

# ZARZĄDZANIE PUBLICZNE

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Zeszyty Naukowe Instytutu Spraw Publicznych  
Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego

Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego

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# INTRODUCTION

Educational systems all over the world face very complex and demanding challenges and have to transform continuously in order to answer them. The issue of educational management and leadership seems to be the most important area of educational systems development and transformations. Regardless of quite long history of educational management and leadership theory development there still is a need of defining basic concepts and research exploring practice in that field. Current issue of Public Management collects a set of papers addressing those issues.

First paper by Robin Precey raises the problem of trust in education showing its importance and the role and obligation of educational leaders in developing trust in educational settings in difficult contexts of political attempts to reduce the role of educational circles in defining goals of learning and teaching. In the second paper Roman Dorczak tries to explore how the idea of leadership was transferred from general management theory to educational management and defines the concept of educational leadership describing it as leadership focused on development of all groups of people involved in school life. He calls such leadership a **developmental leadership** and gives concise description of main characteristics of such educational leadership. Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz in his paper presents results of his research on the state of thinking of school head teachers showing them in broader theoretical framework giving description of specificity of being educational leader in contemporary world. He uses the term of mental models to define head teachers professional thinking and argues that those mental models are key factors deciding about educational practice. Fourth paper by Gerry Mac Ruairc argues that we need leadership training programmes that will develop critically informed and engaged leaders who can be active partners for political forces with their reductive policy proposals imposing neoliberal solutions damaging educational processes. Fifth paper by Jakub Kołodziejczyk describes the ideas and plans to reform system of school support and improvement in Poland as important element of reform and transformation of Polish educational system. Closing paper by Antonio Portela deals with the issues of accountability and evaluation in education that become central in educational discussions all over the world. He explores links between those two concepts and the concept of democracy using work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière and showing how accountability and evaluation can be both a condition and a challenge or even danger for democracy.

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## LEADERSHIP AND TRUST IN EDUCATION – THE OFTEN MISSING MAGIC GLUE

### Abstract

This article examines the trend across the world to move towards centrally controlled education systems driven by a political desire that students might attain and schools be judged by a narrow range of measurable attainment targets with policing by inspections. It argues that this has emphasized management rather than leadership and that there is a need to refocus on more aspirational achievement aims for young people and schools. It defines and argues for integrity in both leadership and management and makes the case for the significance of the way in which leaders lead. A transactional approach leads to the erosion of trust and transformational leaders in contrast build this up.

The article explains why trust is so important and explains how trust can be developed in and by leaders and managers. It finishes by outlining the challenge of developing leaders and managers of high-trust school cultures

**Keywords:** educational management, educational leadership, transformational leadership.

### A global pandemic: the virus in our schools and society

An on-going debate in education is whether schools reflect society or whether they shape it. In truth it is probably a bit of both somewhat like the “which came first – the chicken or the egg” conundrum. Schools are or should be at least in part a model for society as it is and as it should be. If we have a selective, class-ridden, elitist education system (as in England), then the structures and systems in society (legal, financial, social) that generate the education system feed off and replicate it. Sometimes a few fortunate, resourceful individuals break the mould in such a culture but this is unusual. Similarly, a more inclusive system such as that in Norway may be said to help develop a more inclusive society for more individuals.

It could also be argued that this place of schools in shaping the future has become even more significant. Although other social agents influence the way children develop (families, peers, social workers and law enforcement agencies in some cases), school has become relatively more important in many societies as

changes in parenting and respect for authority have weakened. Most children go to schools, which are relatively stable environments, on most days. Schools may be characterized as “the last chance saloon” to solve societies’ ills. The “Every Child Matters” policy in England and “No Child Left Behind” one in the USA may be seen through such a critical lens.

Throughout many parts of the education world we are witnessing the spread of national standardized testing, a narrower curriculum with a focus on what we think we can measure (mainly in Mathematics, Science and English), increased public accountability frenzied by inspection and performance management of individuals centred on measurable targets. Such an approach to education is based on local, national and international competition in relation to a narrow definition of attainment. Sahlberg [2012] calls this the “Global Education Reform Movement” (GERM) and he compares it to a virus that is spreading and has become the unofficial orthodoxy. Such competition, he claims, is eroding traditional public school systems. Over time this leads to a lack of trust and lowers morale and professionalism of teachers.

Chickens do come home to roost. What sort of society will those countries hell-bent on catching the GERM inherit in the future?

## Leaders or managers of schools?

Accepting a link between schools and society raises important issues for those who are the leaders of our schools. Leaders decide on the direction in which an organization is moving having justified it and they continually check progress. In the light of this, managers move the organization forward. Are those in charge of schools today infected and affected by the GERM of centrally prescribed performativity not leaders at all but rather managers? Are they really civil servants, employees of the State, who are paid to do as they are told to replicate the established norms of the society in which they operate even if these are those of injustice and inequality? Or rather are those running our schools leaders with a sense of moral purpose, with the courage of their convictions – what Bottery calls “trusted gatekeepers” [Bottery 2007: 89]. For example are they driven by doing what is right for all children (not just those in their immediate care) in order to improve society based on moral tenets such as social justice and equity?

## Integrity: the backbone of leaders and managers

Whether we are leaders or managers or a combination of the two, we need integrity. This means that there is a consistency between what we think, say and do.

Leadership and management only exist if there is followership and committed followers need to believe in the thoughts, words and deeds of their leaders and managers.

Exemplary leaders and managers are thinking people and thoughtful people. They are thinking in the sense that they are intelligent in the way they act and at times react. They are thoughtful in that they understand what they believe and why. Exemplary leaders and managers communicate their beliefs effectively in many ways spoken, written, electronic and importantly in their body language. They communicate effectively on a one-to-one basis, in small group, large meetings, with professionals and non-professionals, including a wide audience via the media.

Most important exemplary leaders and managers behave in ways that are consistent with their beliefs and that which they communicate on a day to day. Followers believe what people do much more than what they say.

Thus integrity is vital to exemplary leadership and management. This requires the knowledge, skills and competencies to model the world they wish others to inhabit. They really are in the business of showing and fashioning a future for young people and their staff and leading the way into a better world. Exemplary leaders and managers believe that schools can lead society not just reflect society. Without the backbone of integrity leaders and managers cannot stand tall and may even be spineless.

## The way we lead and manage is profoundly important

Effective leadership can make a positive and profound difference to a student's achievement and that leadership can no longer be in the hands of one person – in the case of schools – the head teacher. Marsh [2000] rightly claims that solitary leadership can be directive and heroic (even solitary), but that this no longer fits the realities of time and workload for current education leaders nor does it make best use of the rich talents that reside in many organizations. At its worst it is arrogant and diminishes other human beings in the organization. Yet many organizations have continued to be led in transactional ways based on a simplistic scientific approach. Wheatley [2007] concurs as she explores the extent the scientific paradigm has had on our behavior and organizations. That view blocks the development of the collaborative leadership, culture and expertise needed for success in the reforms, and assumes that reforms can be aligned and packaged in outdated and rigid ways. Tragically, the impact of GERM is to push schools towards this transactional form of leadership and management. Trust is not as important in this systems world as people do as they are told and are then rewarded or do not and are punished.

Leaders who operate in today's world find themselves working in dynamic complicated environments replete with accountabilities and possibilities, plans and projects, specialist staff roles and teams that did not exist a few of decades ago. Leaders in education now work in an environment where they are responsible for diverse groups of specialists with whose areas of expertise they are ini-

tially unfamiliar. Kehane [2004] recognized that in many sectors of the economy, changes in organizational patterns combined with shifts in worker attitudes are ushering in a new dynamic. The complexities of current school organization with its multi agency approach and transdisciplinary working requires different kinds of leaders. This emergent paradigm questions what organizations are and as a consequence what people expect from one another in the workplace. Jenkins and Jenkins [2006] argue that leaders today call for growing levels of personal commitment and creativity from employees and employees expect organizational transparency, meaningful work and significant participation and influence on the quality of life in the workplace. A new way of leading is emerging – that of a transformational leader with employees having more autonomy and responsibility in the workplace.

Such transformational leadership is an elusive concept. Whatever the form of words chosen to express a definition, there seems to be some consensus in the literature that it involves building a vision of a better future, establishing shared organizational goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, modeling values and best practice and demonstrating expectations of high performance, creating a productive culture and most importantly developing structures to foster participation in decision-making. Underpinning all of this is trust.

The challenge for the leader who seeks to be effective in transforming the organization for which they are ultimately responsible is how they can create a shared meaning and a sense of purpose to make more effective interpersonal and inter organizational relationships. Collaboration and cooperation may be the lynchpins to success. Schuman [2006] claims that collaboration is the increased challenge to incorporate collaborative values and practices into everyday ways of working. Sennett [2012] states that the most important thing about meaningful cooperation is that it requires skill. In particular it needs listening skills, subjective expression and empathetic skills. Trust has to be present in order to progress towards collaboration and cooperation.

## Trust in leadership and management

### Why is trust important in leadership and management?

Trust in schools and school leadership and management is increasingly seen by researchers and practitioners as a crucial influence on how well schools work for students [Bryk & Schneider 2002]. It is indeed the magic glue that binds school communities together. Trust is a firm belief in the reliability of a person and is exhibited by authenticity and interpersonal regard. It is the confident expectation that a person will do what they say and that there will be a benefit. Fink asserts that the “starting point for any relationship is trust. In fact the very foundation of human society is trust” [Fink 2005: 45].

Trust is a necessary condition if leadership and management are to nurture learning that impacts significantly on behaviors in a sustained way in order to succeed in a complex, uncertain world – that is transformational learning. Such deep and profound learning by staff and students involves processes that are risky. A customized curriculum emerges to match the needs of participants. For this to happen successfully, people need to trust the leaders and each other. A critical posture involves students and staff being able to voice and hear other perspectives and sometimes this can be unsettling as well as beneficial. Without trust between all involved in the learning that comes from this, honest helpful dialogue will not happen. Questioning, enquiry, challenge, problem-solving, structured reflection and analysis are all more effective when people operate in a community of learners co-constructing knowledge underpinned by peer support and collaboration. This requires respect for self and others, confidentiality and trust. The meta-cognition (learning about learning) that can encourage individuals to higher levels of learning is also helped by a climate of trust for honest critical reflection. This is true for children of all ages as well as adults.

Thus, it seems clear that trust is a necessary condition for effective transformational leadership and management. Trust in schools can stimulate and nurture loyalty, development, retention and recruitment of staff, successful management of change, creativity, satisfaction and happiness for staff and students alike. Bryk and Schneider state that it “constitutes a moral resource for school improvement” [Bryk & Schneider 2005: 34]. How then can such a vital moral resource be developed in and by leaders?

## How can trust be developed in and by leaders and managers?

If trust is so important in successful organizations, how can leaders and managers embrace and grow it so that participants can develop it in their own schools?

- Bottery [2004] argues that those responsible for organisations need to do five things to develop trust: We need to act on the dynamics of trust. We know that trust develops, in a simplistic way, through at least four stages. At first there may be calculative trust with those involved making probability judgements on the reliability of the relationship (what Bottery calls the “the logician”). Next might come the role trust stage where trust is based on greater understanding of the role of the professional. Following this might be the practice trust stage where, rather like a gardener, deeper trust is based on witnessed results over time. Last and deepest is the identificatory trust stage as with a talented group of jazz musicians who trust each other implicitly as time and success in the relationship goes on. Leaders and managers need to know how to identify and encourage trust in the group through these stages and to make this overt and articulated for the others to apply in their own practice.

- We need also to understand and deal with the “foundation arenas” [Bottery 2004: 118]. These three arenas are the agreement on values and value priorities, people who wish to be trusted doing what they say they will do and lastly displaying the competence to do this effectively. All of this is called integrity – a quality highly valued in leaders and managers that needs to be modelled and facilitated in others.
- We need to appreciate the mechanisms by which meso-level trust i.e. institutional trust, works as well as recognising that trust is a multi-level concept operating at the micro (personal) and macro (society) also.
- Effective leadership and management also entail understanding and developing the understanding of others in relation of *thick* and *thin* trust and the appropriateness in cultivating different thicknesses for different purposes and situations.
- Furthermore, trust is cumulatively dynamic. “Nothing is as fast as the speed of trust” states Covey [2006: 3]. It certainly seems true to me that in schools, trust can grow upwards and outwards developing social capital. Figure 1 illustrates how, I feel, trust can build other positive aspects of transformational leadership and, in doing so, deepen trust further.



Figure 1. The dynamics of trust

Source: own construction.

However both within groups and within schools mis(dis)trust can spiral downwards and outwards as its corrosive effect takes hold destroying social capital. Figure 2 shows how trust can build negative aspects of leadership and, in doing so, erode trust further.

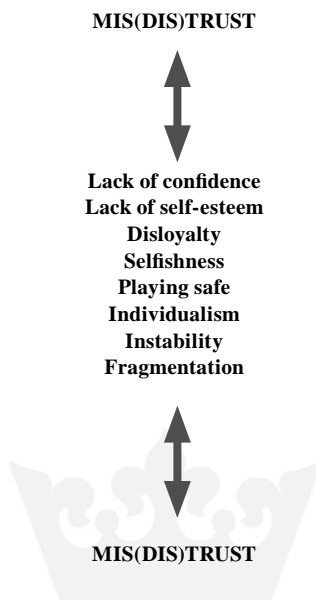


Figure 2. The dynamics of mis(dis)trust

Source: own construction.

## The challenge: developing leaders and managers of high-trust school cultures

For many years leaders and managers, for example in England, have operated in an environment of top-down, rapid, prescribed change with lack of real consultation and with a short-life span for many initiatives. In addition there have been very high levels of accountability for school leaders through inspection and public testing of students (and in the process teachers and schools) with a focus on a narrow range of measurable outcomes and high public visibility. This is not peculiar to England as increasingly other countries have been exposed to and caught, often willingly, the “English transactional leadership disease”. As Sahlberg [2012] argues...the GERM is spreading. Writing from an American perspective Sergiovanni says that: “Many of the standards-driven and high-stakes accountability systems for schools now in place across the globe are here because state governments do not trust local teachers and administrators, local citizens and local governments” [Sergiovanni 2001: 74].

This culture of naming, shaming, blaming and taming of school leaders in an increasing number of countries means that they are pushed into a position of watching their backs and playing it safe. Trust of and by head teachers and school managers has not been a strong feature of school life in recent years. The magic glue has been missing. It is a serious challenge to both model and facilitate learning under-



pinned by trust and for leaders and managers to develop such a culture – in some senses counterculture – in schools today. Habits and behaviors die hard but my experience of working with school leaders and managers across the world tell me that a significant number wish to develop new ways of working. Bryk and Schneider's extensive recent research into Chicago schools leads them to the view that:

Good schools are intrinsically social enterprises that depend heavily on cooperative endeavors among the varied participants who comprise the school community. Relational trust constitutes the connective tissue that binds these individuals together around advancing the education and welfare of children. Improving schools requires us to think harder about how best to organize the work of adults and students so that this connective tissue remains healthy and strong [2002: 144].

## Fighting the education virus

In order to resist the negative aspects of the global reforms in education that are the unofficial orthodoxy, leaders and managers need to take a stand and focus on achievement and the whole child rather than attainment only and the basics. This requires a clear and strong sense of moral purpose. It needs courage and confidence to take the stand. Principled horizon scanning [Bottery 2007: 90] of the external environment is necessary in leaders. Leaders today need to be entrepreneurial and spot opportunities. This requires flexibility and adaptability in a rapidly changing world. Integrity and intelligence are essential. Moreover, Power rightly argues that leaders need “professional imagination so they can gauge a sense of their own efficacy within cotemporary settings. Without such imagination professionals will be doomed to stumble from one crisis to another with little hope of illumination” [Power 2008: 144]. Leaders need to “understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meanings for the inner life and external career... the individual can understand his own experiences and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period” [Power: 155]. Leaders and managers also have to be comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty. Most important, as also Sahlbeg [2012] points out, leaders must develop professional responsibility and trust.

If trust within schools is so important then it is axiomatic that those who lead and manage our schools learn to model and develop this in their professional practice. This is vitally important for the well-being of children and those adults who spend much of their lives in our schools today and tomorrow and for the future society that we are in the process of creating. The magic glue needs to be replenished.

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## DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP – AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE SPECIFICITY OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

### Abstract

Author raises the issue of specificity of educational leadership trying to show that such specificity has to be based on central value of educational organizations. In educational context such central value should be individual human development. Paper describes different ways of understanding leadership and educational leadership present in literature and gives some postulates how educational leadership can be defined, proposing to call such type of leadership a developmental leadership. A description of such type of leadership and conditions of its introduction to education are the main aims of the paper.

**Keywords:** leadership, educational leadership, development, developmental leadership.

### Introduction

The concept of leadership, present in management and educational management theory since many decades, had become especially popular during the last twenty years. Many authors in the area underline importance of using concept of leadership and importance of introducing leadership into practice of educational organizations that want to raise their achievements [Potter, Reynolds, Chapman 2002; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, Hopkins 2006]. There are even some suggestions in educational research that educational leadership (not educational management) is the key factor in raising educational effectiveness of schools and educational success of students [Marzano, Waters, McNulty 2005]. It is not surprising then that theories and paradigms of leadership are very frequently transferred from general management theory and used to build understanding of leadership in educational contexts across the world. It has become very popular in theoretical educational discussions in Poland too as the Polish educational system is searching for ways of improvement of schools. Unfortunately in practice leadership concepts are still far less popular than educational management concepts [Kwiatkowski, Michalak 2010]. All this makes it necessary to raise the issue of leadership in education and its specificity.

## What is leadership – different paradigms

If leadership matters, it would be very important to answer a basic question about the meaning of leadership. The concept itself comes from the field of general management theory and was unfortunately, as many other concepts, transferred to educational management theory without thinking about specific values of educational organizations and specific needs of leadership in education. Such attitude is present from the very beginning of development of educational management theory and practice and makes it extremely difficult to build specific and adequate to educational needs theory of educational management [Bottery 1990; Bottery 1992].

The core element of leadership is the fact that it can appear in a social context of a group and is always about influence of some people on other people in order to achieve certain objectives [Northouse 2007]. How does that influence look like and how through that influence organizational objectives are reached is understood differently and that is the reason why since the beginning of its presence in management theory leadership was described and defined in so many different ways. There are also numerous attempts to classify those different paradigms of leadership. Let us have a closer look at some of them, that can be useful from educational leadership perspective.

Shields [2009] for example describes three paradigms of leadership: transactional, transformational and transformative. First type of leadership – **transactional** – is based on interpersonal (transactional) talents of a leader. He/she creates conditions for reaching organizational objectives through complex system of agreed regulations describing obligations of all members of organization and setting out rewards and punishments. Such type of leadership is very common in schools as they are challenged by demands of narrowly understood public accountability focusing attention of school leaders on school inspection and test results. Looking from the deeper educational perspective such leadership may lead to "depersonalisation", when interests of school as organization and teachers as responsible for reaching certain goals are more important than interests of development of students [Precey 2011]. **Transformational** leadership is based on a creative vision of a leader who inspires others and together with them creates conditions for achieving organizational goals according to that vision. Transformational leadership motivates members of organization, stimulates them to act, creates conditions for development. The main problem of such leadership is, that it focuses on leader's vision and develops organizational and personal potential according to that personal vision of a leader which is always an external factor from the perspective of individual development of members of organization. From that point of view transformational leadership may mean and very often means indoctrinational leadership. **Transformative** leadership appears when school and members of school community take active role in transformation of unjust world outside the school or within it. It implies individual and organizational transformation and development but source of that development is again

very often external. The basic value underlying transformative leadership seems to be interest and good of community or broadly speaking society, not interest of individual development of a person which is reducing educational value of such a type of leadership even if social change still really is not realized task of contemporary schools [Precey, Rodrigues Entrena 2011; Shields 2009].

The most popular is an attempt of Avery [2004], who describes four different types of leadership present in general management theory. First type, called **classical leadership**, is built on charismatic personality of a leader who uses power of formal authority and force to impose his/her ideas. It can be described using examples of great leaders in our history, still is very frequent in some forms but no longer possible in democratic society. Second type, called **transactional leadership**, described above, uses interpersonal skills of a leader to impose his/her ideas. Third type of leadership named **visionary leadership** (similar to transformational) develops around visionary ideas of a leader. Fourth type of leadership described by Avery, called **organic leadership**, needs involvement of all members of organization in the leadership process. It implies distribution of power and obligations, involvement or inclusion of everybody in the leadership process. Avery values such leadership but wrongly tends to think that such process leads to disappearance of leadership, calling such state a **leaderless organization** [Avery 2004]. The idea of involvement of all members of organization in leadership is present also in paradigms of leadership called distributed and democratic leadership [Gronn 2002; O'Neill 2002]. Distributed leadership does not serve properly educational values because it implies the idea of distribution that is always an act or process controlled by someone and built on values external to individual development of a person who receives distributed powers. Democratic leadership has more potential as it is not result of decision of one person only or few people in a group, but it is still based more on value of democratic organizational process than value of individual human development as it should be [Woods 2004].

As it is clearly visible, different ways of defining leadership present in literature have elements that are important for educational leadership, they are all not completely adequate for needs of educational organizations. There is a growing necessity to define such adequate educational leadership.

## Educational leadership – developmental leadership

When we try to define educationally adequate leadership, we have to start from defining core value of educational organizations. That value should be a central point for assessing all processes connected with leadership in schools as organizations and more generally educational management in theory and practice [Łuczyński 2011].

The main aim of education is (or should be) individual human development of students and all other people involved in educational processes [Piaget 1997; Dorczak 2012]. Leadership adequate for the needs of educational or-

ganizations has to be built on that value as central one. Author proposes to use term of **developmental leadership** to call such educationally adequate type of leadership. Development is the most important value in that type of leadership and all actions undertaken within such leadership process have to be focused on supporting individual development of members of educational organization both students and teachers. Having in mind importance of that central value some other characteristics of developmental leadership have to be underlined:

First of all, developmental leadership should be focused on educational and developmental needs of all and create conditions for involvement of all. That notion of involvement of people in schools in the leadership process becomes very popular in many theories. Alston for example uses the term of **co-leadership** or **multi-leadership**, describing best practices of American schools [Alston 2002]. Developmental leadership has to go at least one step further. It should value potentials of all regardless the fact that those potentials are different avoiding mistakes of talent management approach that tends to undervalue those less talented in organization and focus on few only, those who can quicker and better support the process of achieving organizational goals because they are more talented [Davies, Davies 2011]. On the one hand focus on all members of organization has to be derived from focus on every individual as central value, on the other hand it has to be seen from the perspective of community to prevent individualistic and egoistic attitudes that can defragment or even destroy community that is natural and necessary environment for individual human development. Michael Fielding describing such school reality uses a very adequate term of **person-centered school community**. He argues that school as organization constructed on such basis can serve development of individual and community as learning community that serves individual needs, not uses or abuses individual. He also argues that educational leadership has to take into account that person-centered perspective in order to be really educationally valuable type of leadership [Fielding 2006a; Fielding 2006b]. Some authors describing educationally sensitive leadership use term of **inclusive leadership** underlying both necessity of inclusion of every member of school as organization in leadership process and necessity to serve educational needs of every student [Ryan 2006]. Such focus on revealing and valuing potentials of all those involved in school life in different roles is the basis for learning processes on individual level that are central part of broader developmental processes [Fink 2005].

That focus on the value of learning is the second characteristic central for educational leadership called here developmental leadership. Many authors argue that learning should be central value of educational management and leadership as it is also one of central values of educational organizations. They even try to define specificity of educational leadership building it on that value of learning [MacBeath, Dempster 2009; Mazurkiewicz 2011]. It seems that such thinking focusing on learning only is educationally wrong. It is of course obvious that learning is a central element of development but learning alone may

sometimes not contribute to development at all or even block, disturb or prevent development of individual. In educational organizations learning should be subordinated to development as central value and the same applies to educational leadership that should value learning and create best possible conditions for learning, but only as part of broader processes of individual and community development.

Third important thing constructing good educational leadership is an interactive character of developmental leadership. Educational process is only possible in social interaction, development – an interactive process. Really educational leadership has to be developed in interaction between members in organization and needs high level of communication skills. It must be stressed that it even is not possible without good conditions for communication and good communication skills of partners of leadership process [Komives, Lucas, McMahan 2007]. Traditional types of leadership such as transactional, transformational or even classical are interactive but different partners of that interaction are not equal. Developmental leadership is different because it needs that interactive process to be constructed on value of equality between all partners involved.

Fourth feature of developmental leadership, its constructive character, is strongly interrelated with the previous one. It is obvious, accepting constructivist theory that social reality is created during the process of interaction and discussion. Developmental leadership has to take that into account and consciously manage that process helping members of organization to structure their environment according to their developmental needs of seeking sense in organization and in broader social contexts [Sułkowski 2005]. The role of schools and education in general is to constructively criticize, challenge and if necessary transform social reality we live in. It is especially important as individual development happens in broader social context and is influenced by social change. Developmental leadership should take that aspect into account and focus on building individual and communal capacity of active involvement contributing to social change [Shor 1992].

Developmental leadership needs also special organizational environment to be developed. It can be called a knowledge based organization. Educational leadership needs certain knowledge necessary to develop all listed characteristics and competencies of developmental leadership. The most important elements of that knowledge are:

- knowledge of the nature of human development;
- knowledge of the nature of learning process;
- knowledge of the teaching process and methods;
- knowledge of communication;
- knowledge of interpersonal processes and aspects of group life;
- knowledge of social change processes and the role of school in society;
- knowledge of organizational change.

All this makes the task of becoming educational leader highly demanding and difficult and creates challenges for those responsible for development of educational leadership abilities among members of educational organizations.



## Conclusions

As it was said, the task of building potential of educational leadership seems to be very difficult as it is a very complex and highly demanding phenomenon. At the same time the issue of educational management and leadership is not always central in educational reforms or is limited to narrowly understood educational management as set of technical skills that can be easily delivered through short training or through introduction of managers trained in the area of business management to schools. In Poland, but also in many other countries, public discussion in that field lacks the issue of leadership or focuses on understandings of leadership that are not adequate to educational needs. It seems that it is necessary to built institutional structure helping to develop theory and practice of educational management and leadership that will be specific and adequate to the nature of educational processes and needs of individual development of students in schools. There are some examples as National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services in UK or Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership in Australia, that can be used as inspiration for creation of such institutionalized (and through that more sustainable) ways of development of educational leadership. They are worth considering as models useful in the process of development of school leadership thou some authors argue that such centrally organized institutions may bring a danger of using them to influence education politically [Thrupp 2005]. Such danger exists and can only be answered through development of professionalism of both teaching profession and school leaders.

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## LEADERSHIP AND MENTAL MODELS. STUDY OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' AWARENESS

### Abstract

The main purpose of the proposed paper is to analyze paradigms (theoretical frames) of leadership owned and used by school principals. The analysis is based on the results of the research conducted for the purpose of defining and describing the school principals' way of thinking about leadership for education. For the purpose of building framework for research it was assumed that four leadership paradigms might be defined.

Leadership might be understood through classic paradigm of leadership (domination of the significant person or elite group); or transactional paradigm (influence and negotiations); or visionary paradigm (called sometimes charismatic where the most important is clear vision); or organic paradigm (existing in multicultural and diverse world where leadership is flexible and leaders change dependently on a situation).

Three methods have been used: interview with 99 principals of schools (of different type), observation in the same number of schools and analyses of the blogs (written on-line by school principals).

It is common to ignore the mental models (or paradigms) used by people what brings certain outcomes for every initiative. It is necessary for policy making, change projects or developmental initiatives to recognize and take under consideration the diversity of possible perspectives (mental models) owned by those who are working in the concerned area, in this case head teachers.

Civilization changes influence context and demands towards schools. Those challenges impact the modernization of schools. One of the common expectation towards management are more open – participative mode of the decision making process and the involvement of employees in sharing responsibilities. Unfortunately different initiatives towards inclusion of employees into management and leadership processes bring rather disappointing results because they ignore ideologies and assumptions of people who decide about school functioning.

Analysis of the results of the research should improve the understanding of the school reality by showing strategies and decisions adequate to the state of “educational consciousness”.

**Keywords:** educational leadership, mental models, change, development.

Among many various initiatives, which are worth taking or should be taken, one appears to be particularly important. It is an attempt of creating a strategy for selection, education, training and support head teachers of schools (and directors of other educational institutions). Dozens of thousands of people constituting a group of the most important “actors” in education system deserve recognition and support, as well as a precise assignment of tasks and expectations. One of preliminary activities ensuring quality of such strategy is initiation of a broad discussion on head teachers’ role. One element of this discussion should be a reflection on head teachers’ awareness.

## Study of awareness of education leaders

Civilization changes result in new demands towards schools. It coerces initiatives of schools’ modernization, which have rather minor successes. One of the reasons of low effectiveness of such actions might be the fact of ignoring beliefs, ideologies and opinions of people on whom the reforms rely – the head teachers.

Although education remains one of political and social priorities, lack of critical reflection and lack of discourse on education lead unavoidably to a slowdown or introduction to inappropriate reforms, which increase the risk of stagnation. Since our interpretation of reality structuralizes this reality, and they (interpretations) depend on our knowledge created on the basis of participation in social processes, it is necessary to allow for a critical stance towards data, information and opinions [Berger, Luckmann 2010]. As our knowledge, interpretation of reality and activities depend mostly on conclusions drawn through critical reflection, a systematic reflection is a necessary condition of an individual and organizational development.

This is why I decided to look at the way the head teachers think about leadership. The essence of my research project shows a variety of approaches of head teachers to leadership, and – as a result – to the tasks taken by them in schools. The research consisted of 99 in-depth interviews with head teachers of primary, junior high and high schools. This group included active head teachers who voluntarily participated in two projects focused on school development and evaluation.

## Mental models as concepts of reality

The possessed convictions (mental models) decide on a person’s actions, their approach to tasks or interpersonal relations [Senge 2002]. Therefore it is important to define such convictions before designing systematic activities. Defining mental models of leadership makes it possible to ask crucial questions: Do the mental models of head teachers inspire them to take creative, non-schematic actions, giving students and teachers an opportunity to take autonomous decisions, or do the models rather contribute to reproducing patterns, limiting and forbidding

experiments? What leadership style will be preferred by people convicted that the main aim of education is reproduction of the current state and transferring knowledge? What style will be preferred by people convicted that school should bring a social change?

Every person has individual theories on reality and its sectors, and uses them to understand situations and act appropriately and coherently. Individual theories comprise of three elements:

- 1) a concept of reality, that is an answer to a question: what is it like?;
- 2) a system of values, or an answer to a question what is important and how it should be;
- 3) and an orientation on activity, or a conviction whether one should be passive or active in a given situation, and what kind of actions one should take [Polak1999].

What are contemporary concepts of leadership? In the world of global connections a traditional approach is more and more criticized. A couple of trends dominate contemporaneous thinking about leadership. When trying to grasp complexity of this subject, leadership may be described in the framework of four main paradigms: classical, transactional, visionary and organic [Avery 2009].

Classical leadership means domination of one eminent person or elite group, giving commands to or manipulating others. The goal of a group is settled, though it does not have to be openly declared. Members of the organization just conform to directives given by leaders and do not question them, due to the fear of consequences or respect to the leader. This style of work: giving commands and controlling people was a dominating style of leadership in the 20th century's organizations and is still very popular today [Avery 2009].

Transactional leadership means leaders perceive members of the group as individuals and dedicate a lot of attention to their skills, needs and motives. A basic concept of this kind of leadership is conviction that a leader consciously uses their influence to direct, order and assist in activities and relations in the group. Leaders and members of the group negotiate or conclude transactions. Their effects depend mostly on an ability of a leader to influence others in order to reach goals and on ability to reward or punish members of the group [Avery 2009].

Visionary leadership (sometimes called charismatic, inspiring or transformative) is an answer to the times of change and uncertainty. Such leaders appeal to hearts and minds of organization's members, presenting a clear vision of the future. They set up a plan of reaching goals by their organization and motivate its members to make this vision come true. Visionaries are not heroes, they are rather „products” of their times. Once the times change, such leaders lose their power. Their abilities and visions do not fit the needs any more. Subordinates of visionary leaders are expected to be active and engage in all group activities taken to carry out the vision [Avery 2009].

Network (organic) leadership probably will appear in network (organic) organizations, which make the concept of an individual, central leader less and less useful. Such organizations function in multicultural, diversified world which can be presented (just like the organization itself) not as a hierarchic

system but a group of dynamic communication hubs. Inter-functional working groups are common in contemporary organizations. Their members may interchange depending on current needs or they can participate in several groups at once. Self-governing and self-improving groups do not need permanent formal leadership. It can always be handed to someone more suitable. Due to changes in organizations, the concept of leadership must have changed too. New forms respect growing dispersion of workers and complexity of connections between them [Avery 2009].

## Local and global context of research

As a society in Poland and worldwide we face today unprecedented challenges. In the same time we should not forget how successful Polish society has been – political system has been changed, economy, at least partially, cured, Poland has become a democratic state belonging to the world, not to a particular bloc. However, years of civilization delay have severe consequences in many areas of social life. Among others, they led to a need of a quick construction of a new system of values, additional (bigger than in other countries) investments in infrastructure and technology, increasing effort to shape a civic society or to reconstruct an education system.

Unfortunately, either the euphoria following the smooth transition from totalitarianism to democratic system or the fear of too difficult questions has virtually blocked a critical discourse on ideologies ruling social life. The hard period of transformation, economical decisions and abandoning some social groups have deepened enormous inequalities. Additionally, open borders showed us tremendous diversity of the world we, as a society, cannot deal with. It turned out that negligence in education of “the former system”, and too slow reforms and modernization of educational policy (after 1989) not only have not contributed to a quick social capital development, but also have not let fully use intellectual potential of Poles. This situation has deepened a threat Poland has been struggling for some time – a danger of becoming a place of cheap labor and consumption of goods produced elsewhere, instead of playing a role of a leader, thanks to creativity, mobility and entrepreneurship of Poles.

Awareness and common agreement on importance of the role of education in individual, civilization, economical and social development is linked, among others, to reflection on:

- transformation from industrial age to the age of knowledge-based society, where new competences are important. Schools should be particularly interested in soft skills (such as teamwork), which have not been formally accepted as teaching goals (in spite of official declarations or even stating so in strategic documents),
- globalization triggering economical changes and bringing different cultures together, standardizing opinions, creating similar lifestyle world-

wide. It is important to ask: Can education become a space where the youth are prepared to being open to divergence and diversity, in the spirit of equality of chances?,

- sudden, yet uncontrolled and controversial development of new communication and other technologies, which – in spite of gigantic investments – has not brought a significant improvement of education quality [Dumont, Istance 2010].

Education constantly remains one of the major points of interest of the governments all over the world, since it is still perceived as the best investment for the future. In most countries it is a significant entry in public spending and still remains the warranty of success. Actually, nowhere is conviction that investment in education is vital for strengthening opportunities of long-term increment and for reaction to technological and demographical changes influencing the labor market challenged. The belief of usefulness of education for individual and social success is confirmed by various statistical data, e.g. showing advantages of having higher taxes from higher income.<sup>1</sup> Education plays important role in retaining labor force in the labor market for a longer period, which is necessary in aging society or when employment rate may rise.<sup>2</sup> Other economic advantages are, among others: differences in income dependent on the level of education– higher education means higher income,<sup>3</sup> but also social advantages, including better health [Education at glance 2010].

It is not surprising that formal education gets substantial financial support. OECD countries spend 6.2% total GDP on average on functioning of educational institutions. In the years 1995–2007 in these countries spending on educational institutions (excluding higher education) grew on average by 43% [OECD 2010].

Despite economic proofs and social advantages stemming from education, and despite the rise of expenditures per student in the last decade, many countries note a worrying lack of educational effect. One of the experts analyzing data on education conclusions is a need of taking efforts towards appropriate changes in education system, to achieve better results in relation to the capital invested [Education at glance 2010]. Situation is not clear, however. It is obvious that educational systems are meaningful to individuals and to whole societies. It is certain that systems are very expensive, but there is no success in attempts to improve them.

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<sup>1</sup> An average male with higher education in OECD countries, during the whole period of professional activity – due to income taxes and social insurance contributions – brings 119000 USD more than a high school graduate. Society wins more, since taxes alone do not reflect directly many other advantages stemming from education.

<sup>2</sup> On average in OECD countries in years 1997–2009 unemployment rate for people with higher education has been about 4%, while for people without secondary education this indicator has often been well above 10%.

<sup>3</sup> In over 2/3 of OECD countries, which have data on their disposal, people with higher education earn over 50% more than the others.



It is as difficult to deny the need of a reform of education, as to find solid suggestions showing what should be changed and how. Stephen Ball [2007] notes that recently popular trends, appealing to market model (where workers' success depends on the ability of selling one's skills, knowledge and entrepreneurship on the global market) do not bring good results because of two reasons. Firstly, they often do not bring changes they promised. Secondly, they create new problems. New rules of creating wealth replace mass production logic of the Ford-like, industrial era with logic of flexible, knowledge-based production. However this process does not necessarily show new ways of the state's functioning. What is more, frequently used deregulation and privatization-reduced state's opportunity of direct intervention on practical and ideological level. Regarding the argument about lack of changes, Ball shows that "industrial labor" has not disappeared, but it has been exported. Cheap labor in mass production, without proper employee's protection, has found its place elsewhere on a geographical and political map. Labor requiring low qualifications still exists, but in the sector of services (and is frequently bound to feminization of certain professions). As far as the second argument on new problems is concerned, Ball notes similarities between center-peripheries relations in global economy and relations between top-ranked schools and school with the lowest stores in all rankings, especially in these educational systems which have experienced market-based reform [Ball 2007].

A characteristic dualism in educational policy of many countries is clearly visible. On the one hand, importance of an individual and individual choices of every consumer are accentuated. On the other hand – there are references to the aims of policy concentrated on satisfying economic interests of the state. It is not known whether these priorities can be fulfilled in the framework of the same initiatives. Among typical elements of thinking about education and ways of its systematic improvement we may find:

- an idea to improve economic situation through binding education with employment, productivity and trade,
- attempts to provide students with skills and competences useful in recruitment processes and work,
- a movement towards direct control over curricula and grading,
- initiatives towards reducing costs of administration and management in education,
- growth of social influence on decision-taking process and pressure of market choice [Ball 2007].

This combination of activities, or a proposition for education improvement stems from neoliberal vision of the world, where most important elements of social structure are connected with economical decisions taken in the atmosphere of a free market. I do not want to discuss effectiveness of such solutions. Yet I would like to stress how strongly do they determine thinking about education in many countries of the world, impairing critical thinking about these solutions.

## Systematic approach to complex reality

One of the most important principles of thinking about education development is „interdependency”. Today we cannot talk about individual theories or ideas on actions offering a solution to problems. We should rather take into consideration a whole set of conditions determining suitability and effectiveness of any initiative. To make chances for reforming education real, our actions should be at the same time:

- concentrated on the learning persons, which means that all actions should influence learning process,
- properly designed and structured, which means action cannot be a mere effect of a teacher's intuition. They should also create space for autonomy and investigations of the learning persons,
- substantially personalized, that is sensitive to the context and characteristics of individuals and groups, their previous knowledge, motivations, emotions,
- inclusive, which means sensitive to differences and deficits, enabling every learning person overcoming inborn barriers,
- social, which means that learning always takes place in interactions, cooperation and common effort to create an environment supporting learning [Dumont, Istance, Benavides 2010].

It seems today we should change the procedure of introducing reforms and improvements of education systems. A popular and practical perspective of immediate reaction to diagnosed problems should be left aside in favor of a deeper reflection on the nature of education, needs of a contemporary society and role of theory and preconceptions of reality. An approach towards education, pedagogy and leadership must be defined contextually, so it is possible to include specific conditions and problems in different areas, in which education takes place. It is also important to ask constantly about social justice and its relations with existing structures, processes, and decisions, which are taken. It is necessary to initiate, but also to perceive various discourses on education, since they construct reality of education.

Reflection on possible perspectives leads to a necessity of seeking a new pedagogical and political language, which would enable reactions on changing context and challenges. This language should create relations between democracy, ethics and politics, so that activities in education are understood as political action (or stemming from political context and influencing it) and actions in politics are understood as educational actions (or serving society's education). It is necessary to understand that the language of politics (and power) is more important for education than the language of technology and methodology, since education is a moral and political activity showing visions of social life, the future of individuals and groups [Giroux 2011: 71].

Any solution or idea to solve dilemmas connected with education should grasp and treat the issue from different perspectives, including various groups, levels and strategies. Each initiative should include a component focused on school and its

area, on teachers and other groups. It might be introduced top-down, through official channels and legal changes, or bottom-up, thanks to differences in awareness and needs of education system participants. To avoid the fate of many great ideas attempting to change the system, which have been incapacitated, since in implementation process they lost their primal, planned meaning and they have begun to function as petrified emblems of totally different order, each structured change should be treated systematically, which means including three actions:

- trying to understand relations and links between things/elements of the system and consequences of these relations. Systematic thinking tries to answer the question on the way in which we, in a given situation, confer sense to relation, structures, processes, patterns/models stemming from them, as well as what it means to us;
- introducing and engaging multiple perspectives, trying to see one thing in many ways (as it is seen by different groups). It helps avoiding stereotypes in thinking about solutions and strengthens awareness of the fact that “our perspective” influences interpretation of what we see. While introducing changes, it is worth asking a question about other ways of understanding the situation, and how these other interpretations might affect opinion on this reform. While searching for a good solution, guarantying success, one should also look analyze different meanings of success, and how different perspectives on this topic might affect human behaviors and actions;
- being aware of borders between the system’s elements. Seeing everything as a whole inhibits noticing all the important elements and understanding them. Where and how do we mark out borders is meaningful to the system, because it reduces dealing with things which are not vital for us. Marking borders of course is dependent on the accepted system of values, so it is always worth asking who marked them, what is inside and what is left outside, or about practical and ethical consequences of marking out borders, inclusion or exclusion [Williams, Hummelbrunner 2011].

It appears that the procedure of introducing changes and improving system should be reformed. A very practical perspective of immediate reactions to diagnosed problems should be replaced by a deeper reflection on the nature of education, needs of contemporary societies, and the role of theory and assumptions about reality. It is necessary to initiate, as well as to recognize various discourses on education, since they shape reality of education. Contemporary Polish school suffers from the absence of the term “leadership” – a capital we should not ignore – in its discourse.

## Present and absent discourses

Among significant factors decisive for a success of development initiatives and for a success of schools and whole education systems, leadership potential is mentioned more and more often. The fact who, with what skills, aims and sup-

port leads educational processes becomes a more and more important (or just more and more clear) element deciding on quality of schools and education systems.

One of the key elements deciding on the shape of education system is a mental model of education and mental model of leadership characteristic for people deciding what goes on at school. Very often good ideas fail not because of lack of motivation or will, lack of systemic thinking, but due to human **thinking models**. New concepts fail while introduced, because they contradict our internal images – models of how the world functions, images that restrict us to old, tried and tested ways of thinking and acting.

Thinking models may take a form of simple generalizations, such as “you cannot trust the others”, or they may compose complex theories, such as a concept explaining why members of my family interact this way and not the other. Yet, most importantly, thinking models are of an **active** character – they shape our actions. Understanding the way in which thinking models shape our perception is absolutely crucial in management. Problems with thinking models do not rely on whether the models are true or false, because they are always generalizations. Problems with thinking models appear when they are accepted silently – when they function below the threshold of consciousness [Senge 2002].

Leadership, despite many different interpretations [Northouse 2007], is usually defined as a process of influencing others to reach together commonly negotiated goals of the organization [Alston 2002: 2]. It might be understood as a specific group process in the interaction between people; sometimes leadership is treated as behavior [Northouse 2007], sometimes as particular personal features, a set of characteristics – behavioral patterns and personal features, which make some people reach their goals more effectively than the others [De Vries 2008: 203]. On other occasions leadership is analyzed from the perspective of specific skills, such as reaching and processing information, problem solving, social skills, motivating others or knowledge. This approach emphasizes the meaning of competences and shows perspective of growing to the role of a leader. It gives each person an opportunity to learn leadership, stressing its complexity, while in the same time presenting the elements it consists of [Mazurkiewicz 2011].

I suggest understanding leadership as a process occurring in groups of people characterized by several specific features. Educational leadership is a process concerning processes of teaching and learning. Its specific goals depend on context of education, but the main goal is teaching people. While talking about educational leadership, it is important to remember that education is a process in which a community of learning people is created, due to involvement of mind, emotions, past experiences, sensitivity to conditions or other people, with reference to the values accepted by a given community in the same time. It is a similar situation with leadership. It is not a characteristic of an individual or even a group, but an organization quality – a result of cooperation of many people. Leadership potential has nothing to do with charisma, authority or visionariness of individuals, but rather with an ability of increasing participation of organization's mem-

bers in decision-taking process. An education leader improves abilities of revealing potentials of the others, so they can transgress from an unfavorable situation (one leader in a group) to a desired situation – participation of many people in decision-taking process and increasing leadership potential of the group. A conscious leader, together with a group, should create situations enabling everybody to learn and solve problems [Mazurkiewicz 2011].

An education leader shares their knowledge and encourages the best cooperation, helping others to believe in themselves, to see and use their own potential. A leader should also assure colleagues about the right direction of their work and decisions and help fight uncertainty, so often connected with gaining autonomy and independence. Unfortunately, more and more complex future will contribute to making head teachers' work more difficult rather than easier. Situation will require constant improvement. That does not bode well head teachers, who are already loaded with too many duties. It is necessary to redefine a head teacher's roles towards being a designer and constructor of a school culture, letting all the organization's members learn. Leaders are members of teams wiser than individuals, thanks to the wealth of teams – people. Thomas Hoerr uses a term **distributed intelligence**, which in his opinion proves that our intelligence cannot be restricted to what is inside us, but should be determined by an ability to perceive and use external resources. He believes this kind of intelligence will determine a success of organizations (and schools especially) in the future [Hoerr 2005].

Educational leadership is characterized by a specific sensitivity of people engaged in the process. This sensitivity manifests in constant searching for ways of building a community, vision of an organization and specific (for the organization) approach to the tasks. These “ways of building an organization” refer to and manifest in various areas. Here are the most important ones:

1. Reflection on conditions of functioning, community's needs, social trends, philosophy, approach to teaching process which results in activities adequate to the context (**ACCURACY**). In an organization with a high leadership potential, there is a conviction about the rationale of action, a desire of searching new solutions and an acceptance of mistake that might happen due to activity, not disregard.
2. Concentration on the process of learning and development (**LEARNING**). In an organization with a high leadership potential a goal is clear and accepted. In every aspect of organization's activity a priority of members' learning is visible.
3. Constant support and demand for participation of all the employees in decision-taking and dialogue, which define directions of activity (**PARTICIPATION**). In organizations with a high leadership potential employee's talents are revealed, a desire of taking more responsibility than the necessary minimum can be observed, a readiness to take part in all the events connected with institution's activity is visible.
4. Ability to act as a service reflexive towards people and institutions (**SERVICE**). In an organization with high leadership potential there is a cli-

mate of trust and support. A desire to help in solving problems is a visible priority. Official hierarchy is very flattened, respect and prestige is gained in relations with others, not due to a position.

5. Respecting autonomy and diversity, even if difficult and different from mainstream (DIVERSITY). In an organization with high leadership potential an ability to use all the resources, also divergence and diversity is clear Rules of autonomy let treat this divergence as an asset, not a burden [Mazurkiewicz 2011b].

It is important that people taking part in and responsible for education leadership process are aware of multitude of elements necessary for final result of institution functioning and teamwork. Gaining such awareness is a moment when a development of leadership potential, of an individual or a group may start. An attempt to build an efficient learning organization and developing leadership potential at the same time require multidirectional activities of various intensity. Then you cannot avoid a question what education is.

## A necessity of reflection and active attitude towards reality

It is necessary to support leaders and candidates for leaders in their development, which is completely new, it sets new goals and is carried out in a new form. First of all, they must be supported in thinking about their roles, about teaching process, about their places of work – schools they run, in a much broader context than currently. A reflection on activities in the context of the leaders' colleagues' and society's conviction, in the context of values and preconceptions on what they are doing, in the context of priorities and justifications why they are acting this way and not another, is necessary. This kind of reflections is one of key aspects of development of leaders, who aim at constant evolution of actions, compliant with the needs, building trust in organization and to organization, responsible activity, in relation to what is going on in the world around.

The voices calling for fundamental social change, reminding the need of mass cooperation and change of the style of leadership, which might mean abandoning mythicizing specialization and expert knowledge, expertise and control in favor of cooperation, participation and creativity. It is well known that we will not prepare leaders of the future, looking back. Phenomena connected to social and virtual cooperation not only change the way of learning, but learning as such, which creates new tasks for the leaders. Today they should become anthropologists focusing on the groups, rather than (as it has been so far) psychologists focusing on individuals [Gobillot 2009]. Obviously a demand of giving up expert knowledge and experience might sound worrying, but one should remember we talk about leadership potential, the capital that should help us deal with results of disturbing trends. Gobillot talks about an appalling demographical trend, observable as lower and lower level of understanding between generations, about expert trend disturbing traditional activities, noticeable by the fact that expert knowledge can be found not only inside,

but also outsider organization, about the trend of losing attention/concentration, which is seen when it is more and more difficult to engage attention to the most important aspects of the organization, when there is less and less time for it; and about democratic trend, manifesting itself in the fact that it is less and less probable that the leaders might control resources and people personally and directly.

While demanding thinking about leadership as a way of acting according to needs and as satisfactory development of education system, I point out to reflection as the mechanism of constructing leadership. I believe that what and how we think about the world makes the world what it is like. I suggest then accepting social constructivism as a main theory explaining mechanism of people's and organizations' learning, which means accepting the assumption of socially created reality. Here an individual is the world's creator. Through interpretation process they convey senses and structurize their environment. A man in organization is a seeker of sense [Sułkowski 2005: 77–85].

In the era of constant time deficiencies, unmet deadlines and delays, a postulate of devoting more time on reflection on theories might appear unreasonable, but it is necessary to act rationally. If you restrict yourself in professional development to “technical”, practical matters, if you close yourself to so-called “theory”, there is a risk of using procedures and methods thoughtlessly and taking thoughtless actions. Knowledge of your own attitudes and ability to put your opinion in theoretical context gives a possibility of specifying your standpoint, rational access to experiences and opinions of other people, justification of the practices used and intellectual tool to recognize, analyze and evaluate various issues and problems we face. Such a self-consciousness protects us from self-condemnation (for example for the fact that our students do not learn, there is a reluctance to learn) and enables a sensible development. If you understand context, structure and sources of your own concepts and theories, there is a possibility of their development in a reflective and conscious way. You can also gain terminology for the discourse it, which it is then easier (or rather possible at all) to participate and build a professional culture. It is then easier to justify and explain the action taken and protects you from fashionable trends and pop-theories [Brookfield 1995].

## Head teachers and their visions of leadership

Research on leadership shows a very complex image. A leadership and a leader are terms, which at first seem clear and possibilities of understanding them seem obvious, since these words accompany humanity for a long time. We hear them, we discuss them, and we refer to them. In spite of this fact (or maybe due to this fact) precise definition is very difficult. Every conversation or analyses resemble peeling an onion: It does not lead us to a common understanding, but reveals next layers of understanding. An interview on leadership started with a question about a character of a leader: who is a leader? We could see certain regularity. The interviewed head teachers most often defined leaders through actions, functions or tasks. A leader was described

through what they did. According to the respondents leaders are people who can organize others' work, define tasks precisely, assign well-matched tasks to certain employees, appreciate subordinates, especially when they comply with commands or earlier settlements. Leaders set goals to be achieved, they decide about priorities, about which aim has to be met unconditionally, and which can be postponed.

In spite of precise specification of criteria, it was not easy to classify comments of head teachers. Similarly to the case of a question on visions of education, it appeared that mental models of a majority of head teachers combine elements of various concepts and paradigms. We should then rather talk about flexible usage of various elements of theories than about sticking to one theory. Head teachers expressed opinions, which were a specific amalgam, a mixture of perspectives and theories. That is why here, just like in the case of visions of education, I defined four additional mixed paradigms of leadership.

Despite a conclusion about a multitude of stands in between the paradigms, we can answer the question about the state of awareness and about who the leader is in head teachers understanding. Two groups came to light. They expressed their opinions on leaders clearly enough to be assigned to a certain paradigm. 22% of respondents expressed themselves in a way combining a paradigm of visionary leadership, treating a leader as a charismatic, inspiring, magnetic person, and 18% of respondents invoked a vision from the classical paradigm. Here a leader is defined as a person or a group on top of the ladder and executing power over other members of the group.

A group of respondents presenting a mixed, classical-transactional leadership paradigm constituted 22%. Together with 18% of supporters of classical leadership it forms 40% of head teachers inclining towards a strong person, using their formal power or ability to punish and reward, combined with an ability to negotiate (transactional leadership). If we take into account an 8% group of people presenting opinions from both visionary and transactional paradigms (and a group of 22% pointing to a visionary leadership), we will have a 70% group of respondents invoking to a visionary or classical leadership, enriched with elements of transactional leadership.

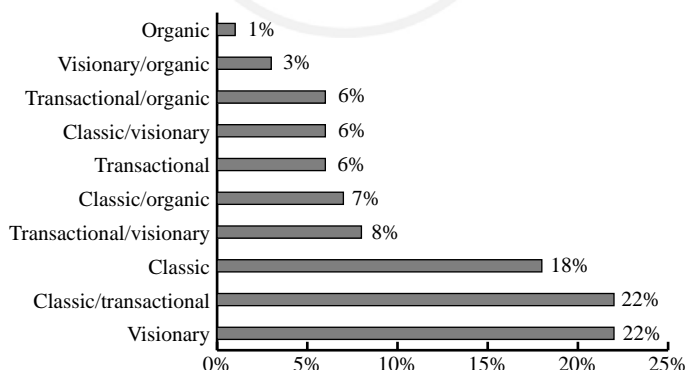


Figure 1. Paradigms reflected in answers to the question: who is a leader?

Source: own construction.



It is clear that a leader, as understood by the interviewed head teachers, is a strong person – strong due to their vision and ability to convince others, or strong due to a position and authority. Additionally, respondents stressed that a useful skill of a leader is an ability to negotiate, arrange or manipulate others through a distribution of rewards and punishments.

Supporters of visionary leadership paradigm would say first of all that leaders are active in two areas: appointing a direction of development of an organization through creation of a rousing vision or showing valuable goals and enhancing others to a certain direction of actions or new initiatives:

Someone who knows what he wants, has a program and can captivate crowds, has a certain charisma.

A leader is a person with a vision, a strategy, he creates an atmosphere to work and triggers creativity. A leader is a guide who must show direction very clearly...

A leader is someone who can captivate, impress, introduce something new, give a new direction. A person who makes a flock follow him.

Without a leader – according to followers of visionary leadership paradigm – a group does not know what to do, is not able to define goals, and is apathetic, not energetic. Moreover, in this vision a leader integrates and helps others feel a community of goals:

It is necessary to unite these people in a certain way, because it is essential, if you want to lead a group. A leader has to convince others to what he wants to do, and must have supporters (...) for me the most important thing is making others believe they all want to go in the same direction.

Supporters of classical paradigm express a similar conviction on integration. However, an integrating element is not an attractive vision worth taking effort of cooperation, but a person of an intriguing, strong leader – someone who enjoys respect, has authority and can control “his” or “her” people, a man of power. Among the most important skills and abilities assigning tasks and executing their realization were pointed out. Such a perspective is often related with an appropriate understanding of social life, where hierarchy, dependence and power relations are a natural state:

If there is an institution – a school or police, there must be someone on top of the institution. Surely this hierarchy must exist (...). There must be a constant control of one person over the other. If you look at a family life – a child must be controlled by a parent, a parent is often controlled by their parents, or by relatives, neighbors. A leader, on the one hand, should be accepted, and on the other hand – treated with respect.

According to head teachers, leaders are people who can organize work of others, precisely define tasks to be done, and at the same time match tasks with predispositions of a given employee. They also appreciate subordinates, especially when they follow the commands and comply with earlier arrangements. Leaders set goals to achieve, they decide about priorities, about which aim has to be met unconditionally, and which can be postponed:

A leader is like a dance leader – he assigns tasks. You can say – He deals with cards, he organizes everybody's work.

The most important task is to coordinate the team's work so it is fluent and harmonious (...). Someone who says: "do this, do that" is always needed.

It is someone who leads a group, organizes it, presents clear goals, clear, I say, and minds if the others know his expectations.

As you can see, a leadership is often identified with organization of work or leading people with deficits, who cannot deal, who could not survive or work on their own, which is perceived as a natural state. Controllers are necessary – without them everything becomes too complicated:

From time immemorial, someone must have ruled and someone must have been ruled. A leader is a person who leads the others, who manages them, takes decisions, so we do not kill one another, so there is a certain hierarchy.

Everybody is lazy by nature. We like to avoid certain things, or go shortcut. That is why a leader or a head teacher has to control, check, and limit shortcomings... because people need showing them a direction and a monitoring of their activities.

Not everybody might become such a leader, because of the perennial order:

(...) Since the dawn of history someone has had to wield the power and someone else has had to obey.

Leaders are self-confident, believe in their competences and know what to do. This confidence infects the others, but also creates a situation where subordinates wait for confirmation of the rightness of their decision or action, and they do not bring themselves to act on their own:

This is someone who is aware that they are a leader, what depends on them, what they influence. It is a responsible person, conscious of their decisions.

People often wait for a signal. They want to do something, but they are afraid to step out. While talking to a leader, they get a green light and they carry out something they were first reluctant to; a leader is a manager, whose opinion and influence are decisive.

Both paradigms – visionary and classical, were very often combined with transactional leadership. An element of negotiations, consultations, arranging something with subordinates appeared in comments of head teachers preferring classical or transactional leadership. However, in most cases, the voice of subordinates was only a mere addition to decisive power of a leader. A leader, in good faith, with all his knowledge and experience, listens to all the voices, to take decision:

(...) a good leader also listens to the others and allows for common realization of some tasks.

As a leader, I try not to be autocratic, but almost democratic – we have conversations, talks, and only after such a confrontation of opinion, I choose the main task and assign given jobs to certain people, using potential in every person.

An expectation that leaders should know their employees to be able to motivate them better, was visible:

It is a person who knows best all the people in their group, who knows its needs. Such a person should appreciate a contribution of a worker and should notice everything, or a majority of things, what employers do for this institution.

A leader has to know how to work with people, since every person is different, a leader must know how to talk to people.

Leaders are trustworthy thanks to their competences, an attitude they manifest and rules they follow. A leader arouses respect and inspires:

A leader should be open, go-ahead, ready to take risk, able to listen to others, sensitive. Should have a charisma. A task of a leader is to create a team with whom you can do something no one has done before.

A leader must set an example and be an authority for all.

A leader is someone who looks more bravely and further in the future than the others.

Leaders are self-conscious of their potential, tasks and the influence they have on people and organization. Therefore, they take responsibility for their own action and for the action of others. People cannot function or cooperate in a team without a leader.

This conviction about a necessity of a strong leader, strong person, strong individual probably reflects a desire of safety, certainty, conviction that what we are doing is right, because our leader confirms it. Few adductions to organic leadership paradigm and lack of adduction to participation or distributed paradigm show a deep aversion and lack of trust to group forms of wielding power. Probably this is a result of experiences of our society. However, we should encourage construction of a new vision of leadership, leadership answering to contemporary challenges and dilemmas, leadership different from a vision of a strong individual controlling people and situations. Probably there are clear and sometimes reasonable fears which make people stick to the vision of a strong personality of a leader. One of them is a fear that increased participation, broadening a commanding group results in limiting competences on the leaders' side. Elite approach fights here with participatory approach. A conviction that on the side of classical leaders we will find knowledge and competences is balanced by a conviction that for quality and fairness of actions, people should be engaged in the decision-taking process.

Leadership is an integral element of human nature. It has been with us since the times of antic tribes. Here everything, which is the best, and the worst in our human nature is cumulated: love and hatred, hope and fear, service and egoism. Leadership stems from what we are like, but also results in what we are like. That is why leadership manifests in various forms and types, why it answers to many challenges and problems. A basic problem of a human being has always been surviving, dealing with physical environment. To survive as a team, we had to, and we still have to learn, remember, solve the problems, but also make

mistakes. Although some difficulties can be faced individually, most often we do it in a group – we are dependent on one another. In this collective effort, taken to survive, people take up various roles, including the roles of leaders.

The next problem, after survival is the understanding of the world. When we are safe, we want to understand what surrounds us and share this understanding with others. We live in groups, so we construct social reality – commonly possessed definition on what is true. Group memory holds experiences, images, and dreams. These, who take dominating roles in creating a group narration, become leaders and tinker with myths and facts. We can imagine as well that constructing organic leadership is easier when we struggle with understanding the world, rather than when we fight for survival.

The third problem of a human being is managing the power, or searching for a way of reconciling interests and needs of an individual with interests and needs of a group. Balancing a desire of autonomy with a desire to live with others is a task for leaders. This is done through delicate, often hidden mechanisms. These three problems are strongly interconnected and decide about our lives [Harvey 2006].

Education needs a modern leadership, based on cooperation and permanent communication with people, efficiently using complex diversity of actions, attitudes, behaviors and values, found in every organization. Leadership has to be a process of taking actions, creating situations determining organizational initiatives, entitling others to take actions, modeling relations between the people. Then, various features, believed to be leaders' characteristics are useful, but first of all we should remember that a function of a leader can be executed only in a group. Without a group this function does not exist. It can only be understood in the context of relations, in a specific game between people, school environment, and atmosphere, school culture and the whole community. The theoretical consideration and practical requirements towards head teachers we had until now bring more confusion than support. They concentrate on an individual – their predispositions and duties and they do not appreciate the role of a group, which is led. Therefore, it is worth stressing that although there are many ways of conceptualization of this issue, we may note key components making understanding the leadership phenomenon easier: it is always a dynamic process, connected with influencing some people by others, it manifests in a group context and refers to goals' realization [Northouse 2007: 3].

In the whole world postulates to improve school leadership are heard. Everywhere there is an investment in leaders, although sometimes it is hard to prove effectiveness of such actions. An importance of a leader in ensuring sustainable development of a school is strongly accentuated. Such people are perceived as having key role in a school's success, so there are attempts to invest in various ways in their professional development, but in the same time they are required to come up some additional expectations and tasks. This contributes to a more and more difficult situation of managers of education. The most serious restriction of this approach is not including a context in which a manager functions. A majority of researchers stress that the more participation, transfer of entitlement, trust toward the others and democratic attitude, the more effective the leadership [Michalak 2006].

For now it sounds like “mission impossible” if we take under consideration opinions heard earlier. Strong personality, charisma and clear vision, high competencies in leading teams, high position in hierarchy and finally for majority of respondents not directly declared but possible to track in their language masculinity are features of the leader. Our schools and our societies need something different.

In order to be able to see the broader picture of the leadership in education I have decided to check not only the “ideal” picture of the leader but also leaders’ “real work day” and their understanding of their role and typical tasks what is described in the next section.

## Key tasks of education leaders in practice

From the comments of the head teacher participating in a research, a particular difficulty arises. It stems from a necessity of reconciliation a role of administrator responsible for, let’s say, physical environment, with a role of a person responsible for a learning process of both students and teachers. Domination of organization and administration tasks is clear. What is interesting, an intensification of tone and comments connected with classical leadership paradigm might be puzzling. As it turns out, in everyday life, in practice, there is no place for being a visionary. Only 3% admitted that their tasks are somehow connected with setting goals, creating a vision or integrating others around tasks. As many as 48% head teacher unambiguously talked about tasks and behaviors, which enabled to assign them to a category of classical leadership. If we add head-teachers presenting intermediate types: classical-transactional (19%) and classical-visionary (14%), we will receive a group of 81% head teacher, who act in a quite authoritarian way to manage administrative issues -- control, regulations, finances, providing facilities, making renovations, and also sometimes training teachers, but almost never touching the issue of students’ learning.

A head teacher is responsible for safety of building, so they must know that it is obligatory to have a complete technical documentation, technical, inspections, chimney, gas, fire inspections etc. Evacuation plans to be prepared.

A fundamental role of a head teacher is pedagogical supervision, but they almost do not have time for it. Then, there is function of an employer. A head teacher is a person who hires employees, and sometimes also fires them.

The next role of a head teacher is representing school outside, which translates into cooperation with others:

The most important task of a head teacher is preparation of an organizational sheet, which is a fundamental document on the basis of which a school works.

A head teacher, first of all, fulfills the role of manager, or person running a school and responsible for it. A head teacher must organize work of students and teachers, prepares a school year – preparing a certain number of classes, planning and adapting teachers who are going to teach young people. (...) As a result, their role is the one – to use an ugly word – of a supervisor.

A head teacher watches over the course of the schedule. It is clear that every day a head teacher supervises whether the teachers are at work, or they have called sick, or they have taken a leave.

Controlling and running documentation of teachers. Observation of lessons, of teachers' work, assessment of the teachers' work. A head teacher is everything at school. They are often a secretary, a PR-specialist. Suddenly they must know everything about constructions, health and safety at work, plumbing, law.

Organizes schoolwork, remaining safety and in compliance to all the requirements. Signs a pile of documents and takes responsibility for everything, regardless they know the matter or not.

A head teacher must go out of the office, make a stroll through corridors, check what is going on in every toilet. This guarantees order at school.

There is a clear disappointment resulting from a disproportion between a broad scope of responsibility and relatively low pay and status. There were also few voices suggesting that a head teacher may inspire teachers:

(...) I constantly encourage my teachers to develop. E.g. last year I set twice such requirements, so the teachers tried to use multimedia in teaching. In the first place I just talked and talked, but later I just organized a training course.

Activities of a head teacher aiming at team integration were also emphasized:

A head teacher fulfills a role of an arbiter in settling controversies among teachers. Head teachers absorb directions of reforms set by the ministry and adapt them to conditions in a given school, to the community's characteristic, to type of students, way of access.

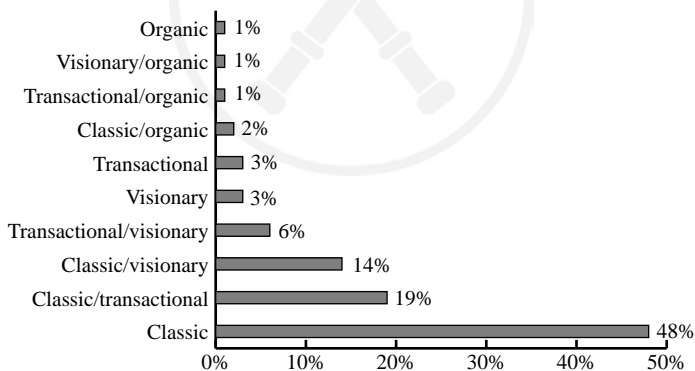


Figure 2. Paradigms reflected in answers to the question: what are basic headteacher's tasks?

Source: own construction.

Everyday activities of the head teachers, who took part in a research, duties they perceive as fundamental, are a far cry from the duties of an effective head

teacher<sup>4</sup> enlisted by Marzano and his colleagues [Marzano, Walters, McNulty 2005]. Sadly, one can have an impression that in Polish schools the most burning questions are: controlling and disciplining teachers, filling documents in, and bigger and smaller renovation works. There is very little reflection on the role of educational leaders in designing and ensuring conditions for teaching and learning, or promoting life-long learning. Of course there is possibility that external world demands it from people assigned to the position of school leaders, but is it situation we need and desire? What systemic changes must occur, to make head-teacher take responsibility for learning process?

## Recapitulation

Among many conclusions quoted already before one seems particularly important. First of all, educational leaders, whose profiles emerge from the interview, are people functioning as source of inspiration and vision, with a substantial formal power. Unfortunately, practically they are controllers of teachers and organizers of the process of replenishing facilities and improving school infrastructure, responsible for safety rather than for an intellectual development. In fact there is no visible desire or potential for initiating of running a process of change.

In order to face contemporary challenges we need something more from those on leadership position for future success. But are we able to define “something”? It is difficult but more disturbing is the fact, which the interviews with the head teachers prove, professionals in the field of education do not even see a need for it. We should immediately start a serious conversation about values of democracy, solidarity and fairness. Of course it is not a task for education sector alone. It is

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<sup>4</sup> Affirmation, or recognition and celebration of successes; promoting change, or an agreement for disturbing school's balance to reach intended effects and preventing sticking in the same place for years; appropriate rewarding, or noticing differences, using flexible ways of rewarding, showing examples of excellent work in all cases; communication, or caring about efficient communication between all the students and teachers; caring about culture which directly influences students, that is reinforcing culture which directly and indirectly influences learning process and students' achievements; taking care of discipline; flexibility, that is adapting to current needs and situations; concentration on priorities; explaining convictions, or a discussion to define convictions about education, school functioning, duties of teachers and showing their value and usefulness; inviting teachers to contribute; commitment in the issues related with teachers (curriculum, methods, grading); intellectual stimulation, or ensuring teachers know the newest theories, good practices, researches' results or literature useful in their work; knowledge of the best practices in teaching, that is constant learning, knowing effective practices and guidance in this area; monitoring and evaluation, that is appropriate designing of a process of information collection to achieve a valuable feedback; optimistic attitude, or consciously constructed optimism as an important feature of an effective school; order, that is avoiding chaos and uncertainty on what should be happening; relations, or caring about effective, professional relations at school; connections, that is organizing relations with external environment – teachers, authorities, the whole community; means, or rather its readiness to be used; sensitivity to context, that is an awareness of what determines current situation of a school; visibility, that is maintaining as frequent a contact with all the employers, students and teachers and other stakeholders as possible [Marzano, Waters, McNulty 2005: 41–61].

the society, understood as citizens, organizations, politicians, and social leaders, who must show political will of including a question of the role of education in the mainstream of public life. A public debate on what education we want and what leaders we need should be started. When we decide what a good school is, there will be a chance to create such school in a systemic, not incidental way. Similarly, it is crucial to achieve a well-understood and accepted vision of roles and tasks of education leaders – key people in education system organizing such complex processes as teaching and learning.

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## LEADING THE LEADERS: EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES ON THE PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LEADERS

### Abstract

Dealing with the legacy of the discourses of neo-liberalism and new managerialism on the current framing of leadership discourse provides the background to this paper. Increasingly there are strong indications at policy level that the intention of recommendations are very closely aligned to the neo-liberal worldview evidenced by the uncritical acceptance of neo liberal infused language among many key stakeholders. This paper calls for leadership development programmes that will provide for critically informed and engaged leaders who can position themselves as key mediators and evaluators of these reductive policy proposals. To this end it is necessary to make leadership and what constitutes leadership practice more explicit and to cease conflating it with management so that the knowledge and understanding of leadership within the domain of education can develop fully. This process creates an imperative for a greater engagement with the theoretical fields and disciplines linked to education within leadership preparation and development programmes with more encouragement for leaders to continue to masters and doctoral levels so as to build capacity within the leadership community to mobilise the rich and diverse knowledge-base underpinning education to critique and challenge.

**Keywords:** leadership development, critical pedagogy, foundation disciplines in education, neo-liberal perspectives, person centered imperatives for school leadership.

### Introduction

Leadership appears to have gone viral. It seems as if the whole world in almost every domain of activity is talking about models of good leadership, lack of leadership or the need for leadership. Biographies and autobiographies of successful leaders are filling bookshelves on many highstreets. With such diverse interest in the idea of leadership it is becoming difficult for those involved in scholarship and research in the field to secure the conceptual basis underpinning leadership discourse. The preparation and development of leaders is also attracting the attention of a number of education and training experts and providers with

programmes ranging from “one off seminars” on issues such as motivating and managing staff to diploma and degree courses dealing with a range of leadership and management topics. In the area of education, the focus on school leadership as a way of ensuring the successful delivery of policy reform in schools in both national [Department of Education and Skills 2011] and international contexts, and at European level in particular [Mac Ruairc 2010; Pont *et al.* 2008a, 2008b] is gathering momentum, adding to the diversity of interest in the field. Central to much of the work on school leadership is a focus on leadership preparation and development. However, what constitutes this domain and what is viewed as appropriate or desirable content is often highly contested in practice. Echoing what is happening in the broader leadership field, the preparation and development of school leaders exhibits considerable variation in content and form. Even the idea of leadership development as a title is not universally accepted or used, with many jurisdictions preferring the more limited idea of leadership training. Consequently, some programmes focus almost entirely on developing the skill set of leaders to carry out the functions of a leader in an efficient way (LDS programmes, Ireland, <http://www.pdst.ie/lfs>) others such as the National College of School Leadership in England can be viewed as an attempt on the part of government to shape the content and nature of school leadership training. This type of “designer leadership” [Gronn 2003] ensures that leadership training can be controlled so that practice and activity in schools can continue to serve government priorities and imperatives well [Thrupp 2005].

The paper will address a number of challenges that prevail in many contexts with respect to school leadership. The impact of neo-liberalism and new managerialism on the current framing of leadership discourse is well rehearsed in scholarship [Day 2003; Thrupp and Willmot 2003; Lynch 2005; Bates 2006; Fitzgerald 2008; Sugrue and Solbrekke 2011]. The legacy of these discourses now needs to be examined. The manner in which they are increasingly functioning in a hegemonic/doxic fashion is an issue that will require considerable surveillance and resistance in the future. A case in point is the recent drive for/towards school autonomy. The notion of autonomy within an increasingly constrained accountability framework is contributing to a very specific workplace reality for school leaders. Leaders and teachers are caught between the two powerful and sometimes contradictory forces of autonomy and accountability [Sugrue and Solbrekke 2011]. Critics of the manner in which autonomy is being packaged question point to a process of blame dispersal, where the state increasingly distances itself from the outcome of education and blames the school (Apple among others). More recently the economic downturn in many countries has increased the legitimacy for the already well established predominance of economic imperatives and the increasing economisation of education policy [Lingard 2010]. Both trajectories are continually marginalising perspectives that focus on the person orientated, developmental, holistic and formative work of schools (Fielding, Woods, Wrigley, Tompson). The culture of performativity which is almost universally accompanied by overt models of surveillance of attainment has also been widely critiqued in the literature. The practice of teaching to the test [Anagnostopoulos 2005;

McNeil 2000; Zigo 2001; Lam and Bordignon 2001; Mac Ruairc 2009, 2011], or in some cases teaching the test [Mac Ruairc 2012] has a negative impact on the quality of school curricula. The wash back impact on the curriculum regularly results in a more strongly framed, strongly classified curriculum [Bernstein 1991] which in the case of the UK has produced what has been described as an improvised curriculum [Alexander 2009]. The avoidance of risk taking and innovative practice [Williams & Ryan 2000] and the negative impact this has in schools succeeding in connecting curricula and teaching to the realities of students' cultures, backgrounds and economic conditions [McNeil 2000] is very regrettable. This outcome in itself provides a very strong argument for changing the direction of school attainment surveillance by arguing for a greater focus on the nurturing of authentic learning cultures in classrooms. All of these issues create contexts that limit the scope and creativity of the work of school leaders and their teams.

There are strong indications at policy level in particular that the intention of recommendations are very closely aligned to the neo-liberal worldview. While the impact of testing on children's experience of school is being challenged in some contexts, the role education plays as part of a comparative and competitive market driven area of growth is firmly embedded in the discourse. The intended and unintended consequences of international comparative testing in the form of testing PIRLS, TIMS and most especially PISA is very significant. There is further evidence of uncritical acceptance of neo liberal infused language among many key stakeholders. The recent report of European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) *Report on school leadership and governance (2012)* is an example of how doxic this perspective has become among some influential stakeholders.

## Leadership preparation and development: policy drivers

Two recent publications the OCED report on Improving School Leadership [Pont *et al.* 2008a; 2008b] and the Comenius Framework of Reference Report [Mlaker *et al.* 2011] provides further evidence of the doxa of neoliberalism. Both publications contain very specific implications for the nature of leadership development programmes into the future. Both of these reports are indicative of an increasing level of interest at EU level in the area of school leadership. In addition to these, a number of comparative reports on how different countries are selecting, recruiting and developing school leaders are now published or in train and increasingly commonalities are emerging with respect to the focus of these reports and the manner in which they are delimiting discourse as it relates to leadership policy formation indicating very clear links to the perspective outlined above. The OECD conducted its study of school leadership with a view to providing policy makers with information and analysis that will help them "formulate and implement school leadership policies leading to better education" [Pont *et al.* 2008a: 14]. This work comprised two interrelated strands; the first, entitled the analytical strand, involved the 22 countries and the findings of this phase,

identify “policy levers and a range of policy options to help governments improve school leadership... and build sustainable leadership for the future” [Pont *et al.* 2008a: 1]. The second strand, published in volume two, focused on a more detailed examination of what was considered to be “innovative practice in school leadership” [Pont *et al.* 2008b: 15] in five case studies countries. In a similar way to other work in the globalizing and internationalizing of leadership development [Dimmock 2003] the main purpose of this part of the study was to explore “new models of school organization and management that distribute leadership roles in innovative ways” [Pont *et al.* 2008b: 15] and to identify “promising programmes and practices to prepare and develop school leaders” [Pont *et al.* 2008b: 15] both of which were identified as central to the research by the OECD team [Pont *et al.* 2008b: 15]. Neither of the two volumes indicated any commitment to contributing to a more equal, just or inclusive school system. Neither showed any commitment to the broader educative functions of schools (for a more extensive critique of this report see: Mac Ruairc 2012 and Mac Ruairc 2009). Both volumes take an extraordinarily benign view on the impact of new managerialism, conflating the contribution of this type of perspective with an increase in standards.

The model proposed, to shape leadership preparation and development programmes, is limited to the dissemination of a “what works” approach to leadership development. Little account is taken of the problematic nature of the use of this transferrable epistemological [Gunter 2006] approach to school leadership where there is considerable research that points to the contextualised and differentiated [Gunter 2006] nature of the work of school leadership and school leadership improvement [Leithwood and Hallinger 2004]. The idea that different national and local contexts are “the product of unique and dynamically changing sets of circumstances – political, economic, social, cultural historical, professional and technical– in that country” [Bolam 2003: 74] is not considered. The view of leadership as a form of practice that takes account of “the moral, epistemological, sociological and discursive dimensions of practice” [Riehl 2000] is entirely absent from the discussion. In a similar way there is no sense of the need for leadership to comprise “a concern for suffering and oppression, a commitment to empowerment and transformation, an aggressive advocacy on behalf of students and a critical stance towards leadership and authority” [Riehl 2000: 70]. This focus on the critical leadership domain is a vital component in quest for equity [Grace 1997] because it enables a genuine engagement with the overall context of schooling, the historical basis of the field [Gunter 2006] and the workings of the power structures that delimit education systems.

The more recent report on school leadership development (2011) focuses specifically on “improving the preparation and training of effective school leaders and disseminating a better understanding of the role of school leaders” [Mlaker 2011: 7]. The report included perspectives from schools of education, in-service training institutes, schools, ministries of education and NGO’s [Mlaker 2011: 7]. The overall purpose was to develop a framework of reference for school leadership. It followed a similar development pathway to the OECD report discussed above; phase one consisted of compiling and collating country background re-

ports into a European synopsis while the second phase identified core elements of school leadership qualifications by explicating a series of domains and components which in the view of the participating partners should constitute a leadership development framework. This proposed framework extends previous work by Leithwood and Riehl [2005] outlining five domains considered to capture the different dimensions of leadership practice. These domains were subdivided into components that provided greater detail in relation to the content of each domain. Finally each of the components were linked to modules, a number of which are included in the report by way of exemplars. These module exemplars are intended not only capture aspects of what different countries are doing with respect to leadership development but also facilitate the sharing of good practice.

When the detail in this report is viewed from the perspective of developing leaders to deliver a more broadly based, holistic and inclusive type of school system the framework falls considerably short of what is required. On a positive note there is specific reference to aligning the core purpose of schooling with “ethical, educational, political and cultural values [to] include procedures that guarantee fairness justice and democracy” [Mlaker *et al.* 2011: 12]. One of the domains also focuses on the personal development and growth of the school leader. Both of these signal a departure from the language and intention of the OECD report. However, this broader perspective is not developed to any great extent in the document. The overall thrust of the language of the document strongly resonates with the neoliberal discourse of outputs, effectiveness, an over emphasis on management activity rather than the more complex domain of leadership and “the creation of a corporate identity” for each school [Mlaker *et al.* 2011: 10]. The final section in the report provides a selection of module descriptors from leadership preparation and development programmes in a range of countries. These are intended to illustrate “example[s] of good practis[c]e in the areas of leadership and leadership development...that could inform practitioners and policy makers” [Mlaker *et al.* 2011: 102]. When these are examined a very worrying picture emerges for those who believe in the transformative power of education to work towards a more equitable society. The attention paid to this core, arguably prime, function of schooling is scant. It is mentioned explicitly in only one of the modules included in the publication. However, in this case it is included in a module comprising 7 x 1.5 hour sessions covering the following areas: the school as an organization, the self-evaluating school, school culture, inclusion, leading the change process, strategic planning, leading in context. The scope of this module indicates a lack of awareness of the complexity of what needs to be explored when focusing on themes such as equality and inclusion. The incidences of references to other cognate concepts in the entire document are included to illustrate the marginal nature of the focus on these key issues in the formation of leaders; social justice (0), equality (0), justice (2), equity (2), democracy (2) [in the same sentence on the same page], social class (0), gender (0), race (0), ethnicity (0). Essentially what has been reported and to some extent recommended is a leadership development programme that does not need to deal with any of the aforementioned areas. Failure to deal with these core dimensions of school life in the preparation and ongoing

development of leaders is very problematic. There is growing evidence that homogenous forms of schooling are failing to deliver appropriate levels of education to diverse student groups including lower socio-economic groups, ethnically diverse groups [Riehl 2000; Riley 2009]. These groups are increasingly claiming their own forms of subjectivity and are beginning to strongly resist being treated as a social variable by policy makers [Wrigley 2008], where the impact of these social variables are controlled for in statistical studies, particularly in school effectiveness research where the noise of this diversity has to be silenced in order for the “real findings” to emerge. The socially constructed nature of difference on a whole range of variables will require leadership that is responsive, sociologically informed and above all critical of the competing discourses. There is a considerable body of scholarship that is now focused on the need for school leadership to engage in a critique of current models of schooling and address the gaping need for a leadership that is focused on the key issues of equity and social justice through the building and strengthening of a democratic community in schools. The avoidance of dealing with the core purposes of schooling points to a significant lacuna in policy in this area. The lack of an explicit focus in all work with leaders on issues such as the formation of children and young people, difference and diversity, the holistic development of individuals, the person centered nature of schools and ironically one of the findings of the OECD report itself [Pont *et al.* 2008a] the reason why many leaders/ teachers enter the profession in the first place, i.e. the desire to make a difference [Pont *et al.* 2008a]. Perhaps if more acknowledgement was given to the personal rewards and positive outcomes for all as a result of investing time and energy in the broad, holistic development of children and young people and if the discourse that repeatedly marginalizes this defining dimension of school leadership could be altered then the serious crisis in recruitment in many countries as detailed by the OECD and several others [Pont *et al.* 2008a; Bolhofer 2011] might be ameliorated.

## Challenging times

It is clear that the dominance of one perspective in policy development at EU level as well as in many national policy contexts both within and outside Europe is creating one dominant view of what school leadership will be like in the future. However, some research and scholarship based on practice in the field is highlighting different models of practice on the ground. Conference presentations on leadership [AERA 2011, 2012] recount details of school leaders who are focusing on the broader, more democratic, inclusive and holistic models of schooling. These leaders are most often working in areas of high poverty/social deprivation. The evidence from their work suggests that their strategies and the values and vision that inform their practice is having a very positive impact on the students in their schools. The outcomes far exceed those that produce success on high stakes accountability frameworks. While success in these highly visible

measure of attainment is important it is not the only purpose of school experience. A recent edited publication by Wrigley [Wrigley *et al.* 2012] provides clear evidence of models of school leadership that are bound broadly by the constraints of neoliberal regimes but extend far beyond its limitations by basing their leadership practice on the broader imperatives for education informing the critique in this paper. In this collection and elsewhere we see evidence of a commitment to a broader curriculum, producing enriched models of schooling and framed within a much greater range of learning experiences. The task of leadership is to engage with and lead a process of curriculum enrichment and enhancement by authentically engaging with students, their learning contexts and their communities. These leadership practices are dispersed and democratic and there is evidence of significant depth in terms of the penetration of leadership activity in the school. In many ways, these leaders are working as organic intellectuals [Gramsci 1971] or leading as critical pedagogues as envisaged by Friere. This evidence indicates the considerable potential that leadership has to make a difference in a way that supports the formation and development of students across a number of domains. The main issue here, however, is that these stories emerge on the margins almost in spite of rather than a result of the broad system that is in place. The evidence points to both ordinary and extraordinary works of heroism, exposure to personal and professional negative outcomes and a whole host of systemic and structural challenges to overcome while in pursuit of the vision. What is evident when these stories are considered in the context of the type of school leaders being shaped by current policy perspectives is that the leaders in these exceptional cases require support in doing this work and producing these type of outcomes. It is the view of this author that if current policy imperatives for leadership preparation and development prevail or continue to dominate, the heroic work of these school leaders will always be positioned at the margins of practice. The narrowly defined, reductive and controlling forms of leadership that are often focused on delivering managerialist, national standards [Thrupp 2005] with leaders who are taught to focus on managerial and formulaic models of practice will not produce transformative outcome in communities that require enriched models of education most. In this way, it could be argued that these communities are additionally disadvantaged by current policy trends because the dominant discourse is negating the models of leadership that are proven to work best in these communities. Indeed it can be stated that there isn't any school or community, irrespective of the socio-economic classification of the community or the access social groups have to seek and pay for compensatory packages to supplement formal schooling, that deserves the type of school experience articulated in the OECD report critiqued above. There should not be any school that would be led by someone whose preparation and formation was based solely on the narrowly defined range of competencies outlined in the policy documents explored here. What are required are models of leadership development for all leaders that make working towards enriched models of schooling for students and their communities the norm not the exception. This requires a commitment to a form of leadership preparation and development that creates critically informed



and engaged leaders so that when policy and change are being developed, leaders can position themselves as key mediators and evaluators of these proposals. To this end, it is necessary to make leadership and what constitutes leadership practice more explicit and to cease conflating it with management so that the knowledge and understanding of leadership within the domain of education can develop fully. This process creates an imperative for a greater engagement with the theoretical fields and disciplines linked to education within leadership preparation and development programmes with more encouragement for leaders to continue to masters and doctoral levels so as to build capacity within the leadership community to mobilize the rich and diverse knowledge-base underpinning education to critique and challenge. The potential here to reshape the school system is considerable. In this type of scenario, authentic and meaningful leadership can happen but the location of control shifts towards the school, the school leader and the broader professional community of leaders and teachers. Now we are moving towards a degree of autonomy that has the potential to obviate narrow accountability measures. Is this a step too far for the neo-capitalist world? Maybe the intention to focus on narrowly based, managerially focused leadership development programmes is a tool of the powerful to silence the critical?

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## PLANNED CHANGES IN POLISH DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM FOR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

### Abstract

Paper describes a current condition of the system of improving teachers in Poland and changes planned. Analysis of the system structure of improving and the scope and aims of institutions supporting improving the functioning of schools and teachers were included in the first part of the text. In the second part were described planned changes including both organizational new solutions integrating all sorts institutions of a system of improving both supporting schools and teachers and the change in the way of conducting improving based on the process-based approach.

**Keywords:** improving schools and teachers, professional development.

### Introduction

Currently in the majority of school systems in the world solutions for improving the quality of education are sought. In many cases implemented reforms are based on research, analysis and reports illustrating different school systems and their elements, providing recommendation for tendencies in planned transformation. The McKinsey report published in 2007, a study in which 25 school systems are compared, demonstrates that the top-performing school systems focus their activities on selecting the right people to become teachers and continuous development of their professional skills [Barber, Mourshed 2007]. Andreas Salcher commenting the results of this report points out that: “Is just the teacher’s ability that decides every day whether children understand the world a little bit better and relate to their parents delightedly what they have learnt today and enjoy going to school the following day” [Salcher 2009, p. 64–65]. Seen from this perspective, the quality of education system is not determined by structural reforms of school systems (e.g. like those carried out in Polish education system in 1999<sup>1</sup>), but by the quality of teachers’ preparation to perform their profession.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1999 education reform in Poland was based on two fundamental changes: structural – introduction of new type of school „gymnasium”, and curricular – introduction of new curricula.

An essential impact on teachers' performance has the initial training and whether teachers upgrade their knowledge and develop skills during teaching practice. In Polish teachers' education system the pre-service teacher training lays within competence of universities providing professional training and having autonomy in creating the content and course of studies under general guidelines. Second field related to in-service teacher's training is to a greater extent governed, directly or indirectly, by the Ministry of Education through influencing professional development training institutions and creating in-school model of teacher development.

Planned model of supporting schools and teachers focuses on second of the mentioned aspects that is in-service professional development. Analyses of current support system for schools and teachers implemented by the Ministry of Education led to determination of fundamental problems related to its' performance, that became framework of new support school and teacher development system project:<sup>2</sup>

Development process is focused on individual teacher, is addressed to teacher's training needs, that are frequently different from the school's needs.

Participation in different forms of development does not translate into teachers' professional practice nor into the process of making changes in schools; schools fail to deliver mechanisms of supporting teachers in making changes.

Different forms of professional development are scattered between many institutions of supporting system; lack of mechanisms imposing cooperation between these institutions.

Predominance of incidental approach, based on single, short training forms that does not translate into permanent improvement of the quality of the educational processes.

Apart from focusing on teachers' professional development consisting in the improvement of teachers' individual qualifications, professional development is put into context of needs related to work and development of individual schools as organizations. Certainly there are two reasons for that. In the first place, there is no clear connection between the existing teacher professional development and the effectiveness of instruction. Second reason seems to be connected to the conviction of policymakers about crucial importance of organization and necessity to subordinate teacher professional development to the needs of organization (school). This approach is reflected in the title of mentioned project „Teachers' professional development system based on open-access, comprehensive school support”, co-financed by the European Union under European Social Fund.

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<sup>2</sup> Presentation: *System doskonalenia nauczycieli oparty na ogólnodostępnym kompleksowym wspomaganiu szkół*, Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, Olsztyn 2011.

## Current state

Current school support system is based on three fundamental, independent of each other from the point of view of organization as well their domain of action, institutions: Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling Centers, pedagogical libraries and teachers' development agencies of different legal status (managing authority: public, nonpublic) as well as different regional access level.

Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling Centers are specialized institutions pertaining to education department dedicated to diagnostics, therapy, prevention and counseling in communities where children and adolescents are raised. These institutions play an important role in school support system that consists in providing assistance based on expertise that frequently exceeds possibilities and needs for application in every school (e.g. specialized diagnosis). The majority of Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling Centers are public institutions (about 90%) that operate in all administrative districts in Poland.<sup>3</sup>

Second group of institutions providing support for schools and teachers are pedagogical libraries. Organization of professional development courses for teachers of school libraries in form of workshops, trainings, seminars, conferences or discussion panels is one of their tasks. Moreover they are expected also to support teachers in subject matter classes (core curriculum) by teaching education classes, library classes and giving help in carrying out in-school professional development. All pedagogical libraries are public institutions, present in almost every county.

The most significant role in teachers' development system play professional development agencies. Their basic task in the education system is, above all, to carry out different forms of teacher development (seminars, conferences, lectures, workshops and trainings), with regard to peculiarity of subject matters and general knowledge as well as teacher's professional skills. This task comprises also counseling and methodical mentoring.<sup>4</sup> The tasks of public teachers' professional development agencies depend on their operational level:

- central (run by the ministers of: education, national heritage and agriculture),
- regional (run by voivodeship self-governments),
- local (run by county, city and commune self-governments).

Table 1 shows the comparison of tasks of public agencies supporting teachers' professional development.

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<sup>3</sup> Administrative division in Poland is organized in three levels of local self-governments: 16 voivodeships, 379 counties and 2478 communes.

<sup>4</sup> Based on: Regulation of the Minister of Education on Teachers' Professional Development Agencies of 19th November 2009.

Table 1.

Comparison of basic tasks of agencies playing significant role in the teachers' professional development system

<b>TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY</b>	<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL COUNSELING CENTER</b>	<b>PEDAGOGICAL LIBRARY</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Subject matter and methodical counseling;</li> <li>– providing support to the school's management and WDN (In-school teachers' professional development);</li> <li>– organizing certifying and qualifying courses;</li> <li>– organizing different forms of cooperation and experiences exchange;</li> <li>– supporting teachers' professional development;</li> <li>– publishing informational and methodical materials;</li> <li>– inspiring teachers to innovation and promote best practices;</li> <li>– performing other tasks requested by the managing authority.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Diagnosis of particular educational problems;</li> <li>– psychological and pedagogical assistance for children;</li> <li>– career counseling;</li> <li>– early support;</li> <li>– prevention;</li> <li>– therapy, family assistance;</li> <li>– supporting educational function of school;</li> <li>– issuing certificates related to special education, deferred and early admission to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Collecting and making accessible library materials and multimedia collections;</li> <li>– bibliographic information;</li> <li>– providing help in instruction and WDN (In-school teachers' professional development);</li> <li>– information work and publishing;</li> <li>– meet-the-author sessions.</li> </ul>

Source: Czech, E., Domańska, D., Gęba, K., Kordziński, J., Tarkota, J. (2010). *Compilation: Założenia i modele funkcjonalne powstawania i działania Centrów Rozwoju Edukacji*. Warszawa: ORE.

There are about 400 teachers' professional development agencies in Poland, about 30% of them are public, the rest are nonpublic agencies.<sup>5</sup> At the same time it is notable that nonpublic teachers' professional development institutions employ a little over 30% of staff dedicated to the development activity. That means that public agencies are responsible for supporting teachers and schools in their professional development. Therefore the key role in the development system plays easy access and possibility to participate in their offerings. Voivodships' self-governments have an obligation to run such agency therefore the easiest access to professional development agencies is in the capital cities and more difficult access in remote towns. Teachers' professional development agencies operate in only 54 of 379 counties and only eight communes. There are also significant differences in regional "saturation" of their activity in different regions of Poland. On one extreme we can place Dolnośląskie Voivodeship, where apart from two agen-

<sup>5</sup> Presentation: *System doskonalenia nauczycieli oparty na ogólnodostępnym kompleksowym wspomaganiu szkół*, Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, Olsztyn 2011.

cies managed by voivodeship's self-government operate other 21 agencies run by counties (out of 29 counties of the voivodeship), and on the other extreme there are voivodeships like Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Lubuskie, where the only public teachers' professional development agencies are those run by the voivodeships' self-governments. Table 2 shows a comparison of regional disparity of teachers' professional development agencies. Also the evidence from research reports the importance of accessibility to the agencies. Over 46% of teachers justify their choice of a particular agency with its' easy access.<sup>6</sup>

Table 2.

## Regional disparity of teachers' professional development agencies

Voivodeship	Number of public agencies run by			Number of non-public agencies	Total
	Commune	Country	Voivodeship		
Dolnośląskie	0	21	2	13	36
Kujawsko-pomorskie	0	0	3	9	12
Lubelskie	0	2	1	8	11
Lubuskie	0	0	2	1	3
Łódzkie	0	2	4	15	21
Małopolskie	0	3	1	41	45
Mazowieckie	1	6	2	32	41
Opolskie	0	3	2	7	12
Podkarpackie	0	2	1	9	12
Podlaskie	0	3	3	10	16
Pomorskie	4	1	1	31	37
Śląskie	1	2	5	40	48
Świętokrzyskie	0	2	1	18	21
Warmińsko-mazurskie	1	2	2	15	20
Wielkopolskie	1	3	5	33	42
Zachodniopomorskie	0	2	2	17	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>398</b>

Source: Presentation: *System doskonalenia nauczycieli oparty na ogólnodostępnym kompleksowym wspomaganiu szkół*, Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, Olsztyn 2011.

Beside the question of regional incidence of teachers' development agencies, evaluation of their effectiveness in supporting teachers plays an important role. A study done by Danuta Elsner and Krzysztof Bednarek supplies information on the attitudes of teachers towards the support provided by the development agencies and evaluation of performance of particular agencies done by teachers [Elsner, Bednarek 2010].

<sup>6</sup> Quoted data come from evaluation research (external evaluation) of teachers' professional development agencies carried out within pedagogic supervision. In the research participated 866 teachers using services of 14 teachers' professional development agencies.



The evidence shows that teachers perceive given support as one-way process, considering themselves as recipients and manifesting passive attitude of receivers. They want to be provided with advices and counseling, supported, trained and informed (Figure 1 reports the percentage share of expected forms of assistance). Solely small number of teachers perceive the support as cooperation requiring active involvement of both parts. Frequently, the main interest of teachers is to obtain assistance in solving their individual specific problems, present in their school practice.

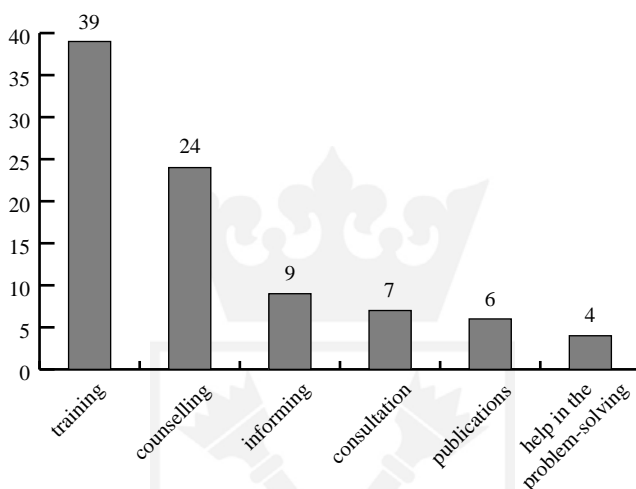


Figure 1. Expected forms of assistance (in percentage terms) delivered by advisors and counselors (N-866)

Source: Elsner, D., Bednarek, K. (2010). *Pomoc doradców metodycznych i konsultantów placówek doskonalenia nauczycieli w opinii jej beneficjentów. Raport z badań*. Warszawa: Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji.

When asked individually, both teachers and school principals speaking on behalf of their schools, express their desire to contact and cooperate with teachers' professional development agencies more frequently, preferably on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the agencies rarely offer cyclical cooperation and if so, these offers are addressed to individual teachers.

Successive steps of teachers' professional development require different development methods and contents [Day 1999]. In contrast, quoted research show that development agencies do not diversify working methods upon teachers' development phases. Certainly it is related to the fact that the main users of their offer are schools (courses dedicated to group of teachers from the same school) rather than individual teachers presenting different level of professional development.

Another deficiency of teachers' development system reported by evidence is lack of follow-up support, that could give support in implementation of developed solutions and practice acquired knowledge and skills.

Above mentioned analyses help to gain understanding of decisions made in regard of basic tendencies in planned changes in the teachers' professional development system in Poland, that focus on one hand on the organizational aspect, and on the other on methods to support teachers and schools not practiced by now on a large scale. Later on main assumptions of the new teacher professional development system in Poland, based on analysis of government department's materials, will be presented.

## Planned changes in professional development system for schools and teachers

On the basis of documents created in the framework of the „Teachers' professional development system based on open-access comprehensive support for schools” project, we can reconstruct main assumptions of planned support system and their implementation. The main conditions to be met by the new teachers' professional development system comprise:

- supporting agencies located close to school, therefore operating in its' vicinity;
- responding to the needs of school, that is adapting the offer and professional development process to current needs of individual schools, to provide school with assistance within entire development process starting from assessment of needs to monitoring of outcomes of implemented changes;
- using the potential of various institutions providing services for teachers' professional development.

Realization of above mentioned assumptions requires making changes at the organizational level – creating new institutions, accreditation system of those new institutions, creating new strategies and methodologies of professional development as well as recruiting and training experts possessing capacities to implement effectively presented assumptions.

The support system is aimed to prepare and carry out a comprehensive offer to provide schools with direct support as well as recruitment and training experts able to perform effectively following tasks of the agency:

- support in problem diagnosis,
- presenting possible practices leading to solve diagnosed problems,
- assisting schools during implementing of change, improvement,
- elaborating joint result assessment and cooperation in formulating conclusions for further work.

Other important tasks of the support system will comprise:

- arranging cooperation between schools (e.g. creating networks of schools), consisting in cooperation between principals and teachers (e.g. internships coordinators, subject matters teachers, class teachers),
- creation and management of resource data bases indispensable for correct task completion (experts, publications, initiatives),
- informing about tendencies in national education policy.

## Structural changes of support system for schools and teachers

Realization of the first of fundamental assumptions that is approaching institutions giving support to schools, requires launching new organizational solutions. Basic assumption of the project's authors is to create new type of institution, operationally called Center for Education Development (CED) aiming at providing support to schools and teachers through realization of tasks presented in the previous paragraph. One of basic dilemmas to consider is how near to schools (in terms of spatial location) should be CED situated. Bearing in mind localization of currently existing institutions supporting schools (teachers' professional development agencies, Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling Centers, pedagogical libraries), yet also economic reasons, CED have been attributed to counties.

Principal assumption for creating CED is the use of institutions that already exist in the school supporting system. They will form part of newly appointed institutions or provide them with support.

It is important to bear in mind (what was already mentioned in the initial part of this article) regional diversity of localization of supporting institutions in Poland, with special regard to teachers' professional development agencies. Therefore creation of CED in counties will be determined by the current state of school supporting system in individual counties and this, in turn, results in necessity of creating alternative ways of founding CED. Current state as well as legal possibilities have been analyzed for the needs of the project, three creation (functioning) models of CED as an independent unit have been proposed:<sup>7</sup>

**Coherent model** – newly appointed CED can act as an independent institution or a group of institutions. Within this model CED would complete all tasks of previously existing units including individual tasks resulting from the aims of planned schools' and teachers' supporting system. In case of lack of teachers' professional development agency or pedagogical library in given county before formation of CRE, new unit would be committed to complete their tasks.

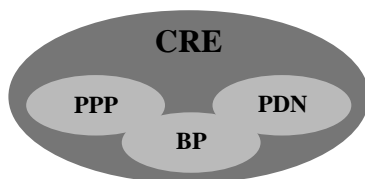


Figure 2. Coherent model of forming county Center for Education Development

Source: Czech, E., Domańska, D., Gęba, K., Kordziński, J., Tarkota, J. (2010). Compilation: *Założenia i modele funkcjonalne powstawania i działania Centrów Rozwoju Edukacji*. Warszawa: ORE.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Czech, E., Domańska, D., Gęba, K., Kordziński, J., Tarkota, J. (2010). Compilation: *Założenia i modele funkcjonalne powstawania i działania Centrów Rozwoju Edukacji*. Warszawa: ORE.

**Cooperative model** – Center for Education Development will operate as an independent institution and its' role will consist in coordination actions of individual institutions (Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling Centers, teachers' professional development agencies and pedagogic libraries) and schools. Within this model creation of Center for Education Development will not generate any intervention at the structural level and organization of existing units that would maintain their full autonomy (and independence in performing their tasks). Centre for Educational Development would perform its' own tasks, of which the most significant one would be coordination of cooperation between and with other supporting units. This model requires legal authorization of cooperation form of independent units.

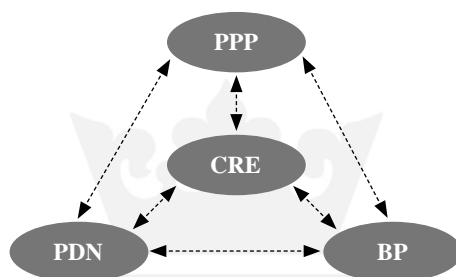


Figure 3. Cooperative model of organization of county Center for Education Development

Source: Czech, E., Domańska, D., Gęba, K., Kordziński, J., Tarkota, J. (2010). Compilation: *Założenia i modele funkcjonalne powstawania i działania Centrów Rozwoju Edukacji*. Warszawa: ORE.

**Complementary model** – assumes creation of new Center for Education Development institution performing its' own tasks that will comprise task pertinent to teachers' professional development agencies and pedagogic library (probable solution assumes that teachers' professional development agencies and pedagogical libraries will form a group of institutions). In compliance to this model, Center for Education Development would operate independently from Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling Centers acting in given county, however one of the tasks will be to coordinate partnership of Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling Centers with schools.

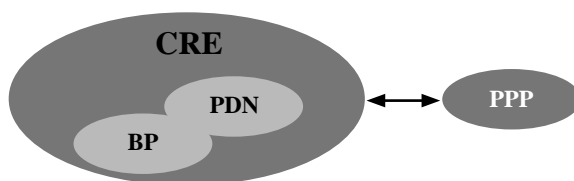


Figure 4. Complementary model of organization of county Center for Education Development

Source: Czech, E., Domańska, D., Gęba, K., Kordziński, J., Tarkota, J. (2010). Compilation: *Założenia i modele funkcjonalne powstawania i działania Centrów Rozwoju Edukacji*. Warszawa: ORE.

Local self-governments (counties) will play the key role in choosing adequate model for creation of Centers for Education Development, with special regard to particular conditions of given county (that will concern, first of all, number and type of locally operating agencies).

## „Process” model of supporting development of schools and teachers

Beside prospective organizational changes aimed to achieve goals of the new support system, another significant change concerns development methodology. Current support system fails to satisfy schools and teachers due to short, one-time trainings, focused on individual teachers' needs taken out of context of school needs on one hand and on the other on poor implementation of built solutions, knowledge and skills into teachers' professional practice.

Elementary change in planned supporting system will concern duration of professional development course for schools and teachers – it will be a long-time process enabling opportunities to generate, test and sustain changes both at school's structural level and in terms of acquired skills by individual teachers that will translate to a larger scale into their practice. Due to these reason project-based system has been recognized as the most relevant to carry out teachers' professional development.

Three following means of receiving project-based support from Center for Education Development are provided:<sup>8</sup>

1. at school's request, according to its' internally determined needs,
2. by virtue of law in case of low evaluation stated in external evaluation,
3. in relation to national educational policy (determined by Ministry of Education).

Execution of the project (regardless of its' source or reason to launch it) will be based on some key points enabling completion of assumptions of new support system:

- development (in cooperation with principal and teachers) of detailed assessment of the school's and teachers' needs,
- planning and carrying out activities leading to solve diagnosed problems,
- assisting schools in implementing new solutions into each teacher's practice in order to reach sustainable improvement in the quality of work of given school,
- selecting best forms of development for individual schools (e.g. training or consultancy),
- making accessible indispensable materials and content-related tools.

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<sup>8</sup> Report: *Reinforcement of Support of Schools' Improvement System With Special Regard to Teachers' Professional Development and Methodical Counseling – Support System Concept* (2010). Warszawa: ORE.

It's important to emphasize some significant differences in the approach towards currently existing supporting system. First of them is connected to the assumption of necessity to carry out in-depth diagnosis of difficulties encountered by school (or teachers). The diagnosis should be carried out by school representatives and advisor responsible for the project on behalf of Center for Education Development and, if necessary, Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling Centers .

Another crucial element concerns planning coherent procedure plan in solving diagnosed problem. These procedures can be aimed at fulfilling needs of groups involved in the school life (teachers, students, parents), with the assumption that the main role in carrying them out will be played by teachers, regardless of the fact to whom these actions will be addressed (e.g. preparing specific actions addressed to pupils or parents but carried out by teachers). Thus during planning different forms of teachers' work (e.g. team work) in search and creation of appropriate actions should be taken under consideration, as well as forms and methods of supporting teachers' professional development (e.g. trainings, workshops, methodical consulting, critical friends, collegial lessons, study visits etc.). It is important to underline one of the fundamental assumptions of the new supporting system that emphasizes transferring knowledge and skills built during different forms of professional development and relating them to planned procedures.

## Cooperation and self-instruction networks

One of the most important elements of prospective support system for schools and teachers is building a model of professional development based on net of teachers and principals working in cooperation and learning from each other that will complete the activity of Center for Education Development. This form of professional development presumes that schools (teachers and principals) not only can receive support, yet can provide also help to each other in solving problems and learning. Since the activity of the net implies use of knowledge and skills of teachers operating in their local community, arises possibility of developing cooperation between teachers and schools operating in the same area that frequently struggle with similar issues. Nets of cooperating teachers and principals enable sharing with knowledge and skills as well as contributes to learning from each other, exchange of experiences, analysis of best practice, finding innovative solutions, collective completion of agreed tasks, teamwork for problem solving.

We can distinguish three models of prospective networks in regard to the content and their target:

- cooperation and self-instruction network of principals (exemplary subjects: principal's tasks beyond pedagogy, building educational consistency at county level, organization of pedagogical and psychological assistance);

- problem oriented cooperation and self-instruction networks (exemplary subjects: creating author's curricula, teachers team work, work with students within research club, preventing non-attendance etc.);
- subject matter oriented cooperation and self-instruction networks (network of Polish language teachers – reader, cinematic education; mathematics teachers network – how to support students in learning mathematics, early school education; history teachers network – work with sources etc.).

It is assumed in the framework of the project that at county level (with one Center for Education Development) will be created about five networks of teachers and principals. In one network will participate from 20 to 25 teachers or principals from different schools. The participants will meet at least five times per year, the meetings will be organized and moderated by a coordinator (employee of Center for Education Development) adequately prepared to perform this task. If necessary it will be possible to provide the group of teachers with specialist help from external experts. Networks' subject will be chosen locally with regard to needs of individual teachers and principals. It is also planned to support local networks through exchange of experiences, best practices and carrying out professional discussions at local and national level by means of internet platform.

## Competencies of support system personnel

One of the key elements contributing to the efficiency of prospected improvement is related to the qualifications of Center for Education Development personnel working in cooperation with schools. Aims and methodology of CED tasks require from supporting personnel to have specific knowledge and skills that by now were out of center of interest of educational programs for teachers. Therefore arises necessity to select right CED staff during recruitment process, with special focus to elements of already possessed competencies that can be used in future work, as well as planning and carrying out trainings that would complete required knowledge and skills.

Following planned operational model of CED it is not necessary for the personnel to possess specific educational knowledge (such knowledge should be provided by external experts). It is necessary, however, to possess knowledge and skills enabling to carry out:

- organization and execution of projects,
- problem diagnosis,
- moderating work of teachers' teams,
- running individual and group support (e.g. coaching),
- evaluation of executed projects.

Current activities within the *Support...* project aim to develop competency models for CED employees to perform different functions and prepare trainings that will provide them with basic knowledge and skills.

## Conclusions

In the initial conceptual phase of the project schools' improvement needs were studied.<sup>9</sup> The report emphasizes also issues that can have negative impact on effectiveness of prospective improvement in the teachers' and schools' professional development system, that are among others:

- Different degrees of readiness of principals and teachers to participate in developing activities connected to the level of trust towards people from the outside and relating such initiatives to assessment of their work.
- Adequate competence level of Centers for Education Development advisors, necessary to moderate the work of teams of teachers and to manage the project.
- Situations and issues diagnosis based on real, specific problems related to the school life, defined by those who are responsible for its' activity.

Moreover, the threats to the effectiveness of prospective improvement can be intrinsic to the same concept of new support system. The concept demonstrates emphasis on development of school as organization and achieving set of goals that can be erroneously formulated at the system level or can be erroneously interpreted by principals and teachers. Consequently this can lead to subordination of project to other than educational needs of students and teachers' professional development needs. An example of such attitude can be currently observed in tendency in educational activity of schools and teachers consisting in achieving high outcomes in competency tests and subordinating the activity of school and teachers to this goal without considering development needs of children and youth.

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<sup>9</sup> *Pilot Study Report on Schools' Development Needs* (2011). Kraków: ORE.





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## ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION: CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRACY?

### Abstract

Accountability and evaluation have become an integral part of education systems and the day-to-day practice of educators in many countries around the world. The purpose of this presentation is to share an exploration of the links among evaluation, accountability and democracy which draws on the work of the French philosopher Jacques Rancière. It will be argued that evaluation and accountability intertwine not just as a condition for democracy and its improvement but also as a challenge for democracy. Firstly, the notion of evaluation and its relevance to accountability will be outlined. A more detailed outline of accountability will follow in order to present evaluation and accountability as “explanatory scheme” [Rancière 2010]; that is, an structure that primarily serves to explain and provide justification. To conclude, connections between accountability and democracy will be discussed and challenges posed by the former one to the latter one are explored.

**Keywords:** evaluation, accountability, democracy.

### Introduction

Accountability and evaluation have become an integral part of education systems and the day-to-day practice of educators in many countries around the world. Practices, professionals and institutions concerned with assessment, scrutiny, audit and inspection continue to proliferate and the demand for them is widespread and mounting [Newman & Clarke 2009]. In this regard, schools are not different to other organizations and institutions today. Schools are also affected by this trend. The purpose of this presentation is to share an exploration of the links among evaluation, accountability and democracy which draws on the work of the French philosopher Jacques Rancière. It will be argued that evaluation and accountability intertwine not just as a condition for democracy and its improvement but, maybe, also as a challenge for democracy.

This article is divided into three parts. Firstly, the notion of evaluation and its relevance to accountability will be outlined in order to highlight resemblances to

accountability. An outline of accountability will follow. In this section, a number of core features will be emphasized in order to present evaluation and accountability as an “explanatory scheme” [Rancièrè 2010]; that is, an structure that serves to make sense of, explain and, thus, provide justification. To conclude, connections between accountability and democracy will be discussed. After introducing the conventional account of the relationships between accountability and democracy, challenges posed by accountability to democracy are explored.

## The relevance of evaluation to accountability

Accountability evokes evaluation and evaluation evokes accountability. Similarities and differences are not always made explicit, but, nevertheless, you will usually find both terms accompanying each other. Evaluation is usually assumed to serve different purposes. Accountability is often mentioned as one of them. It is not unusual to present accountability as a purpose or function of evaluation. In this view, evaluation would serve accountability and, in turn, fulfillment of this function would serve to justify evaluation [Perrin 2007]. For instance, evaluation is used to document what has been done and accomplished with the available resources in order to answer to those who fund or provide them [Mayne 2007]. If evaluation indeed serves to provide answers and justification through evidence, this use is likely to provide answers on “why evaluate” and justification to evaluation. In this way, evaluation supports accountability, although, if so, accountability will be supporting evaluation as well.

The accountability function of evaluation is fulfilled in the context of governance and policy-making [Hanberger 2011]. Usually, evaluation **for** accountability is deployed within this context. Therefore, accountability mechanisms may be considered to be a policy instrument [Spillane 2004] (for instance, like inducements). Evaluation constitutes a major accountability mechanism. Notice that it means that evaluation is subordinated to accountability and, hence, to policy-making and governance. Of course, this is not the sole function of evaluation in that context. Evaluation may be thought to serve other purposes such as policy improvement or legitimation. However, the fulfillment of the accountability function is likely to be related to the fulfillment of these other functions: for instance, the contribution of evaluation to accountability is likely to promote improvement or legitimation as well. In fact, the purpose of evaluation and accountability is often said to be improvement of teaching and learning [e.g. Reeves 2002].

Furthermore, it might be said that accountability and evaluation interweave dynamically and even overlap. Before concentrating on it, here is a brief introduction to accountability that will be of assistance in highlighting such connections between both notions:

First, decide what values we want individuals and organizations to uphold. Next, specify what it means to uphold these values by codifying them into very specific rules, procedures, and standards: Don't do this. Do do that. Then create numerous reporting mechanisms

to demonstrate that these rules, procedures, and standards have been followed. Finally, give a separate organization the specific task of auditing these records to check whether the rules, procedures, and standards have been followed. And, if these auditors discover any failures, lapses, or discrepancies, they identify the culprits so that we can hold them accountable – so that we can punish them [Behn 2001: 7].

This is accountability.

And what is evaluation? An extensive analysis is beyond the scope of this article, but a minimal delineation of evaluation is provided now in order to highlight connections again. A standard conceptualization is used. Evaluation has been defined as “the systematic collection and interpretation of evidence, leading, as a part of the process to a judgement of value with a view to action” [Beeby 1978, in: Wolf 1990: 3]. According to Wolf [1990: 3–6], this definition embodies four core elements of evaluation: a) systematic collection of evidence, b) its interpretation, c) judgement of value and d) action.

- a) **Systematic collection of evidence** implies that information needs to be gathered. In addition, it is also implying that information needs to be acquired in a systematic way.
- b) **Interpretation of evidence** is highlighting that evaluation does not consist merely of collection of evidence and providing information which describes something. Collected evidence is to be analyzed and made sense of with great care. Systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of evidence provides a reporting mechanism required for accountability.
- c) The incorporation of the third element of the definition, **judgement of value**, reveals that evaluation neither is exhausted in description nor is mere interpretation of that being described. Evaluation also implies drawing judgements about the worth of something. A value judgement is a statement that ascribes value to something: when saying that something is good or is better, you are making a value judgement. The ascription of value depends not only upon the object itself but also upon the evaluating subjects [Kraft 1981: 131]. These judgements are to be drawn as reasonably and as carefully as possible, and a major basis for doing this should be the evidence that has been systematically gathered and interpreted. But this is not sufficient. To be sure, evidence cannot answer the question whether (or not) something is good or better. Subjects need to answer. But evidence can and must assist subjects in answering. There is an additional condition to be met: subjectivity need to be identified and defined in order to be neutralized or, at least, controlled. Therefore, some kind of normative references or standards are usually considered (certain goals or objectives, for instance). These are the standards embodying individual or institutional values which are required in accountability in order to state whether something is of value. Evidence will assist in demonstrating that such standards have been met.
- d) The fourth element, **orientation to action**, raises that the undertaking resulting in a judgment of value is deliberately tackled for the sake of future action and achievements. The decision on future action (for instan-

ce, punishment), taken in light of the judgement of that being evaluated, may be conceived of as another judgement of value because there will be a statement ascribing value to a choice. This second judgement is however usually within the scope of agents other than evaluators (for instance, policymakers).

## But what is accountability?

Accountability will be the specific focus now. This notion is sometimes quite slippery and “constantly changing” [Behn 2001: 3]. Bovens [2007: 449] has suggested that, in contemporary discourse, it “often serves as a conceptual umbrella that covers various other distinct concepts”. In order to provide a more detailed outline, I will be referring to some key dimensions in what follows. They will be responsibility, documentation, performance, transparency and participation. Responsibility and documentation would have to do with what accountability itself consist of; performance and transparency are rather connected with the object of accountability, and participation points to the subjects of accountability. Of course, these are interrelated elements, and relationships will be emphasized as well.

**Responsibility.** Two meanings of the word “accountability” have been distinguished. In a broader sense, accountability is considered to be associated with responsibility “and carries connotations of ‘being answerable to’” [Biesta 2004: 234]. To be more accurate, it may be said that responsibility is implied by accountability but the reverse is not necessarily the case. At least in academic terms, responsibility is not exhausted in accountability and is often conceived of as encompassing more dimensions [Cane 2002; Bovens 1998: 24–26]. But there is a conventional conception of accountability and responsibility which virtually conflates both concepts [Raffoul 2010]. In her glossary of education terms, the influential scholar Diane Ravitch virtually equates accountability and responsibility. According to her, accountability is “the concept that individuals (e.g. students, teachers, or administrators) or organizations (e.g. schools, school districts, or state departments of education) should be held responsible for improving student achievement” [Ravitch 2007: 8].

**Documentation.** In a narrower sense, accountability refers to the duty to present auditable accounts of activities [Biesta 2004]. Historically, the concept of accountability is closely related to accounting in financial contexts. This logic would have simply been transposed to the managerial context, without much consideration of the extent to which it is appropriate for managerial purposes. As stated by Biesta [2004: 235], “rather than adapting the principles of the audit process to the specifics and requirements of a different context, (...) the culture of accountability has led to a situation in which practices had to adapt to the principles of the auditing process”. For him, this meaning and the former one are largely distinct and the link between them is quite weak. In his view, there would

be overlap between both meanings only insofar as it is legitimate to assume that the provision of auditable documentation is synonymous with responsible behavior [Charlton, in: Biesta 2004: 235]. However, both aspects are seemingly not so far from each other. A number of scholars find the core of responsibility “in the idea of having to answer for something, or of giving an account” [Cane 2002: 30]. Being a respondent has to do with one’s answering for things (for instance, successful performance) and justifying a position [Buchmann 1985: 2; Behn 2001: 4]. Being responsible has to do with having the capacity to be such a respondent. Moreover, it might be added that the responsible person is one “who is ‘likely to be in a position to give a satisfactory account of his conduct’ because he realizes “‘that an account of his conduct can be appropriately called for’ and acts accordingly” [Haydon 1978, in: Cane 2002: 33]. To be able to be such a respondent, one will need to support his/her answering. Evidence is likely to provide such support. Hence, it might be said that being responsible requires documentation. Accordingly, accountability in education usually requires “measurable proof” that relevant constituencies (teachers, schools, authorities) are teaching students efficiently and well [Ravitch 2007: 8].

**Performance.** A further point to made on the relationships between both concepts (responsibility and accountability) is that, as suggested by the definition by Ravitch included above, accountability usually assumes that agents are to be held responsible for success. However, success would need to be understood in a broad sense to include the two following dimensions. On the one hand, effects and results are part of the focus of accountability. But accountability is focused not just on what agents actually accomplish (or do not accomplish) but also on how agents do what they do in order to reach such achievements [Behn 2001]. Hence, actions are, on the other hand, another part of the focus of accountability. In education, accountability is increasingly conceived of not merely as an analysis of effect variables (for instance, attendance rates or test scores) but rather as a deep and, probably, dynamic analysis of cause-and effect-variables which also include curriculum and teaching and leadership practices (and not only income, social background or ethnicity) as cause variables. In fact, what is particularly needed to know is not merely information on results but the causes of those results [Reeves 2002].

However, it may be said that what one can be held accountable for is not (causal) actions and effects themselves. Usually, one is rather held accountable for the extent to which actions and effects adhere to standards. Therefore, accountability is often equated to individual or collective responsibility to conform standards – either in form of achievements (for instance, a goal or an objective) or in form of performance (for instance, functions established in some way – by law, regulation or agreement) [Behn 2001]. Standards are set to hold somebody accountable. To be made accountable, actions and results (and the subjects themselves) need to be adhered to standards.

As already suggested, a belief underlying accountability is usually that actions (including the harmful ones) lead to the corresponding effects (including the harmful ones) and that, in turn, effects are traceable to actions. This traceabil-

ity is made possible by documenting events. Documentation will allow locating the barriers to expected actions and achievements “without getting caught up in confusing complexities involving interests, obscure motives, and political games of assigning blame” [Marres 2010]. Thus, pressure to develop standardization and evidence-based processes aiming at allegedly improving accountability is increasingly identifiable.

But there is also an expectation and even a remarkable certainty that punishment will be accompanying accountability; that is, something bad (and absence of anything good) is expected to happen to those who are accountable when they do something bad (namely, bad actions or results or, also, absence of good actions and results) [Raffoul 2010; se also Behn 2001: 3]. This is rooted to the usage in financial contexts, in which the purpose of auditing is often “to detect and deter incompetence and dishonesty in the handling of money” [Biesta 2004: 235]. Nevertheless, formal definitions usually do not even mention the word “punishment”, although people seeking to hold someone accountable usually envision some kind of punishment if failure happens or expected success is not achieved [Behn 2001: 4].

**Transparency.** In the end, accountability demands transparency. Accountability requires information and documentation able to trace an object or product. This leads to transparency; that is, to visibility [Newman & Clarke 2009]. But what is to be visible? “In a physical sense, transparency means that you can see through some medium to an object on the other side” [Oliver 2004: 3]. Because of transparency, something is rendered visible. In organizational and social contexts, transparency is “letting the truth be available for others” in order to see it “without trying to hide or shade the meaning, or altering the facts to put things in a better light” [Oliver 2004: 3].

**(Empowered) participation.** The word “accountability” goes back to Latin – to *computare*. This other word is the compound of ‘com’, which meant ‘together’ and ‘putare’, which meant ‘to count’ [Behn 2001: 6–7]. Up to this point, the focus has been on what is counted for accountability. Now the focus will be on who counts for accountability. Accountability affects and involves people relating to one another. It has been characterised as a social relationship (Bovens, 2007, p. 450). But who are those people? Virtually everybody is a tentative answer. There are indeed an increasing number of people concerned with and, at least in a some extent, involved in accountability. Evidence is seemingly available on “the public’s demand for accountability” [Moore & Gates, in: Behn 2001: 2]. It might be said, in particular, that “everyone wants people – often *other* people – to be held accountable” [Behn 2001: 2]. In turn, there is an increase of the number people held accountable. But this widespread concern with and involvement in accountability reveals, once again, that there are those who are accountable and those who hold them accountable.

The accountability holder can be a specific person or agency, but can also be a more virtual entity, as the public opinion [Bovens 2005]. Among the accountability holders, there are people whose sole or main task is holding other people accountable – regardless they are likely to be accountable to other people as

well, although sometimes they also come to believe that they are accountable to no one. But often they constitute a “forum” before which accounts and answers need to be provided [Bovens 1998]. This forum may come to be very comprehensive. There is a public accountability which involves the citizenry as a whole and makes this involvement public (namely, open or at least accessible to citizens), in contrast to other forms of internal accountability in which the membership of the forum is more restricted and the account giving is likely to be confidential or even secret [Bovens 2005]. In either case, it might be concluded that there is a remarkable degree of participation which empowers those involved to exercise control over what affects themselves [Bovens 2007].

Among those who are accountable, there are usually people who assume that they will need to give accounts to the former ones – regardless they are likely to be considered to be, in turn, included among those who are accountability holders, albeit in a broader sense. Behn [2001: 2] that “it’s great to be an accountability holder”, whilst “it’s not so much fun to be an accountability holdee”. However, the conflation of accountability and responsibility depicts a quite powerful agent playing a relevant role. Following Raffoul [2010] the accountability holdees can be understood in two senses:

- In a first sense, responsibility (conflated with accountability) refers to being responsible **for one’s actions** and, in the end, being responsible *for oneself*. It conveys the idea of “authorship over one’s actions and over oneself” [Raffoul 2010: 10]. In this view, the self constitutes the boundaries within which responsibility is contained. Interestingly, responsibility in this sense becomes “an act of appropriation” [Raffoul 2010: 11], because he or she controls and owns his/her actions and, furthermore, owns himself or herself – it might be said.
- In a second sense, responsibility designates being responsible **for the consequences** of one’s actions. There is no rupture but “an important addition” here [Raffoul 2010:11]. In the first instance, the emphasis is essentially on the past, as one is asked to answer for his or her past actions. But in this other instance, the focus is on consequences of his or her actions and, hence, one “is looking toward the future of the act. In this sense, responsibility is being accountable for the future, for what has not yet happened” or for “what is still coming” [Raffoul 2010: 11]. Note that one is still responsible for oneself, particularly if such a responsibility toward the future is conceived of as arising from the links between the actions and consequences, which, in turn, allow calculating the effects of one’s actions in the future.

Note that, in this view, being accountable is on condition of being considered as the cause of actions and its consequences through the freedom of the will and deliberate intention. In the view which assimilates responsibility to accountability, responsibility refers to “the capacity of an agent to be the cause and ground of its acts” [Raffoul 2010: 6], and accountability then presupposes an able and willful individual as cause. Following Raffoul [2010: 8–10], four tenets underpin this view:



- The belief that the human being is an agent or a subject and, hence, the reliance on subjectivity as foundation or ground of imputation.
- The notion that the subject is a voluntary agent and, thus, the reliance on the voluntary and so-called “free will”.
- The belief that responsibility is the cause of the act; that is, “to be the ,cause of’ and to be ,responsible for’ are conflated”. It means the reliance on causality of responsibility.
- The assumption that the responsible being is a rational subject. In other words, the basis for responsibility is rational agency.

This description of those who are responsible and accountable is likely to evoke an image of powerful and even sovereign subjects. If you are responsible, you allegedly decide and are in charge: you are in a position of power. However, this understanding is in sharp contrast to what follows. Those who are responsible are subject not only to stringent duties and expectations but also to be scrutinized with regard to fulfillment. Moreover, lack of adherence to these duties and expectations takes them to be tracked and sanctioned. In the end, the subject becomes the subjected [Raffoul 2010: 21].

## Accountability for democracy?

Accountability is often regarded as a “hallmark of modern democratic governance” [Dubnick & Yang 2011: 171]. As in ancient Greece, direct democracy primarily consists of the gathering of citizens in public meetings and assemblies in order to discuss and to make decisions. In contrast to this model, citizens in modern representative democratic regimes have a very limited executive power, which is left to periodically elected deputies. Nevertheless, citizens exercise a controlling power over these representatives and indirectly through them in decision-making [Andersson 2008: 127].

In these regimes, the execution of political power is regarded as legitimated – moreover, as democratically legitimated – if it is accountable [Blühdorn 2009]. Those with delegated authority are accountable for their actions and its consequences to the citizens: this is often referred to as political accountability [Day & Klein 1987: 27; Rhodes 1997]. They are accountable especially via elections. The controlling power of citizens is primarily exercised “in elections, in which the elected representatives are held accountable for their behavior in office” [Andersson 2008: 127]. But, as said, those holding political power need to have decisions executed and implemented, and, hence, they also need an efficient administration and experts. The first ones (that is, those with delegated authority) are answerable for carrying out agreed tasks according to agreed criteria of performance. Of course, administrative and agencies in charge of devising and implementing strategies and decisions are involved as well and they are, in turn, accountable to some external political authority [Meckstroth 2009].

This sensible structure resembles what French philosopher Jacques Rancière has referred to as “police”. What is “police”? Policemen are evoked by this term. Am I suggesting that those involved in accountability and evaluation might be like policemen? In a certain sense, the answer is yes. At least in many schools and other organizations, this answer might not sound surprising – although maybe some people would not be willing to expressing it. Nevertheless, it need to be qualified. “Police” indeed includes policemen, but “police” is not just a number of policemen. According to Rancière himself, the policemen are not but “a particular form” of police [Rancière 1997: 28]. In his view, “police” is a broader notion. It refers to “a more general order that arranges that tangible reality in which bodies are distributed in community” – he writes [Rancière 1997: 28]. Here are two other definitions by Rancière himself:

(...) the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution [1992: 28].

The police is, essentially, the law, generally implicit, that defines a party’s share or lack of it. But to define this, you first must define the configuration of the perceptible in which one or the other is inscribed. The police is thus first an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise [1999: 29].

As just stated, the police order indeed defines “the configuration of the perceptible”. This means that it “monopolizes the interpretation of sense” because it fills it with reality and meaning and “delimit[s] the boundaries of the perceptible, the thinkable, and the possible” [Tanke 2011: 45–46]. As such, it defines who is inscribed and who is not. In addition, the police order defines ways of being and ways of doing. Those who are inscribed and named are allocated to tasks and places. Consequently, it “defines a party’s share or lack of it” [Rancière 1999: 29]. The police order is an “order of distribution”, which derives from an “order of intelligibility” [Gunneflo & Selberg 2010]. It is worth to emphasize here that “police” is an order that determines what counts (as visible) and what does not count. Also, it determines what counts as an account of it and what does not count as such. Moreover, it determines who is to demand the account (and in which terms) and who is to give accounts (and in which terms).

Furthermore, the police order is indeed a totalizing order; that is, it combines into a total. Following Bingham and Biesta [2010: 34], it may be said that “police” is “all-inclusive”: it means that “everyone has a particular place, role or position in it”. Rancière himself writes that, in this “matching” of bodies, functions and shares, “there is no place for any void” [Rancière 2010b: 36]. There is an “intolerance for the void” [Rancière, in: Prozorov 2007: 88]. But in this order, there is not only “absence of void” there is also “absence of supplement” [Rancière 2010b: 36]. It means that there is no place for anything else different to that made visible and counted. Thus “all-inclusiveness” coalesces with “exclusion of what

‘there is not’” [Rancière 2010b: 36]. Paradoxically, this will-to-include comes at the expense of exclusion – maybe unconventional forms of exclusion [Labelle 2001: 93]. Moreover, it might be said that this order is “sustained by the exclusion of ‘what there is not’” [Prozorov 2007: 88]. This is related to what Rancière [2010: 36] has called “partition”, which – according to his own words – “should be understood in the double sense of the word: on the one hand, that which separates and excludes; on the other, that which allows participation”. For instance, children often participate in evaluation but in such a way that they are virtually separated and even excluded.

Finally, a third point is emphasized here on “police”: this totalizing configuration of the perceptible is consensual and, thus, the “police” can be conceptualized as “(...) the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution” [Rancière 1999: 28]. Rancière has written that “consensus is the reduction of politics to the police” and, thus, it means the “cancellation” of politics [Rancière 2010b: 42].

In Rancière’s view, most of what is normally understood as politics can be thought of as “the police”. However, he is also persuaded that there is a radical opposition between police and politics. In his own words, politics is “an extremely determined activity antagonistic to policing” [Rancière 1999: 29]. Politics threatens police because the goal of policing is precisely that of avoiding or eliminating politics [May 2008].

Using Rancière’s words, politics refers to “the mode of acting that perturbs” the police order [2004c: 226] “by supplementing it with a part of those without part, identified with the whole of the community” [Rancière 2010b: 36]. First of all, it needs to be highlighted that politics is acting. It does not, however, mean that politics is in fact everywhere and, thus, everything is political, but rather that politics **can** be anywhere because it **can** manifest itself at any time in different contexts: politics is always a possibility [Davis 2010: 79]. Secondly, politics is an event. It is not a permanently functioning and self-improving system but rather exceptional moments coming and going. Rancière has written that it is “an activity that is always of the moment and provisional” [Rancière 2010b: 43] and occurs as an “accident” [Rancière 2010b: 35]. Thirdly, this exceptional and momentary action is disturbing. According to Rancière, “the essence of the political is dissensus” [2000: 124]. Dissensus is “the process of politics itself” [Tanke 2011: 61]. It is neither an opposition or conflict of interests, opinions or values [for instance Rancière 2004a: 304] nor “a quarrel over which solutions to apply to a situation but a dispute over the situation itself” [Rancière 2004b: 6]. He asserts that it is “a dispute about what is given, about the frame within which we see something as given” [Rancière 2004a: 304]. It affects “the givens of a particular situation, of what is seen and what might be said, on the question of who is qualified to see or say what is given” [Rancière 2000: 124].

Furthermore, Rancière virtually equates politics with democracy because, according to him, democracy emerges from a “disagreement” (not consensus) between these two parts [Labelle 2001: 87]: on the one hand, the police order and,

on the other hand, the demos. But what is the demos? Who is the demos? Maybe everybody? He reminds us that democracy was “a term invented by its opponents, by all those who had an ‘entitlement’ to govern” – by virtue of a distinct and unequal seniority, birth, wealth, virtue or knowledge [Rancière 2010b: 32]. But, according to him, “before being the name of a community, the demos is the name of a part of the community” [Rancière 2010b: 32]. Who is this part? In his work, the demos is equated to “the part that has no part” [for instance May 2008]. In other words, they are “simply the people who *do not count*”: “to be of the demos is to be *outside of the count*” [Rancière 2010: 32; italics added]. It implies having “no entitlement to exercise the power of the *arkhe*, none for which they might be counted” [Rancière 2010b: 32]. They are those whose full existence is not considered to be relevant within the police order and, therefore, have no share (or an inferior share) in the decision-making process ordering their lives whilst coming to define themselves as being no part and having no part [Labelle 2001; May 2008; Davis 2010].

As stated earlier, politics or democracy is momentary and provisional; correspondingly, “its subjects are always precarious” [Rancière 2010: 39]. But when those who have no recognized part in the social order, who do not “count”, who are invisible or inaudible politically speaking, assert their egalitarian claim, they come into being as political subjects, and they do this through disagreement [Tanke 2011: 44]. In this way, disagreement creates political subjectivities. “Subjectivation” or “subjectification” is the term that Rancière chooses for this process of emancipation which consist of coming to be political subject by struggling for existence.

## Conclusions

In a essay on education recently translated to English, Rancière [2010a: 19] links accountability in education with competition and privatization and highlights that many educational constituencies have embraced them “as solutions”, particularly “on the assumption that student underachievement will be remedied by the magic circle connecting these three points of hope”. The result is still incessant accountability incessantly awaiting for solutions. According to him, accountability is itself a mere “explanatory scheme” [Rancière 2010a: 21–22]. It is a part of the configuration of the reality that has been referred to as “police” – and, thus, it might be hindering democracy. And here lies the problem: in his own words, “explanations serve to cover up the fact that explanations are themselves the problem” [Rancière 2010a: 21].

As a part of it, those explanations sustain a permanently functioning order, not disagreement and rupture needed to make relevant changes. According to Rancière, “they explain [and sustain –let me add] the shape of the educational landscape rather than intervening in any way on educational practices” [Rancière 2010b: 22]. However, it has been suggested that education does not only contrib-

ute to qualification or socialization, which rather contribute to compliance with and, at least, adjustment to existing orders; education is also relevant to subjectification, which leads to be responsive to “ways of being that hint at independence from such orders” [Biesta 2004: 40], being this responsiveness open to challenge and disruption.

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**Wojciechowski W. (1997), *Samorząd terytorialny w warunkach gospodarki rynkowej*, PWN, Warszawa.**

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**Siciński A. (1971), *O idei społeczeństwa obywatelskiego*, „Wiedza i Życie”, 6 (28).**

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***Strategia Rozwoju Krakowa (2005), Urząd Miasta Krakowa – Wydział Strategii i Rozwoju Miasta, Kraków.***

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