Editorial: a human being is a human being is a human being is a human being—the issue of migration in Europe and the responses of adult education

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Migration changes lives. Globalization has created new and radical challenges for contemporary societies. 'New societies' emerge in part through migration. The 'indigenous' find themselves with new neighbours. Situations of migration create tensions within host societies, governments react in diverse ways and educational institutions and individual citizens develop coping strategies. Moreover, this situation also creates the opportunity for political projection of anxieties and problems that were already inherent in the host society, an opportunity which is rampantly used by right wing politics.

'Ein Mensch ist ein Mensch ist ein Mensch ist ein Mensch' (a human being is a human being is a human being …). Thus begins the editorial with the title, Das neue Gesicht der Globalisiering' (the new face of globalisation) of the German weekly magazine Die Zeit (22/9/2014). In this article Bernd Ulrich describes what is at stake today in Germany and in Europe as a consequence of the challenge of migration. Many African, Arab and Persian countries 'find themselves in a radical change that may last several decades' (ibid.). This will trigger massive flows of refugees. What does it mean for Europe, when many of these refugees try to find their way to our continent? 'We can of course try to keep them out of our territories with increasing methods of determent and intimidation. (..) Another possibility would be to turn Europe into a continent of asylum, a place of refuge' (ibid.). If Europe would politically follow such a direction – which is for the moment more than questionable – a paradigm shift would be needed of the same magnitude as the very rapid recovering of (Western) Europe after the second world war, supported by the American Marshall Plan. Such a transformation of Europe into a continent for refugees could, according to Ulrich, be the only 'rational, realistic and modern reaction to the challenges of a globalised world' (ibid). Yet, the success of such response would first of all depend on cultural learning processes, whereby Europeans begin to understand that immigration, in spite of its considerable challenges, is not a threat, but an opportunity for the continent. And, since Europe considers itself as one of the inventors of the human rights, immigration should also be one of its basic humanistic concerns, since a human being is a human being is a human being. In relation to this, research on adult education and learning may contribute to a better understanding on how to deal with these concerns and challenges.

In studying migrating populations in the USA and Europe, Thomas and Znaniecki reported in the 1920s that a society in which 'emigration had appeared ceased to be as cohesive as it used to be before it commenced' (1920/1976, p.21). Particularly in Europe where modernization has advanced historically through the construction and consolidation of nation states, the belief in the uniqueness of members of the nation (their qualities, culture, history, principles and values) and the sense of unity rooted in citizens' solidarity has been at once constructed and challenged. Consequently, models of citizenship, democracy and social participation have mutated. Identities associated with nations have been both reinforced and dissolved into hybridity. A primary cause of the cultural and political change observable in current European societies is perhaps that of migration and migration effects.

Contemporary social research is interested in how migration processes influence individuals and social relations in host societies. This tends to raise questions about social cohesion and integration. Far less effort is put into the study of the motivations for migrants in leaving a homeland, or migration as a process of education and learning. Individual motivations for migration, of course, vary considerably. Decisions are often made quickly. Migration is no longer understood as a decision taken for life. Facilitated by border mobility, economic globalisation, the omnipresence of communication technology and the consequences of war, etc., migration can also occur swiftly. In this regard, learning and education in the migratory context is an intriguing and complex issue. Learning is necessary for the migrants themselves, but also for the host country residents and for those staying behind. Education and learning (formal and informal) may be identified explicitly as a solution to problems related to the restoring of stability into lives, but it may also be that learning is unavoidable. In their conversations *On Education* (2012, p. 3), Zygmunt Bauman and Riccardo Mazzeo identify learning as an inescapable practice and art in such situations:

> (...) conversion and assimilation, that early modern recipe for dealing with the presence of strangers, is not on the cards in the present context of a multicentred and multicultured world. The need to develop, to learn and to practice the art of living with strangers and their difference *permanently* and *daily* is inescapable (...)

Individual and collective learning is necessary in relation to migration in contemporary societies. Newcomers create learning opportunities for themselves and for the societies they enter. They live on the verge of two worlds and cultures; an educational challenge they need to face (Ligus 2011, p. 191-202). Societies act, often controversially, to give a place to newcomers and make citizens more familiar with new conditions. Education can provide relevant sites to enhance that learning. Education and learning are important strategies in the face of "sequent effects" of migration processes.

In exploring adult learning and education in connection with migration processes, questions pertaining to societies, individuals and educational institutions are posed. What educational potential is generated by migration for individuals and societies as a whole? What educational policies are developed by societies to deal with the challenge of migration? To what extent do researchers of adult and continuing education and learning study and discuss the phenomenon of migration and its consequences?

We have invited contributors to this issue to focus on diverse dimensions of migration and adult learning research: individual, biographical, institutional, social, and political.

The opening text of this RELA issue is *The Learning Migration Nexus: Towards a Conceptual Understanding* by Linda Morrice who points out a number of links between learning and migration. The author also describes the selected theoretical concepts of

learning and analyses the interdependence of the migrants' new identity creation process and their educational activity. Also the ambivalent role of the learning processes in the migrants' social integration is underlined by Linda Morrice, especially by analyzing the formal education programs for immigrants in the EU countries. The author advocates a holistic approach in researching migration and learning processes, that would include time, place, and the newcomers' biography contexts. The article again raises questions, that were (already) posed by Znaniecki and Thomas, regarding the adaptation process in a new socio-cultural context, how it depends on a newcomer's own cultural context (habitus) as well as on the specific conditions of the migration process. The role of learning in the process is invaluable but also ambiguous.

The next article *Is adult education a 'white ' business? Professionals with migrant backgrounds in (Austrian) adult education* is authored by Brigitte Kukovetz and Annette Sprung, who are interested in the participation of migrants (the first and the second generation), as professionals, in the Austrian adult education system and presents barriers and supporting factors in the careers of professionals with a migrant background.

The authors base their investigation on the outcomes of the research project 'Migrants as professionals in Adult Education' and frame the results within the theoretical perspectives of 'critical whiteness studies'. This perspective provides new possibilities for educational research on migration societies by analysing the privileges of the dominant social groups and institutions. Brigitte Kukovetz and Annette Sprung point to some approaches and strategies for widening participation and reducing discrimination in the professional field. Authors consider the question on the structural, political and institutional level: how could a theoretical reflection on white privileges and institutional discrimination be implemented in practice?

The following article by John Grayson *Migration and adult education – social movement learning and resistance in the UK* reveals the range of migrant's and refugees' civic activity in UK since 1945 until the present time. The article is based on the data and evidence gathered during an 'activist research project' conducted among the migrant and refugee social movements in South Yorkshire U.K. The author underlines that the migrants' and refugees' social movements strongly affected the political and social discourse in the UK, but their role has changed as the social movements evolved. John Grayson demonstrates the significant impact of these social movements on the adult education scene, in particular that of the popular adult education in the UK. Subsequently the author analyses the threats that adult education for migrants in the UK faces as the marketization of educational initiatives and domination of the vocational adult education.

 In the article *Out of Europe. Agency and biographicity and discourses of ethnic-cultural belonging, inclusion and exclusion* Rob Evans explains the life context, formed by the German media and policy makers, of the young adults who possess a precarious identity. He also critically analyses the political concepts of the *criteria of successful integration* and the *national foreigners.* The author argues that this type of public discourse amplifies uncertainty and the necessity for young adults to balance between the identity constructed upon the culture of their country of origin and the identity based on their daily life in Germany. Rob Evans analyses a case study of the learning biography of a student of Turkish origin, whose learning experiences are deeply inscribed with gender, cultural, ethnic and political meanings.

The last article of this issue *Social housing, multi-ethnic environments and social educators' training* by Flavia Virgilio does not directly focus on the topics of migration and newcomers. It rather explores the process of educating professionals who work in a

multicultural environment (including working with migrants). The design of the training programmes for social educators and NGO practitioners working in social housing projects is based on the outcomes of an international research project, presented in detail in the article. The theoretical framework of this contribution is inspired by the ideas of informal learning, and the concepts of learning for reflexive citizenship and learning for active citizenship.

This issue of RELA also contains an open paper *Education as a response to sustainability issues* by Katrien Van Poeck and Joke Vandenabeele. In their contribution the authors deal with the tension in environmental education and education for sustainable development between acknowledging pluralism on the one hand and taking into account urgent sustainability concerns on the other. They take a guided tour in a Community Supported Farm as an empirical case to reflect theoretically about this tension. Their reflection results into a plea for an educational approach that moves beyond the dichotomy between, on the one hand, teach matters of fact about sustainable agriculture and, on the other, the cultivation of a sheer plurality of values, opinions, and preferences.

References

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