to examine the kinds of discourses on professionalism that have come to dominate.

I do this through an analysis of current constructions of teacher professionalism in PhD programmes at four teacher education institutions in Norway. Research and research training within teacher education is of particular interest, and doctoral programmes at teacher education institutions provide a fruitful entrance point for such analysis as they outline their aims and teaching content in their profiles and educational courses. These programmes can be described as 'flagships' for the institutions and represent the increasing research orientation in teacher education institutions. Within these programmes, students produce research that is expected to be used in teacher education and in practice. The increase in research training in teacher education is demonstrated by the growing numbers of PhD programmes and candidates in the past decade. An analysis of such programmes can thus shed light on the future of teacher professionalism.

Study plans and webpages were strategically selected as study objects, as likely to present the prominent ideas of the respective institutions. I first read all descriptions on the websites of the PhD programmes in the 11 universities and university colleges that offer teacher education in Norway, and reviewed the usage of the terms 'profession' and 'professionalism' in the plans, examining the extent and ways in which they were used. Some programmes rarely or never used the terms

'profession' and 'professionalism' or were either general (educational sciences) programmes, or more specific in scope (reading literacy, pedagogical resources). Four institutions were selected for closer analysis (here designated A, B, C, and D), in which these terms were extensively used in their presentations and study plans.

In descriptions of current PhD programmes in Norwegian teacher education institutions, a range of words and expressions derived from the term 'profession' appear. They are seemingly used descriptively, referring to teachers as an occupational group, and/or persuasively, as shorthand for the desired future of teacher education, teachers, and teaching in Norway. The terms used include *teaching profession*, *professional development*, *professional education*, *professional practice*, *professional understanding*, *professionally oriented teacher education subjects*, *research on/in professions*, *professionalisation*, *theory of the professions*, *professionally relevant*, *occupational professions*, *pedagogical professionalism*, *professionally oriented pedagogy*, *professional field*, *professional autonomy*, and *professional knowledge*. These terms are, however, rarely defined. The term 'profession' is mainly used with positive connotations; thus, not defining it could be either a deliberate or an unconscious act. It is therefore necessary to analyse other words and expressions used alongside these terms to study how discourses of teacher professionalism are currently constructed in Norway.

Through a close analysis of the study plans and webpages of PhD programmes in four Norwegian teacher education institutions, I identified three major ways in which the term professionalism is given meaning in such programmes: (1) teacher professionalism as a function of the production and use of research-based evidence; (2) teacher professionalism as a function of the production and use of practice-relevant research; and (3) teacher professionalism as a function of the production and use of meta-knowledge on teacher practice. These constructions entail positions on teacher knowledge that can be described as instrumental, relational, and critical, respectively. Moreover, while the former two constructions are mainly policy- and consensus-oriented, the third is more tension-oriented.

Developing professionalism through the production and use of research-based knowledge

In institution A, teacher professionalism is defined on the basis of the definitions of professionalism in policies implemented in recent years to enhance quality in teacher education and teaching. The term 'professional' is discursively linked to the performative aspects of teaching (i.e. teacher practice), which should be based on research-based knowledge, a construction which implies that if practice is not based on research, it is not professional. The knowledge dimension thus becomes a crucial part of the definition. The direct use of policy documents is striking and pervasive, communicating a somewhat friction-free vision of the production and use of knowledge in teacher education. While there is also an emphasis on producing research in cooperation with the practice field, teachers' knowledge is presented more as acquisition and 'use' of existing research. This emphasis is central to the construction of the discourse of teacher professionalism. The reference to policy documents is quite striking, and professionalisation efforts at this institution

largely mirror government initiatives. Harmony and consensus between education policymakers and the teaching profession appear to be central to this discourse.

Developing professionalism through the production and use of practice-relevant research

Institution B emphasises that the production and use of research in teacher education should be relevant to practice. Research-based knowledge is not a term that is used in the programme plan; instead, other terms, such as innovation and development, are central. There are interesting contrasts to institution A: while both have a practice orientation, their views on the kind of knowledge that should be produced in teacher education and used in teaching practice differ. The emphasis in institution B is on the production and co-production of knowledge rather than on its acquisition and use. The competence that teachers should develop in teacher education is also constructed differently, and there are differences in how relations between the teacher education institutions and the field of practice are described. While institution A places more emphasis on knowledge production occurring outside of school, and positions actors as more passive in using that knowledge, institution B emphasises the co-production of knowledge and equal relationships between teacher education and the practice field. In the discourse of this institution, professionalism is largely constructed as active involvement in partnerships to produce relevant knowledge for practice. Consensus between policy, profession, and teacher education is also part of the discourse at institution B.

Developing professionalism through the production and use of meta-knowledge on practice

In institutions C and D, yet another, more critical, discourse on teacher professionalism is constructed. As in the two discourses discussed previously, the issue of teacher knowledge is at stake. In institution C, experience-based knowledge is strongly emphasised, but professional practice must be researched in order to further professional education and professional practice. Research activities are supposed to have a meta-perspective on practice, and to aim to improve professional practice. The documents do not describe research-based knowledge or cooperation, nor do they use these terms. Rather, research performed at the institution should improve understanding of teachers' professional practice and thereby also improve it. This programme includes research on a range of different professions.

Critical reflection is also emphasised in the PhD programme at institution D, where the institutional discourse of professionalism is similar. The discourse in institutions C and D is more strongly based on pedagogy than that in institutions A and B. Within this discourse, professionalism is related to *Bildung* (i.e. self-formation or self-cultivation), which entails a critical meta-perspective on existing knowledge and practice. Consequently, professionalism is seen as something that will *strengthen* research-based teaching. In this discourse, therefore, teacher professionalism encompasses educational theory and critical thinking; it is not the *result* of strengthening research-based education.

To summarise, institutions C and D emphasise a meta-perspective on practice, in which research seemingly means educational theory as much as empirical research. Professionalism is related to the subject of pedagogy as an integration of theory and practice. As such, it can also be suggested that these two institutions attempt to redefine professionalism in ways that place pedagogy at the centre of teachers' education and work, where professionalism is not possible without a critical meta-perspective on practice. Another contrast between institutions C and D on the one hand, and institutions A and B on the other, lies in the stronger orientation of the former towards tensions between education policy and the teaching profession.

Unfolding discursive struggles

At first sight, these three ways of constructing teacher professionalism in the four teacher education institutions appear rather similar. All three treat teacher professionalism solely as positive, and their discourses use similar terms and share a common end: improved teaching practices and student learning. However, the three discourses vary in quite significant ways. In particular, as the analysis above reveals, the discourses reflect more fundamental epistemic questions in education. These can be described as discursive struggles that materialise differently in different institutions and have consequences for teacher practice.

Moreover, the three constructions can be related to debates about the discipline of pedagogy, which, arguably, is challenged by the discourse of professionalism. Whereas the first two discourses (exemplified by institutions A and B, respectively) are mainly consensus-oriented, emphasising empirical research-based and practice-relevant knowledge as ways to develop professionalism, the third discourse (exemplified by institutions C and D) runs counter to the policy discourse by seeing teacher professionalism as emerging from pedagogical theory and practice. This use of an 'older' discourse on teacher knowledge may be read as an attempt to 'take back' the term professionalism, as pedagogical theory is ascribed a limited role in the first two discourses. This indicates that discourses on professionalism in teacher education may differ not only in their emphasis on broader cultural values versus attention to technical skills (Larsen, 2017), but also in their affinity to pedagogy versus the increasingly expansive field of educational sciences (Rasmussen, Kruse and Holm, 2007). It thus seems likely that, in recent years, strong policy calls to form partnerships and 'strengthen' educational research in order to transcend the alleged lack of practice-relevant research and teaching in teacher education have incited these institutions to reorient themselves from the former to the latter. Larsen (2016, p. 224) describes this development as a 'mode 2 professionalisation of academia' and questioned whether sound professionalism can be based on academisation alone.

Across the institutional discourses, professionalism is mainly related to practical pedagogical work, i.e., the performative dimension of the teaching profession (Molander and Terum, 2008). Issues concerning the organisation of teachers' work – questions of autonomy, trust and discretion – are hardly addressed. Issues such as whether and to what extent accountability mechanisms influence

teachers' work are highly relevant to efforts to improve professional practice (Buchanan, 2015; Mausesthaugen et al., 2018). This sole emphasis on the performative dimension of teaching may reflect a certain ambivalence within teacher education institutions, which work to strengthen the knowledge base of the teaching profession while adopting the strategies of policymakers. This distinctive combination is a crucial characteristic of discourses on teacher professionalism in Norway, and can be seen as an impediment to ambitions to develop an independent research profile in teacher education that can help develop and safeguard teachers' professional knowledge base (Hermansen, 2017). This might in turn challenge political discourses on teacher professionalism (Ozga and Lawn, 1981; Gewirtz et al., 2008; Mausesthaugen and Granlund, 2012).

Thus, this analysis finds that there is an ongoing appropriation of policy constructions in teacher education, although this may develop and change as research competence grows. This also raises the question of the potential future outcomes of these discursive struggles. The consensus orientation is probably most productive for bringing about changes in teachers' work. However, professionalisation efforts also include the development of knowledge that stimulates critical perspectives on policy initiatives. We thus need to better understand what kinds of knowledge is produced and used by teacher education, as not only students but also teacher educators are socialised into certain forms of knowledge appropriation. For student teachers, it is important to be familiar with different positions on teacher knowledge and to explore alternative discourses in order to develop a nuanced understanding of the complexity of their work. The discursive struggles have also shown that although teacher education is governed by national guidelines in Norway, leading to very similar descriptions of learning outcomes across institutions (Myklebust et al., 2020), the differences in institutional discourses on teacher professionalism may indicate that the education of student teachers, and thereby their socialisation into teaching, can still be quite different in character.

The role of discourses

Current discourses on teacher professionalism in Norway are, at first sight, characterised by consensus between policymakers, the profession, and teacher education institutions. However, a closer examination reveals significant differences between these actors and also, interestingly, among teacher education institutions. While the different actors agree that the knowledge base of the teaching profession needs to be developed and safeguarded, my examination has identified a variety of epistemic positions and relations to policy discourses. The analysis has also shed light upon how the profession's own efforts at professionalisation relate to recent policy developments. The teaching profession has been particularly concerned with resisting policy initiatives that are seen as vehicles of an accountability agenda with an increased focus on performance (Mausesthaugen and Granlund, 2012; Haakestad, 2019). This resistance seems, however, to be less prominent in teacher education discourses on professionalism.

From being marginal in Norway during the 1990s, the discourse of teacher professionalism became almost hegemonic in the 2000s as a way to develop the

education system and, particularly, to improve the work of teachers and schools. To some extent, one could say that this discourse ‘won’ over other discourses on teachers’ work, such as the *Bildung* discourse or those emphasising teachers’ experience-based knowledge. As these older and perhaps more conservative discourses have been prominent within pedagogy in particular, the newer discourse of teacher professionalism has, arguably, contributed to challenging pedagogy, or at least to realigning it with, first, a somewhat paradoxical combination of practice orientation and academisation, and second, a policy orientation towards reform and partnerships. According to the policy discourse, teachers form, or are supposed to form, an identity as reform-oriented, research-informed, accountable, and collaborative. This top-down discourse generation may result in a more authoritarian ‘do as you are told’ culture.

For this reason, it is important to investigate the role of discourses in order to understand and explain processes of change in the Norwegian educational system since 2000. A range of factors has contributed to these developments, in which internationalisation, and particularly the results of the PISA studies, became an important catalyst of education reforms, particularly in the first years of the new millennium. These led to an increased focus on student performance, testing, and accountability, combined with massive efforts to strengthen teachers’ knowledge base, including the implementation of a five-year teacher education programme. This occurred within a broader context of structural reforms in higher education which led to larger institutions and an increased orientation towards research in teacher education (Karlsen, 2005).

In this broader picture of international policy development and changes in the institutional landscape, the discourse of teacher professionalism was clearly a good fit. But how was this discourse received in the field of teacher education? The identification of the three different constructions of how teacher professionalism should best be developed showed that ‘professionalisation from above’ aptly describes the development of teacher education in Norway. This can be explained by the Ministry of Education’s time-honoured practice of governing teacher education in a direct and detailed manner. The government has long seen teacher education as an important ‘governing object’ and a tool for fulfilling its visions for the education system as a whole (Karlsen, 2005).

Although the interconnectedness of ‘professionalisation from above’ and ‘professionalisation from within’ can be described as a hallmark of teacher education, it has also been described as a ‘counter culture’ that has criticised and challenged current education policy discourses (Karlsen, 2005; Haugen and Hestbæk, 2017). This may be a somewhat misleading characterisation, given the historically close relationships between the Ministry of Education and teacher education institutions. The consensus orientation towards professionalisation apparent in the PhD programmes discussed earlier in this chapter may thus reflect a historical continuity. Moreover, Norwegian teachers have long been characterised by their close relationship with the state, and have trustingly adopted policymakers’ strategies. Teachers have historically had a high status in society, particularly outside the larger cities (Tarrou, 1991; Rovde, 2006). Although Norwegian teachers have tended to resist academisation (Hagemann, 1992), their unions have also played an important

role in educational reforms, and have actively supported academic teacher education and calls for increased teacher professionalism (Tarrou, 1991; Nerland and Karseth, 2015). In the current situation, however, it is primarily the teachers' union that maintains a critical role, for example, by addressing tensions that occur when policy meets the practical work of teachers and by raising questions about autonomy, responsibility, and ethics.

The discourse of professionalism in Nordic teaching cultures

New calls for accountability, research-based knowledge, and collaboration within and across educational levels and institutions in partnerships are also heard in other Nordic countries, and have led to the development of new discourses on teacher professionalism. While there is substantial research addressing such policy developments, research on the discourse is rarer. Exceptions include research on how teachers' unions in Sweden and Denmark have used the discourse actively in their strategies to enhance status and legitimacy. For example, both the Swedish Teachers' Union (*Läraförbundet*) and the National Union of Teachers in Sweden (*Lärarnas Riksförbund*) have actively used 'professionalism' as a symbolic resource to supply teachers with legitimacy and increased status (Lilja, 2013). As in the Norwegian context, the professionalism discourse was originally mainly political and decoupled from teachers' everyday work, but was reframed by the unions to pertain to issues of social justice and democracy (Lilja, 2013; Milner, 2018). By contrast, the teachers' union in Norway has maintained a stronger position by presenting a clear counter-narrative to increased external control of the teaching profession (Lilja, 2013). In both Norway and Sweden, the unions call for renewed state involvement in order to increase legitimacy, even though it could reduce professional autonomy (Mausethagen and Mølsted, 2015; Milner, 2018). However, while unions in Sweden advocated for certification as a way to professionalise, the same strategy has been rejected in Norway out of fear that the government could use it to control teachers (Haakestad, 2019).

In Denmark, the professionalism discourse has also been challenged by new policy discourses on the 'knowledge society', continual change, competency development performance, and accountability (Hjort, 2006; Krejsler and Moos, 2006). Krejsler and Moos (2006) argue that since this discourse tends not to include challenges in teachers' practical work, they have found it difficult to take part in the discourse of professionalism. Instead, the dominant discourse mainly emphasises generalist and standardised knowledge, while dynamic and specialised competence and practice has been downplayed. Moreover, the emphasis on loyalty to the school organisation, interdisciplinary cooperation, and international influences make discourses of professionalism misleading, as Krejsler (2011) argues. As the teaching profession has used new discourses on competence development and professionalism to enhance its status, it has also, to some extent, accepted increased external control of its work (Hjort, 2006).

Thus, a challenge that Nordic teachers encounter today is how to deal with the policy discourses on teacher professionalism if they want to have a voice in policymaking. This is an urgent question since the dominant discourses of

professionalism have consequences for how teachers are perceived as an occupational group in society. A key aspect of this question concerns the ways the teaching profession, through its reception of the policy discourses, contributes to constraining teachers' work and forms of professionalism, and how its generation of the discourse succeeds in 'taking back' the discourse of professionalism. So far it seems that there are some minor but significant differences between Nordic countries. Across the countries, policymakers have produced discourses of professionalism that are partly accepted and partly resisted by the profession itself. Yet there are also differences as to the extent to which discourses address issues of external control.

However, research has to date only rarely addressed the epistemic dimension of professionalisation efforts. The analysis of PhD programmes in Norwegian teacher education institutions earlier in this chapter has shed light on this dimension through the past decade and thereby also their reception of the discourse on teacher professionalism as constructed in education policy. Although these discourses appear similar on the surface, tensions remain as to what knowledge is, what kind of knowledge teachers should use, how it should be produced, and who has the right to define it. There is reason to believe that a similar analysis in the other Nordic countries would yield different views on teacher knowledge and academisation in teacher education, including how teacher education and educational research are organised (Larsen, 2016; see also Chapter 7 in this volume). An important construction in the newer policy discourse on teacher professionalism has been to promote research-based knowledge, and the so-called 'pre-scientific' character of the knowledge base for the teaching profession must be seen as a prerequisite for this discourse (Nilsson-Lindström and Beach, 2019). On its surface, this resonates with the core constructions within teacher education and in academia more generally. However, the analysis performed in this chapter shows that, for a more differentiated understanding, it is imperative to investigate constructions on how, and by what means, teacher knowledge should promote teacher professionalism. Such studies can shed light on the future of professionalism.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has discussed the generation of the discourse on teacher professionalism in Norway, its reception in teacher education institutions, and its increasing role in shaping teacher identities. From being quite marginal, in the past 20 years, the discourse of professionalism has achieved almost hegemonic status in defining teachers' identities and work. There is, however, a paradox: in their attempts to transform themselves into research-based study programmes, teacher education institutions have so far tended to mirror policy discourses on teacher professionalism, rather than the 'counter-discourse' of the profession itself. Even though such 'professionalisation from above' does not necessarily represent radically new ways of governing the teaching profession, it might reflect a drift towards a new social contract between teachers, teacher education institutions, policymakers, and administrators (Dahl et al., 2016). We may discuss if teacher education institutions are still the obvious supporters of teachers' efforts to negotiate different expectations and to involve themselves actively in critical discussions about

professionalisation processes. Moreover, my findings may suggest that in the past two decades, the teachers' union has driven critical discussions about teacher professionalism just as much as teacher education institutions have.

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