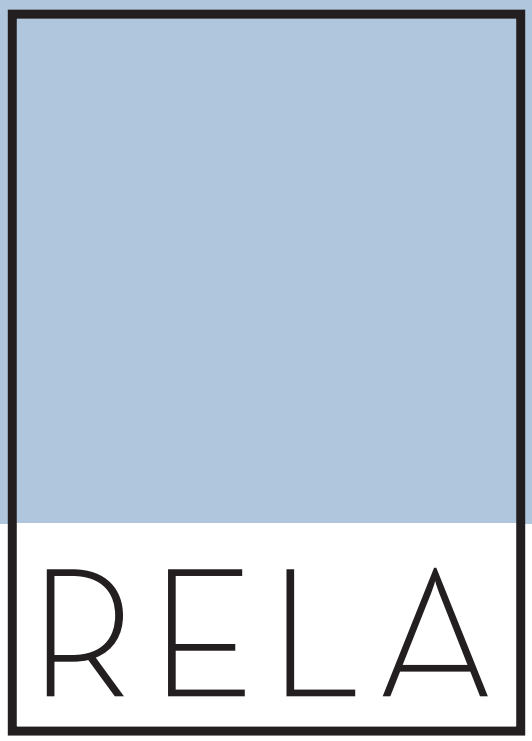
This issue: Envisioning future research on the education and learning of adults



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Establishing a new scholarly journal can be justified by the functional needs of a well-defined scientific discipline – or as opposition to its institutional and paradigmatic framework. This is, however, not the case with the European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA). It is, rather, so that the journal is part of the emergence of a scientific community, very deeply embedded in societal practices at the same time as it is reconstructing intellectually these practices and their context as scientific objects. In this case, the journal can attempt to provide an arena and some of the communicative resources for academic and broader social development of such a community. To fulfil this mission, its rationale and specific goals are equally related to a diagnosis of these societal practices and some visions for the role of scientific inquiry in these practices. As two of the six editors of RELA, and responsible for the editorial work of the first issue of the journal, we will discuss why this journal has been launched, and how the editors want to position it in the area of the education and learning of adults.

Some historical notes on the field of the education and learning of adults

Much of the recent discussion in adult education seems stuck in a contradiction between different educational cultures, which refer to particular historical experiences. On the one hand, there is a focus on personal and political self-articulation, which seems to be inherited from the traditional functions of community learning and liberal adult education. It comes in several radical versions – the traditions of national and local emancipation movements in the past and present, e.g. the tradition referring to Freire – but also in an individual humanistic version, especially in the USA and Europe. They are based on a multiplicity of historical and local institutions and organisations, which have an educational perspective. On the other hand, there is the instrumental perspective on lifelong learning for work, theoretically underpinned by human capital theory and similar frameworks of understanding, which articulates the growing political and societal attention on adult learning, but mostly separated from institutions and organisations for adult education.

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This contradiction between different educational cultures must be seen as a temporary frontline in a much more comprehensive historical transformation of the role of the education and learning of adults. The conceptual shift from "education" to "(lifelong) learning" is the political synthesis of changes in the societal functions of the education and learning of adults but it has – for wider societal and political reasons – been "constrained" to a very narrow understanding of human learning needs.

Adult education has historically developed complementarily to the greater history of modernisation and (formal) education, enabling individuals to deal with new societal realities. The very notions of adulthood and individuality result from this history, as a gradual and complex process of *socially creating* the individual conscious agent in society has replaced the *assigning* of adulthood by ceremonial inauguration.

The notion of modernisation is one way of conceptualising the interrelation of multiple institutional realities, conceptual meanings and historical changes in the education and learning of adults, comprising the inclusion of feudal dynasties and independent city republics in the melting pot of European nation state building, as well as the imperial inclusion of cultures and countries in the third and fourth world that had been living separate from dynamic centres right up until the great discoveries or later (Salling Olesen, 2010). Capitalist economy has been the main motor in this process, where traditional, self-sustaining local communities were included in larger societies, affecting all aspects of political, social and cultural relations. The development of institutional (formal) education, replacing informal education and learning, is just one of these effects.

There is a built-in risk in using the notion of modernisation as theoretical backbone of understanding. Seen from the dominant centre of a global, modernised world, it may seem that the education and learning of adults is on hand to enable modernisation, harmonise the levels of learning between generations, and live up to the accelerating needs for individuals to change. This may be a local truth of occidental modernisation, where the efficiency and speed of knowledge transmission seems to be secured at least for some time by institutional education. This was the hope encapsulated in the humanistic and egalitarian ideas of "lifelong education" which were developed in the 1960s and 1970s. The conceptual development from here to a notion of "lifelong learning", predominantly addressing work-related informal learning, seems to be an effect of the actual neo-liberal degeneration of the western modernisation process, in which obviously the rhetoric of lifelong learning, economic concerns and the focus on employment and work are determining factors (cf. Fejes, 2010). This can be seen as part of a very local vision of global development. The position the most developed economies can hope to maintain is their relative competitive advantage in a division of labour where they take care of knowledge-based, complex work and the service work for themselves, while developing countries deliver raw materials and build up low-tech industrial production.

However, the more universal or all-embracing nature of learning needs in all the advanced capitalist countries may also bring them to bear on wider issues of contemporary society. The new societal staging of lifelong learning, which leaves ideas of formal as well as non-formal education in a more marginal position, placing centre stage phenomena which were in more traditional educational discourses conceptualized as "informal learning". Instead of being stuck in the dichotomy between "intentional education" and "coercive learning", or between different areas of learning, future research on the education and learning of adults must deal critically with the definitions of learning needs and sensitize theory and methods in relation to the new learners and new subjectivities that emerge.

Learning needs related to work and working life seems to be the societal need driving the reconceptualisation of informal learning. As long as the development of work takes the form of a strong division of labour based on mass unskilled wage labour, societal needs remain limited to training and retraining specialists and highly skilled craftspeople. But with the development of post-industrial forms of work organization, a need for broader adult education is emerging. The societal demand on the knowledge economy has changed to include what was mostly called soft skills (e.g. communicative and collaborative skills, quality consciousness, professional attitudes, self confidence) but also traditional literacy as well as new literacies (e.g. numeracy and mathematic understanding, computer literacy). Work-related learning seems to become broader and deeper and increasingly interferes with personal needs and identity. The most visionary capitalists and managers see this development clearly, where as a lot of the contemporary policy in Europe is still trying to bring education back to conservative basics under the umbrella of lifelong learning.

The political consensus on lifelong learning and competence development may not be so easy to maintain in this narrow perspective. Rather, the focus on work and human resource development may raise issues of control and the quality of work. The ideas of a knowledge-based economy have been criticized from several perspectives. One line of critique applies a wider, ecological perspective on work and learning, questioning the inward colonialism of human life without boundaries (Hochschild, 1997) and its cultural consequences (Sennett, 1998; Negt, 1984). The demands on human flexibility and adaptation may erode the conditions of socialization and subjectivity, i.e. the human resources as a whole. Another perspective emphasises the direct political aspect of learning, the need to advance a politicisation of work, including environmental questions, ownership and utility value of production, drawing on vanguard experiences of cooperative enterprises (e.g. The Mondragon cooperative), projects for conversion of production (Lucas Aerospace and others), and a vision of self-regulated work. The dramatic emergence of the climate crisis and the fragility of the capitalist world economy underscore the need for more comprehensive perspectives on work and learning than the instrumental version of lifelong learning.

The neoliberal scenario of an individualised competence market, which will be subsumed into a global labour market, will most likely provide an unprecedented example of market failure – and it will definitely have extreme effects in terms of inequality and the colonization of human labour. The question is whether there is another scenario in which the significance of the labour force as a subjective factor in the economy can be turned into individual and collective self regulation of work and learning.

The resources for any alternative to neo-liberal global capitalism must to some extent be found in many contexts that do not necessarily even see themselves as education or learning. In Europe, we can look into experiences of the past cultural practices, in social organizations and in experiences of trade unions and other communities. They may be found in the forms, level of education, expectations and preferences of young people as well as adults, but they do not form a simple and coherent alternative. But even more, we may have to look for the local and regional experiences outside Europe, which are engaged with the transformations of societies under the influence of the European-North American-based capitalist globalisation process. While the new discourses of lifelong learning are international, Anglophone and relatively homogenous, adult education traditions are locally rooted and have many names: *popular education*, *community education, educacao popular*, *politische bildung*, *liberal education*, *folkeoplysning*, *folkbildning*, *formation des adultes*, *formazione*

popular, *volksbildung* and *citizenship education* to name a few. In adult education discussions, these many names give rise to translation problems - although the names in different languages overlap, they are not the same because their meanings and the practices they refer to are related to societal and cultural contexts.

The mission of RELA will be defined in the reflection of the "real historical" as well as the "conceptual" dynamic. In the background of these general ideas, the editors pointed out – among others - the following concrete areas of interest:

- the Copernican turn of theorising from "education" to "learning"
- a shift from a predominantly philosophical and normative theory of education to an empirical and critical investigation of learning processes and contexts
- the redefinition of the order of objectives (cultural technique/literacy – community education - skills/competence – political education and enlightenment – etc.)
- the contradiction between a diverse historical reality and a uniform (global) policy agenda
- a restructuring of cultural regimes as a result of which an Anglophone hegemony emerges

The new and diverse field of interest has announced itself in academia by the fact that studies of the education and learning of adults have been drawing inspiration for research from many disciplines and research domains. Traditionally, a philosophical discipline of education has been supplemented with psychology and traditional social science disciplines, but recently many other disciplines have contributed theoretical and especially methodological inspirations, for example, from cultural studies, gender studies, policy studies, and working life research. The first issue of RELA cannot cover this multiplicity but it should provide examples which show how and why this broad and disorderly flow of academic inspiration is productive.

For this first issue of RELA, we have invited contributions from academics from different part of Europe and beyond, articles that illustrate some of the above-mentioned multiplicity of perspectives. These articles will be introduced at the end of this editorial.

The path to launching a new journal

First of all, RELA is the output of many years of academic work and networking within the framework of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA). The organisation was founded in 1991, and has since expanded in size, both in number of members and in number of active research networks. Firstly, its function was to encourage research in the area of adult education and learning and to facilitate research oriented international communication through network conferences and seminars, and by inviting young researchers and PhD students to participate in such activities. Secondly, in order to establish a research community, one of the main aims of ESREA has been to encourage international publication of research in all the areas of education and learning of adults. This has mainly been conducted in two ways. Through the publication of conference proceedings and books based on conferences, published by university publishers or local publishers; and since 2005, the publication of a dedicated series with Peter Lang Publishers. Such publications have been important in the work on building a sense of connection and identity around certain research topics and around the ESREA research networks. It has also made research results available to

people outside the networks, through distribution to university libraries, and the possibility to buy the books through bookshops and publishers.

For several years there has also been an ongoing discussion about a more stable and continuous channel of publishing research results in this area, as edited collections have a limited distribution. The traditional way of publishing scholarly work is academic peer-reviewed journals, establishing the scope, the status and the quality criteria of a particular field. RELA is ESREA's bid to take up this academic tradition, interwoven with further work on developing ESREA as a research society.

However it was also felt necessary to reconsider the format and business model of journals. The traditional way of publishing journals has been through publishers who charge subscription fees. The subscription of libraries and institutions to online access to the journals make up an increasing and dominant part of the journals' income at the same time as subscription to hard copies has become rather expensive. This way of publishing makes the availability of research results limited to those who can afford paying for such subscriptions, or are affiliated with institutions who can. Open access publishing has emerged as an alternative business model. Open access means that publications are made available on the internet for free, whereas the costs of producing them are covered by public grants or by user fees paid by those who want to publish their research, or their institutions. Through open access, research is made available to a broader audience, not only those who can pay. There seems to be a recognition that new technologies and a new global scientific arena call for innovative business models in scholarly communication. Therefore, we believe that publishing a journal as open access will contribute to broadening the academic debate, making research more available, at the same time as it provides a space for enhancing the quality of the research we are engaged in. It should be emphasized that open access does not in itself change the editorial tasks, the quality assessment, or the need for technical presentation. Basically the establishment of an online open access journal is just a more contemporary way of meeting the requirements for scholarly publication, and can become an important point in the development of ESREA as a research society.

Why a new journal?

The need for a new journal in the area of the education and learning of adults somehow relates to those journals already available in the same area. They include the Adult education quarterly, the International journal of lifelong education, Studies in continuing education and Studies in the education of adults. What is RELAs contribution in relation to these journals and why launch a new European journal? There are three issues that we would like to raise in response to such questions. 1. The political landscape of the education and learning of adults has changed dramatically in Europe in the last decade. 2. So has the field of research in the education and learning of adults and 3. The available journals do not in a sufficient way address issues at stake in the education and learning of adults in Europe.

Major changes have taken place in the field of the education and learning of adults in Europe during recent decades, and have attracted much more public and political attention. Until the 1960s or 1970s, adult education was a relatively limited and marginal sector in most countries in Europe, and was provided by civil society organisations, in some countries with substantial legal and financial support by the state. Its main content was, beside basic literacy, liberal/popular cultural and political education. In the 1970s and 1980s, new trends emerged in parts of Europe. Substantial

growth in activity together with new priorities on creating second chance access to higher education, and on vocational training emerged (Salling Olesen, 1989). And since the 1990s this vocationalism has become a more universal trend (Field, 2006), united by the agenda of Lifelong Learning, although still very uneven across countries. In countries with a high level of state involvement in adult education, for example in Sweden, there has been a financial shift in government spending from money spent on non-vocational adult education to vocational adult education (Fejes, Larsson, Paldanius & Roselius, 2009), thus limiting the opportunities for adults to get a second chance to enter higher education. The political umbrella over national policies has been provided by initiatives within the European Union as expressed in the European memorandum on lifelong learning (EC, 2001) and elsewhere. Since the memorandum on lifelong learning was published, the European Commission (2007) and the council of the European Union (2008) have developed a greater interest in the education and learning of adults. For example, through developing a glossary on adult learning, by developing quality criteria for adult learning providers, by developing the competence profiles for adult educators and so forth.

The creation of ESREA was in a way triggered by the European policy initiatives since 1990, and the many major policy initiatives taking place in Europe makes the relevance of European research organisation even greater, both as a support and a questioning of such developments and trends. It is our ambition that RELA will be one forum where such debates will take place.

It is, however, paradoxical that at the same time as adult education is growing in volume and policy significance, a number of institutional shifts can be observed at academic departments in some European countries, which reduce rather than strengthen the field of research. In the UK, for example, adult education programs at several universities are being shut down, and even whole departments of adult and/or continuing education have been closed, for example at Leeds university. At other universities, staff in the field of adult education have been moved to other departments that focus on, for example, human resource management or general education/teacher training. Regardless of whether one would argue that these are good or bad changes, we believe that there is an even increasing need for critical academic forums that can gather researchers who are interested in research on the education and learning of adults in a broad sense, no matter which discipline or department they belong to.

The most important reason for launching RELA, however, and the reason why there is a need for this kind of journal, is related to the geographical and cultural bias of those international journals already available. They are all based in, mainly publish articles from and have their main readership in the Anglophone world. This is no surprise. English has become the lingua franca of academic discussions and debates today, and this means that the publishing industry in the UK, the Commonwealth and North America has expanded from local to global, or has taken the challenge to provide publishing channels for the emerging global community. Something reinforced by governments and university boards across many countries, where performance appraisals are based on the number of publications, and to some extent citations, in "international" academic peer-review journals. We can observe a situation where the Anglophone communities dominate while all the other local and national academic communities and the practical and cultural experience they refer to, are becoming more and more marginal. In the light of this, we felt there was a need for a truly international, European journal, which actively embraces non-Anglophone (as well as Anglophone) contributions, and thereby broadens the academic discussion in the field. Thus, RELA aims to be a forum that is linguistically "open access", which is important at a time

when local and regional explorations of issues are often difficult to foreground across language barriers. As academic and policy debate is increasingly carried out in the English language, this masks the richness of research knowledge, responses and trends from diverse traditions and foci. Practically, we will do this by getting more submissions of papers from colleagues all over Europe who do not ordinarily appear in the "international" journals. Further, the journal encourages contributions from colleagues in other parts of the world who can contribute to the ongoing discussions in Europe. This is not an easy task, as there are different traditions of publishing in different countries, and as it is a challenge for many to write in a language other than their native tongue. Only time can tell if we will be successful in these quite high ambitions.

In spite of these reservations against the Anglophone dominance in research debates and publication, we have chosen to publish the journal in English. There are several reasons for this. First of all, we believe that the debate might be enhanced by making it possible for more people to take part in it. And as English is a dominant language of communication, this is the language that might do the work we want. This will have the effect, hopefully, of research results from other countries than those dominating the journals today being made available to a wider audience, and thus there might be a potential for new insights and research results to emerge. As we do acknowledge the challenge of writing in a language other than one's native one, we have chosen to have a language policy that aims to be supportive. This is done in three ways. 1. Papers submitted that are not written in perfect English, (although we recommend that paper are proof-read before submission if possible) but that are good enough to review for academic quality and rigor, will be sent out for review if assessed as being within the scope of the journal, and have the basic academic quality as assessed by the editors. If the paper in the end is accepted for publication, the author will be asked to have the paper proof-read by a professional language editor, and then resubmit a version in high-quality English. 2. Papers can be submitted in a language other than English if there is competence within the editorial group for such language. Consequently, potential authors should contact the editorial group before submitting to check that the language fits the competences of the editorial group. If decided to be reviewed, the paper will be reviewed in the language submitted, and if accepted for publication, the author will be asked to submit a high-quality English version of the paper that is identical in terms of content with the accepted paper. 3. Papers previously published in another language elsewhere can be submitted to RELA for review if this is clearly noted by the author when submitting the paper. If accepted, the author will be asked to provide a high-quality translation of the paper. With these measures, we hope to be able to achieve a good geographical distribution of papers in RELA, and to create a real international, multicultural arena, instead of the invisibly biased structures that are operating today.

A multiplicity of directions

Our ambition with the first issue was to gather papers from researchers from different parts of Europe and beyond that represent different research traditions - papers that can provide illustrations of where research on the education and learning of adults is today, and where it might go from here. The editors set up at theme and wrote an invitation, which included some of the reflections in the previous text, and invited a number of researchers to contribute to the first issue. We left the choice of detailed topic to the

researcher, only that it should be based on the researcher's own research, but we encouraged the writers to include some reflections of their own position in the landscape we had drawn up, and their ideas about the future of research in the education and learning of adults. Fortunately, the response was positive, with a single exception. Although it is impossible to represent this field, which is not clearly or easily defined, and as it contains numerous theoretical and methodological approaches, we think we have gathered an exciting and stimulating sample of texts from different traditions. In the following we will give a brief introduction to the eight articles, although we think they must speak for themselves. These articles are in no way exhaustive, and the forthcoming issues of RELA will offer a greater range of papers from different theoretical and empirical traditions, and a broader geographical distribution of authors.

The first couple of articles deal with the important changes taking place on the political and institutional level of adult learning. They reflect the new political attention to adult education on the national as well as the international level, and they also illustrate how these developments are expressed in very different local dynamics.

Antonio Fragoso and Paula Guimarães from Portugal relate to the general shift in the adult education sector in their description and critique of the development of adult education in Portugal since the 1970s. They draw on, as they define it, two distinct political approaches in their discussion; the UNESCO policy approach to lifelong education as framed during the 1970s, and the EU policy approach to lifelong learning as framed during the 21st century. The authors illustrate how civil society organisations (CSO) have played a key role in the promotion of local bottom-up popular education processes that had the aim of social mobility and change during the 1980s. However, policy changes in the EU have been taken up and migrated to Portugal where competences, skills, economic growth and qualifications dominate the agenda for policymaking. Within such change, CSOs are co-opted by the government to carry out competence-based courses and assessments, with little or no room to define the goals, methods and processes, which, as the authors argue, "reverse the possibilities for re-contextualisation and re-interpretation of social emancipation of public policies" (p. 29).

Aiga von Hippel and Rudi Tippelt from Germany provide an analysis of issues pertaining to participation in adult education. They argue for a need to analyse the meso level (institutional level such as professional activity) and its connection with participation in adult education. By focusing on the competences of the staff in adult education, and especially on a target group and participant orientation as professional action, they want to understand how such orientation can contribute to an increase in participation in adult education. By analysing the attitudes of teachers towards a target group and participation orientation they argue that the teachers see such competencies as important, and these competencies include things such as delivering high quality courses, or providing individual guidance of potential participants.

Several articles directly address the status of the research field, the challenges of defining its object and epistemological basis, and theoretical and methodological implications.

The first article, written by Mieczysław Malewski from Poland, takes as its point of departure Polish adult education research which has been left in a paradigmatic crisis by the changes summarised in the shift from education to learning. Describing the established academic concern as a technical interest, attuning teaching of adults and the function of learning to a modern mass society, he regards the paradigmatic breakdown as a crisis and an opportunity. He emphasizes that it is not an open and free choice for the academic community, rather, it is a shift conditioned by the underlying societal development of a "learning society". After discussing the different potential meanings

of a learning society, Malewski finally outlines the dimensions of an analysis of different paradigmatic lines of reaction to this challenge, which is open to further reflection.

Robin Usher from Australia introduces the work of Deleuze and Guattari, a post-structuralist theorization as a way of thinking about educational research. He draws on their concepts *rhizome* and *lines of flight*. The rhizome displaces meta-narratives, foundations, endings and beginnings with an ontology of becoming. The rhizome makes possible multiple conjoinings and connections where lines of flights are those which decentre, break down coherences and open up contexts to their outsides and the possibilities therein. He uses lifelong learning and electronic communication as contexts and catalysts of research and argues for research without hierarchy and authority. He recognizes lines of flight both in research, where research can be seen as a desiring production, and research as a line of flight in itself viewing the subject of research as a nomad, and the object of research being that of nomadism. Through this, he argues, methodology becomes more multiple and flexible, where scientific methods no longer are the guarantor of truth and certainty.

Tara Fenwick, at the University of Stirling in Scotland examines the very dynamic and multiple development of research into workplace learning, which connects different fields such as adult education, human resource development, organization and management studies, labour studies and professional and vocational education. In these fields, terms such as learning are used differently, with different meanings, ends and aims. Based on a literature review of journals in these areas, she focuses on different representations of learning and argues that instead of seeing these representations of learning as different names for "the same", they represent an ontological multiplicity, they cover different objects. Learning is not a single object but is enacted as multiple objects as different things in different logics. Therefore, we should not treat other ways of speaking about learning as another worldview that we try to incorporate in our own ontology, but meet them on their own terms, as unique ontological positions.

Finally, Staffan Larsson from Sweden addresses the internationalisation of research and the centralized structures in the profession, which has very fundamental implications through the emergent economy of publications and citations where academics needs to publish if they do not want to perish. By looking at three adult education journals that claim to be "international" and how they manage to be "international" in the sense that they have a wider distribution of authors from different parts of the world, and by having articles that look at "foreign" study objects, he illustrates how the vast majority of articles published in these journals are written by authors who have English as their native tongue, and almost 90% of the articles referred to in one of these journals are to authors from the same regions, i.e. Anglophone authors. Thus, invisible colleges emerge that include certain groups of people who publish and refer to each other in the field of the education and learning of adults. And a vast majority of these invisible colleges are Anglophone.

The last two articles display concrete research in the field at the same time as they emphasize a perspective of theoretical and methodological innovation. They do this from very different positions –an empirical case in the new extended field of lifelong learning in Europe and from an African context respectively.

Kirsten Weber from Denmark, presents an empirical analysis of a group of adult learners, which focuses on the wider subjective and societal dimensions of learning. The research deals with adult learners who are qualifying for a professional competence in pedagogical and social work. The focus is on the fragile self understanding and strong emotional engagement of the group members, and it links this analysis of subjective

aspects within the education with the societal status of the occupational group. The article is also a methodological demonstration of a psycho-societal analysis of the emotional dimensions of adult learning in relation to professional work, and it elaborates the theoretical framework of a deep hermeneutic methodology that can be sensitive to subjective as well as societal dimensions of learners' lives and experiences.

Astrid Von Kotze from South Africa illuminates the narrowness of contemporary work-related education rationales in Europe by introducing a more holistic, material understanding of learners' motives, based on their concrete life experiences. She introduces a livelihood approach to technical and vocational education and training policies (TVET) in South Africa. This conceptual and methodological tool relates the learning needs and motives to a livelihood perspective, i.e. vocational education and training must relate not only to paid wage labour that is measurable; work also includes tasks related to sustaining life. She argues that TVET policies need to embrace such a view on work, and view those targeted by policies as subjects and agents who draw on local resources to make a living. Rather than policy that aims to train people for one job, policy should create the possibility to create a sustainable livelihood security for people by taking into account their local conditions for work and livelihood.

This first issue of the journal ends with a book review of a book on active democratic citizenship that fits in well with the discussion raised by Fragoso and Guimarães. The plan is to include book reviews in each issue of RELA that relate to the theme of that specific issue.

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Is there still a place for social emancipation in public policies?

Envisioning the future of adult education in Portugal

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Abstract

The consolidation of the welfare state in Europe after World War II allowed for the development of adult education programmes aimed at social inclusion, economic growth and democratic citizenship. Lifelong education, proposed by UNESCO (1970s), allowed countries to build adult education policies combining the needs of economic growth and increasing democratic social demands, based on adults' emancipation. In the last two decades, the European Union (EU) orientation for lifelong learning has stressed the formation of education and training to prepare workers to be more productive, and the creation of partnership (public/private) provision, according to managerial rules and procedures. These two distinct political approaches have influenced the evolution of adult education in Portugal. In this paper we argue that the civil society organisations (CSOs) of Portugal today are trapped within a set of technical procedures that have been established in the name of lifelong learning and that EU programmes have made it very difficult for CSOs to escape national state control. This situation impedes innovative and alternative attempts to promote social emancipation.

Keywords: adult education policies; lifelong learning; social emancipation

Introduction

Although there has been broad consensus around the idea that a person learns throughout his/her life (lifelong and life wide), specific perspectives view social emancipation as important for this. Public policies for lifelong learning have mainly

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focused on the need to build stronger relationships between the provision of education or training and learning and the satisfaction of economic and labour market needs. An analysis of Western European countries' policies since World War II reveals that the consolidation of the welfare state in many countries allowed for the development of adult education programmes aimed at social inclusion (as adult education was conceived as a social right), and oriented to the preparation of workers for economic growth and democratic citizenship. Lifelong learning as proposed by UNESCO at the beginning of the 1970s represented a political approach for countries that envisioned the challenge of defining adult education policies that combined efforts to respond to the needs for economic growth and for democracy from societies, through aims for emancipation.

In the last two decades, in a context of globalisation, the European Union's orientation to lifelong learning has been refocused. This new orientation emphasises the importance to the private individual of building education and training pathways, the relevance of preparing adults (especially workers) to become more economically productive, and the creation of partnerships and networks of (public and private) organisations in the provision of initiatives driven by managerial rules and procedures.

These two distinct political approaches have influenced adult education developments in Portugal since the 1970s. Recently, the New Opportunities Initiative (a policy under development) follows the European Union's orientation for reform, involving reform in the adult education and training system, the adoption of mechanisms for the formal validation of learning acquired throughout life, and provision through networks of public and private organisations. In spite of experience and knowledge acquired from 1974 up until the 1990s, through adult education initiatives (framed by the national programme and European Union LEADER programme), civil society organisations (CSOs) of today seem trapped in a net of technical and formalised procedures and evaluation obligations. Required through the New Opportunity Initiative in reorienting adult education to lifelong learning, these are procedures and obligations that impinge on innovative and alternative attempts to promote social emancipation.

From the implementation of public policies, emerge changes in adult education that have concrete and significant impact. In this paper, we reveal the corrosive effects of such policies in the provision of adult education, in particular where civil society organisations have been engaged. Our present situation gives us a glimpse of a worrying future relationship between adult education and social emancipation. We end by emphasising a need for the adoption of policy by the European Union and Portuguese government that articulates lifelong education and lifelong learning. In Portugal, such policy would have to take into consideration the non-hegemonic tradition of CSOs and involve the reinvention of social emancipation based on the participation of adults. It would thus involve the valorisation of the needs and problems felt by local people, in the planning of dialogical initiatives.

Shifts in adult education policy

Lifelong education and the welfare state

Public policies based on the idea of lifelong education emerged in Western European countries after World War II. These welfare state policies were built during a period of unparalleled economic growth and full employment. From this period, lifelong education can be regarded a social-democratic initiative (Griffin, 1999a, 1999b), and the

manifestation of a social pact between capital and state regulated labour, linking capitalism and democracy. The connection between economic needs, the democratisation of society and greater welfare became a significant priority of policies (Olssen, 2006). In this, policies have become firmly associated with claims emerging from social security systems. This implicates an increase of social expenses allocated towards the building and functioning of state services that aim to concretise social rights, such as the right to education (Santos & Ferreira, 2002).

These policies for social justice and equality have become privileged strategies for the promotion of social justice and a common good in the building of societies. Over time and through the expansion of public schools, policies turned towards the idea of an *education for all* as a pillar of Western capitalist states' democratisation process. Public policies for adult education, however, went beyond the formal dimension, integrating activities for the promotion of social, political and civic participation. In this sense, and according to Edwards and Usher (1998), there was a clear *differentiation* in the field of practice that included: a) literacy, compensatory education, and the traditional practices of formal education, in some cases already considered as public policies of a modern nation-state; b) vocational training, which served as a determinant factor in the adaptation of the labour force to economic development; c) liberal adult education aiming at social and personal development for civic participation, and taking advantage of civil society organisations (CSOs). For the first time, public policies traversed two different forms of education (formal and non-formal education), enriching and emphasising lifelong education.

The increasing valorisation of adult education in public policy was visible in three areas. First, public policy ensured the financial support for training initiatives and non-formal education activities promoted by state-independent and state institutions. Second, public policy produced a legal framework for adult education that assured financial support in developing the initiatives that were proposed. Additionally, public policy promoted cooperation with and between the organisations that provided adult education activities, placing emphasis on entities involved in social contract negotiations (European Association for the Education of Adults, 2006). As a consequence, this version of adult education, sponsored by the welfare state, emphasised education and training as a state responsibility, and demonstrated a growing concern with respect to the specific forms that encourage a life wide education (Griffin, 1999b).

However, there was public dominium over these policies, characterised by the bureaucratisation and formalisation of administrative procedures and practices. This made for rigidity in their implementation, and a definition of sanctions to ensure social control over the fulfilment of objectives and long-term aims. These policies also entailed the building of a legal framework that aimed at equality in access and the success of public activities delivered through the formalisation and normalization of curricula. Moreover, there was significant professional and administrative control that led adult educators to gradually resemble teachers, in a relationship that began to evolve as one of teaching and learning, rather than educating. This was an effect of *contamination* that adult education began to suffer, by adopting school-like processes that replaced educational practices that had been characterised by diversity and heterogeneity (Canário, 2001). There were similar critiques that soon emanated from academia, civil society organisations and emancipatory social movements. Hence, the emergence of critical perspectives of this functional lifelong education would culminate in a critical social-democratic approach (Griffin, 1999a, 1999b), influenced by authors such as Ivan Illich (1976) and Paulo Freire (1977).

Integrating some of the critiques made by these authors, UNESCO among others played an important role in systematising lifelong education, namely by organising several international conferences on adult education (CONFITEAs) between 1949 and 2009. Lifelong education represented a rupture with the mainstream understanding of education that reduced it to school and teaching. In the Faure Report (Faure, Herrera, Kaddoura, Lopes, Petrovski, Rahnema, & Ward, 1981) the educational systems of industrialised countries were said to be in a crisis: unable to keep up with scientific and technological innovation and ineffective in decreasing social inequalities, despite raising the number of adults engaged in adult education (formal or non-formal). Lifelong education could be considered an instrument in reforming educational systems if it proceeds from the principles of scientific humanism (cf. Lengrand, 1981) and organises learning in educational models (cf. Schwartz, 1976) towards the democratisation of societies and building of a learning society (cf. Hutchins, 1970).

UNESCO defended an innovative combination of formal, non-formal and informal education, and opposed the typical view of education upheld in the linearity of school education. Considering the importance of non-formal and informal contexts in education, one could identify processes that foster democracy and equality of opportunities (Faure et al., 1981). Education was given a new centrality as public policy, as the provision, regulation and organisation of initiatives mainly belonged to the state. As a social right, the state guaranteed equal opportunity to education (Lima, 2007), a condition balancing the fulfilment of individual and collective rights; with this, truly, education became something for all.

It is also important to stress that lifelong education represented a first attempt in building an identity around adult education, by organising and systematising ideas and practices in a field that was inherently diverse and heterogeneous. It was also a first attempt in building a *new educational order*, departing from adult education policies, as argued by John Field (2006). UNESCO defined adult education as a specific identity (Finger, Jansen & Wildemeersch, 1998) that was assumed to be part of a humanistic movement (Finger & Asún, 2001), stressing the importance of development, social progress and innovation through science and technology. This then also incorporated a potential as a liberating project, focused on educational contribution towards the construction of more democratic societies, in which people could be active in and responsive to the world's transformation. Hence, adult education was characterised, according to Ian Martin (2006), as a *social purpose,* because it aimed to create social and political change towards greater social justice, equality, a culture of dialogue developed by the state and social movements, and a better democracy that included a critical reflection on social actions and the political engagements of people.

Lifelong learning, the neoliberal state and the impact of European Union orientations

The economic crisis and a set of major global transformations created a shift in these public policies. Changes were roughly connected to the emergence of neoliberal policies, promoting a new economy based on new "free" market principles in a situation of increased globalisation. Globalization influenced the creation of new international political power centres and the retraction of the state in several social areas. This general scenario has had specific effects on meanings of lifelong education. It has become progressively clear that *lifelong learning* carries new meanings, visible in two key-areas stressed in the Lisbon Strategy (European Council, 2000), namely:

1. To improve employability and the qualification of workers, establish and provide European databases on jobs and learning opportunities to employment

services, and create new programmes that allow the unemployed to access training.

2. To make lifelong learning a priority as a basic element of the European social model, through: new agreements between social partners on innovation and lifelong training; exploring the complementarities between lifelong learning and adaptability (e.g. assuring a flexible management of working time and job rotation); and establishing a European award to companies already advanced in this dimension.

These new functions of lifelong learning are based on the idea that the state is committed to building bridges. Still, the state appears to be transformed into a monitor and controller of conditions that favour the emergence of a learning market, with the aim of delivering more efficient provisions. However, the state seems to be losing its capacity to define policies, while gaining strategic competence in managing established priorities in the short- and long-term. In this sense, the means of education are reinforced, but there is a loss of control of its main aims. In short, there is a reduction in the capacity to determine the results of educational policies, despite the maintenance of a capacity to regulate and adopt compulsory measures (Griffin, 1999a, 1999b).

In a scenario quite different from that of state interventionism, control and results from evaluations seem to dominate public perception. Consequently, there is an appeal to agents and actors linked both to the market and civil society, and an emphasis on facilitating state action by promoting initiatives. This involvement of other partners (non-state partners, even if financed by the state) requires an effort of autonomy, de-centralisation and diversification or, as Claus Offe (2005) states, of *pluralisation* and *fragmentation* inside public systems of education and training. However, despite this, an educational market is still not being built. Quasi-markets are emerging, heavily administered by the state in regards to the definition and regulation of public educational provisions, along with funding (even if shared with other agents) and the evaluation of initiatives (Griffin, 1999a, 1999b). These quasi-markets stem from the management of private companies' principles and organisational productivity (Power & Whitty, 1997).

The objectives of public policies move with this shift. Non-formal and informal education connected to socialisation and learning acquired through experience gain importance. In these policies, typical adults are considered as those who learn throughout life in times and spaces that go beyond the boundaries of school; they are considered to be more educated, have a greater life course and a greater level of competence and qualification related to labour contexts, than their counterpart. In short, adults are *competent subjects* (Andersson & Fejes, 2005), possessing experience and specific skills in certain areas. Public policies should therefore look for the links between school and learning contexts outside school. Policies clearly target social groups or sectors through programmes that combat social exclusion and unemployment, and encourage individuals to build their own educational and training trajectories. One of the more important shifts in the meanings afforded lifelong learning involves that of the participation and involvement of people. The individual is afforded new responsibilities in learning how to adapt in the short-term to changes, to choose, make quick decisions and develop competences adequate for economic, educational, work-related and social transformation (Bauman, 2005; Olssen, 2006).

The so-called learning society emerges as an information and knowledge society, demanding adults to be involved in the management of existing information and acquisition of knowledge needed for growth and economic development. This society

fosters a closer connection between education, the economy, and demands for productivity, flexibility and so forth. In this scenario, education (or a so-called equivalent learning and training) is understood as an investment. The analogies between training and financial capital become common in educational policy documents of the EU (cf. European Union Council, 2004; European Commission, 2006).

Shifts in the meanings of lifelong learning afforded through EU policy texts, illustrate a narrowing of the concept and an instrumentalisation of the aims of adult education to economic imperatives that has been linked to an *economisation of social life* (cf. Lima, 2008). Learning is valued for its potential contribution to economic growth and as strategy to increase the potential for individual's to enter the labour market. From the perspective of "work organisations, adult education has become an adequate instrument to increase the competitiveness of enterprises in a globalised world" (Finger et al., 1998, p. 19).

People are encouraged to participate in adult education, so as to survive in a labour market that is increasingly competitive. This reinforces the instrumental character of the market. Opportunities for social mobilisation (a concern of public state policies), on the other hand, depend on the knowledge adults possess and the diplomas they have earned; new knowledge, becomes a requirement to *stay* in the labour market. Knowledge and competences are measured by their utility for people, in terms of the labour market, and as a result, adult education, and especially lifelong learning, reveals its functional and strategic character (cf. Bauman, 2005). According to Peter Alheit and Bettina Dausien (2002), lifelong learning represents a new way to define the educational task in societies. This meaning of learning promotes the re-organisation of educational and training systems towards these changes in work, the new functions of knowledge, and the de-functionality of more traditional educational institutions (i.e. schools); it also stresses the emergence of a new educational economy characterised by the individualisation of knowledge.

In summary, we have identified two major phases concerning the evolution of public policies for adult education. The first one allowed for the emergence and evolution of lifelong education, especially supported by UNESCO; besieged by an historical crisis in education. The second phase is characterised by a shift of public policies as they adapt to macro-contextual factors (such as globalisation; the rise of neoliberal states as they displace the notion of welfare state; EU changing policy, etc.) and promote lifelong learning as their key concept. It is clear that this shift has greatly influenced national policies for adult education, and, at the same time, implementation at local/national levels. The consequences of this shift seems to be a narrowing of the field of adult education: on the one hand, forgetting values that centrally gave birth to it, such as social emancipation and critical action and thought; on the other hand, using adult education as an instrument to mould workers to the new labour market, while legitimating the instrumental character of the neoliberal free market. This being the case, the main aim of the second part of this paper is to examine the Portuguese case in its specificities, analysing it in the light of the theoretical framework just presented.

Looking at Portugal: from policies to practices

From revolution to EEC

The evolution of adult education in Portugal is different from that of many other European countries, essentially because Portugal was subjected to a dictatorship regime from 1926 to 1974 (a coup d'état in April, 1974 and a revolutionary period of about two

years deeply transformed the national scenario). Consequently, while many European countries were building welfare states, Portugal was struggling with dictatorship. Portugal only began to build a welfare state in the 1980s, bringing new structural changes through neoliberal policy. Therefore, and in a short period of ten years, Portugal transitioned from a regime of dictatorship to neoliberalism. Tensions between the two opposite trends carried over through the subsequent decades and resulted in the intermittent confusion of politicians, educational actors and, of course, citizens.

The Portuguese revolutionary period (1974-1976) overlapped with the final crisis the period of modernisation and development that had been critiqued as one of the state's intervention in public life. The language of neoliberal ideology, which had promoted shifts from welfare to neoliberal states in Europe and the USA, started being used in Portugal. Portugal was trapped between changes taking place internationally, and its own, internal, social, cultural and economic changes. It is therefore natural that hybrid or even contradictory features can be identified in the policies this country created or adopted. The contradictory nature of the state and, consequently, of public policies continued for some time and influenced, from our perspective, the development of the paradigms that now frame adult education in Portugal (Guimarães, 2009a).

If there was a certain hope that an effective sub-system of adult education would be created in Portugal in the beginning of the 1980s, the national translation of neoliberal policies associated with technocratic and rational perspectives clearly surpassed the need for investment in education. An obsession with efficacy and efficiency, visible in discourses that emphasised evaluation, precision and products (not processes), began to define the "education that counts" (Lima, 1996, p. 289). As a consequence, adult education became subjugated to formal education and reduced to education as a second opportunity (focused on evening courses that were called "recurrent teaching"). Similarly, adult education became oriented to the production of human capital and qualified labour, mainly due to the impact of EEC funding programmes. Because of this, "popular education and literacy, in its privileged bridges with cultural, civic and political education, with local development and community education, even with the education of adults for the labour world, will be devaluated and, frequently, ignored (…)" (Lima, 2007, p. 27-28).

However, other perspectives emerged from the hybrid policies that were mentioned earlier. In adult education and education more widely, efforts to implement neoliberalism were accompanied by attempts to establish a welfare system. On the one hand, the new General Law of the Educational System, endorsed in 1986, subjugated adult education to formal education; however, on the other hand, there was an effort to widen educational access and increase adult participation. The tendency to link these two different approaches – neoliberalism and welfare – led to the emergence of a *mitigated neoliberalism in education* (Afonso, 1998).

One cannot understand Portuguese adult education without including CSOs in the analysis, which after the 1974 *coup d'état,* became popular education collectives. A strong social movement triggered a push towards adult education and a central state office directed by Alberto Melo put administration at the service of popular education groups with the hope that they could be the basis of a future adult education system (see Melo & Benavente, 1978). When the state rebuilt itself from 1976, these associations were neglected and without support, especially in terms of funding, human resources and technical support. However, even if relegated to a "suspicious ghetto" (Silva, 1990) they did not completely disappear. Portugal's membership to the EEC in 1986 offered new horizons for vocational education, which soon became influenced by pedagogies previously seen only in schools. At the same time, programmes like LEADER, NOW or

EQUAL created finance opportunities for Portuguese CSOs, which soon began to develop an immense number of projects focused on participative methodologies. These projects allowed bottom-up approaches to development and social intervention, supported through the management mechanisms required by the EEC. The local development and participatory research projects that emerged are illustrations of these approaches, and by the same token, we would argue that their fading in the new millennium is a consequence of the implementation of the new adult education policies (Barros, 2009a, 2009b).

During the 1980s, local development in Portugal was guided by the theory and bottom-up activities and processes of popular education, mainly triggered by CSOs (not directly by the central or local state). Our research shows that some of the central characteristics of these local development models were (Fragoso, 2009): i) clear intentions to transform local social actors into agents of development; ii) a strong ideology of militancy, implying that the social actors involved had clear views on the political dimensions of their educational action; iii) bottom-up activities rooted in popular sectors that would provide forms of explicit resistance regarding increased globalisation, while reinforcing local meanings of identity; iv) social change, which was central in these local interventions – success was measured by qualitative changes triggered in communities; v) participation, which was indispensable and integral in all phases of all processes; vi) education, especially adult education, which was central in local development processes.

From the mid-1980s onward it was possible to witness new local dynamics facilitated by CSOs or other institutions. Gradually, however, there were signs that EU policy was about to change, and/or the instruments and financing provided by the EU were progressively making this task of transformation impossible to achieve. But many other CSOs existed beyond the ones that worked in local development. Plus, among CSOs, very different development notions are implied; some were indeed radical and promoted emancipation and social transformation through adult education. Others adapted and reproduced established orientations by both the EU and the Portuguese state. These CSOs reveal a progressive concern with the inter-connections between education (in a reductive sense) and work, along axes established by education, citizenship and competitiveness (Afonso & Antunes, 2001).

Meanwhile, the desert of public adult education was still a fact. This situation took a turn in 1995, as the government made an effort to define a public adult education policy for the future. A team of experts nominated by the government constructed principles as a foundation to build what adult education would come to be. They advised (Melo, Queirós, Santos Silva, Salgado, Rothes, & Ribeiro, 1998) the state to assume the responsibility of creating a national system of adult education through new logics and new, wider, partnerships with CSOs. Central to the development of the national policy, was the creation of an agency that would make concrete and coordinate the implementation of policies in the field. This agency was created in 1999 (ANEFA, National Agency for Adult Education and Training).

Adult education of the new millennium: the hegemony of European Union orientations and the New Opportunities Initiative

The ANEFA created two new forms of provision: the recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC) and EFA courses (Adult Education and Training Courses). The central arguments used to justify the need of RVCC were clearly presented: learning processes are not limited to formal situations of education and training. Rather, learning potentially occurs in all areas of thought and action, in one's

personal life, in the family, at the workplace, and in the community. Work, leisure and social interactions are understood as means for learning and producing competences, which are key to personal development (Duarte, 2004). Statistical data shows that in the year 2000, more than three million Portuguese adults had not completed the compulsory nine years of schooling, while about 19% of these people performed professional functions that require some responsibility. This could indicate that in Portuguese society there has not been close correspondence between level of formal education attained and competence level; in other words, schooling does not equip people with the competences that allow them to perform professionally. However, it was the argument of social justice that was emphasised; individuals who demonstrated their acquisition of a set of competences (defined through a competence referential) could have those competences certified by a formal diploma. A network of centres where adults could apply for the recognition of prior learning was created. In 2001, six centres opened, and gradually, the number of RVCC centres increased to 84, in January, 2005. These centres were promoted mainly by those CSOs that could integrate competence certification into wider processes of adult education or social intervention.

The same concept of key-competences was used to structure EFA courses that allow a school certification and a professional qualification. These were constructed for adults living in marginal situations, or at risk of social exclusion or socially excluded. These courses are composed of general modules as well as a strong, specific training phase that aims at building competences around a particular professional profile. The work is undertaken according to innovative models of real-life themes decided upon by the group of learners and includes a mediator who is fundamental to pedagogical processes. The last phase of such courses provides participants with the possibility to include learning in real-labour contexts.

The role of the ANEFA in the context of Portuguese adult education was characterised by some structural contradictions. The importance of creating new and widened public services to adults is not disputed, but the distance between the original recommendations of the 1998 expert group and the concrete outcomes of the ANEFA is very large. This agency was able to implement two of the ten proposed measures that appear in Melo et al. (1998) neither of which was central to the group that produced the document. The ANEFA's work assessment depends more on the measures that lack than on the existing ones. This Agency represents the beginning of a gradual narrowing of the humanist agenda for adult education in Portugal (potentially characterised by social emancipation), because of the individualist conceptions it proposes and the ambiguous delimitation of state intervention. That is, the core of the ANEFA's action was based on strong appeals made to CSOs' actions. It constructed the rules while assuming a mediator's *status*, however, both RVCC centres and EFA courses were developed (and in a certain sense, even interpreted) by CSOs. There is a real danger that this type of contract transforms CSOs into vehicles of state policy, simultaneously questioning the central mission of CSOs and the major aims of a public social policy, which targets economic and employment dynamics. Finally, the specific linkage between education and training proposed by the ANEFA tends to subordinate educational principles to those of training: heavily school-framed and seeking to promote competitiveness, flexibility and a wide adaptation of the Portuguese labour force (Canário, 2001; Antunes, 2008; Lima, 2008).

In 2002, a new right-wing Portuguese government abolished the referred Agency and substituted it with the General Directorate of Vocational Training. Soon after, adult education became scarcely mentioned in official documents; in its place appeared expressions such as "human-resources qualification," "vocational training" and

"lifelong qualifications". According to Lima (2008), the vocational paradigm, vocational training, and the ideology of competences are presented as solutions to Portugal's difficult situation as compared to other Northern and Central European countries; this ideology supports the idea that all problems can be solved through these dimensions of adult education. However, this also ignores the objective that calls for "the development of public policies and medium to long-term actions that aim to assure a humanistic, democratic education" (ibid., p. 96). The two existing forms of provision of public adult education remained, although new orientations were passed to RVCC centre teams. For instance, quantitative demands were made, such as imposing on centres that they have 1,000 annual inscriptions – 700 adults in process and 300 adults being certified. There was a clear shift towards the formalisation of processes, involving control, monitoring and assessment of the work achieved by CSOs.

In this period, a significant number of Portuguese CSOs were already conducting RVCC processes and delivering large numbers of EFA courses. This fact was consequently amplified because there appeared to be a change in EU policies. Former programmes that had been crucial in the past, such as LEADER, NOW or EQUAL, ceased, leaving groups without alternatives. In order for Portuguese CSOs to survive, programmes increasingly dependent on the EU would have to investigate other sources of funding. The situation in Portugal can be roughly described within the trend of more and more CSOs delivering services defined through state policy. This has an "influence greatly [on] what civil society organisations can or cannot do. Plus, in some cases concerning public offers of adult education, it is the state that defines the philosophic principles, methodologies, instruments, etc., thus carrying state policy into the concrete field of action" (Lucio-Villegas, Fragoso & Florindo, 2009, p. 174). During certain cycles of adult education evolution, Portuguese CSOs were a fundamental part of this sub-system and, quite significantly, the natural source of critical thought and practices because they focused on resistance and social emancipation. Given this, we may currently be witnessing a major shift in this scenario.

Even though the government changed again in 2005, when the socialist party won the election, existing trends were not altered. New policies were implemented with a renewed efficacy, supported by massive *media* campaigns, which worsened the state of affairs and provoked the emergence of new levels of state control over CSOs. Soon after, the government announced a new programme named the "New Opportunities Initiative" as well as the creation of an agency to guide the implementation of public policies in the sector, the National Agency for Qualifications (ANQ). Arguing that people's qualifications are key to productivity and to improving the economy and labour market, the New Opportunities Initiative redesigned the existing RVCC provision, according to EU lifelong learning orientations. Departing from a network that included 84 centres at the end of 2005, the government rapidly opened up more than 450 new centres and aimed to have one million persons "qualified" by certification by the year 2010. Additionally, the great majority of these new centres were opened in regular secondary schools, which surely must have contributed to the diminishing of unemployment among teachers. This occurred simultaneously to changes in funding policy, which created difficulties for those civil society institutions that promoted centres. Overall, what was supposed to be adult education was given to the formal education system. These very recent events require some reflection:

1. In order to be able to work with adults using adult education principles, philosophy and methodologies, teachers need to cut ties with formal education paradigms, which is difficult to achieve and requires time. Additionally,

schools produce a certain organisational and cultural setting that makes it very hard to build a centre within a school that does not function according to the school's culture and rules (Fragoso, 2007). There is the real danger of transforming RVCC processes into formal school processes.

2. The pressures to certify in RVCC centres are real. This means there is the risk of transforming this system into a certifying factory that produces diplomas in an assembly line fashion.
3. Present public adult education in Portugal is a very narrow system that manages large masses of people. This system appears to be the core of adult education objectives and interests. At the same time, the state created a new area of employment for "new" adult educators and support for the remaining areas of adult education has vanished. Additionally, the EU seems to pay no attention to it. We have mentioned local development as an example of a critical practice guided by popular education; this will prove to be very difficult to continue, if not impossible. As a result, a certain local development we used to believe in is dead (Fragoso, 2009). The same reasoning is valid for many other areas of adult education (now absent) in Portugal, such as literacy courses, basic and general adult education initiatives, socio-cultural animation, civic education initiatives, and so forth.
4. The existence of more than 450 RVCC centres translates to around 7,000 technicians working in this area in Portugal. This means that we suddenly have an immense number of individuals who claim to be working in adult education. The questions raised by this simple matter are diverse: Are we witnessing the birth of a new (hidden) profession in Portugal? How do these individuals perceive their own work and professional identity (as teachers, educators, adult educators or technicians) (Guimarães, 2009a)? Do they see their work merely as an extension of schoolwork? Do they understand the most significant theoretical approaches of adult education (Finger & Asún, 2001)? Do they understand the history of this field of practice and the most evident issues in its social purpose (Martin, 2006)? What are the effects that this causes in the public's perception of the nature of adult education? In short, the present configuration of public adult education in Portugal raises a number of issues that concern us and seem to be important enough to be chosen as future research themes.

The eventual emergence of new professions within the field of lifelong learning will also involve the definition of a variety of technician profiles. Due to the characteristics of the processes of administration and management of the new forms of provision of adult education, most technicians occupy their time with technical procedures and general bureaucratic procedures. Therefore, they are far away from the educational interventions of organic intellectuals or other counter-hegemonic educators; in short, they are not committed to the building of critical reflection – they are lifelong learning technicians, specialists in managing an adult's autonomy in an apolitical form (Guimarães, 2009b).

Even though this situation represents a recent reality, there are already some investigations we can refer to that could help us deeply analyse the issues. In a case study designed to investigate adults' perceptions regarding RVCC processes, Narciso (2010) states that adults are well aware of the process focus in qualifications, employability and the acquisition of competences to better compete in the labour market. She clearly identifies present public adult education with lifelong learning

principles at the foundation of this perception, concluding that a society based on this type of education will never be able to implement an emancipatory culture. Because of this, she calls for the return to "a true adult education, reflective and with its humanistic roots, which never was capable to anchor in our country due to the constant changes and interests of educational policy" (ibid., p. 210).

Amorim (2009) conducted a case study with an aim to discover the impact of certification on several life dimensions of adults who had concluded the RVCC processes. Significant changes occurred in adults willing to continue their studies either in a formal or non-formal context, due to a re-valorisation of education. The second change occurred in a purely personal dimension and related to their self-confidence and self-esteem. However, Barros (2009a, 2009b) suggests that these processes carry a certain "psychologisation" that does not point to the heart of critical and emancipatory adult education. Her research concludes that there is a set of new institutions and educational processes that are imprinting a very deep re-configuration in the sector. This re-shaping, according to Barros (2009b, p. 702), is corroding the pedagogical pillars of what we used to call "adult education". The paradigm of lifelong learning implicates the emergence of an "allomorphic and mutant adult education", which, without significant opposition, is successfully holding back the development of adult educational experiences that aim at social transformation.

It is also important to comment on the issue of employability, a tenant that is central to lifelong learning. RVCC has been reshaped under the idea that it allows adults to obtain a better job or to improve their professional situation. However, Amorim (2009) registered only a few cases in which certified adults improved their professional situation. The number of successful transitions was not significant. Guimarães (2009a) also notes that this promise of a better job, new opportunities for social mobility and a better life should be compared to the real scenario. Structural unemployment emerges as an essential and intentional characteristic of our present macro-policies, and the *promise* might never be fulfilled and, under these conditions, actually becomes *deception.*

Conclusions or envisioning the future of adult education in Portugal

The hegemony of lifelong learning in the international agenda seemed to heavily transform the landscape of what used to be adult education. On one hand, this agenda gives a unique importance to the marginal sub-system of adult education, carrying new conceptions of education and training, learning methods and pedagogical work, theory and action assessment. On the other hand, it frames economic aims and transfers an instrumental character to adult education that is increasingly focused on lifelong qualifications, competitiveness and aiding people's adaption to the labour market and economy.

In the Portuguese case, there was a first attempt at building an adult education sub-system according to the central principles and values of lifelong education. This was particularly clear in the revolutionary period, but also in immediately subsequent years. It is true that during the 1980s, educational policies changed due to the neoliberal shift, but this was done progressively – not as an abrupt change – handing adult education control over to national formal school management structures. The overall outcome was the formerly mentioned emergence of a particular form of mitigated neoliberalism (Afonso, 1998). Plus, at the end of the 1990s and inspired by the Hamburg CONFITEA, Portugal tried to build a public system of adult education that was supposed to keep some of the features of lifelong education.

After some hesitations, the New Opportunities Initiative constitutes, in our opinion without a doubt, the real appearance of lifelong learning philosophy into the concrete field of adult education practice in Portugal. From its inception on, social emancipation, critical action, humanistic, wide-open notions of citizenship or other principles dear to lifelong education have been forgotten. Clear discourses of strict economic growth, competences, qualifications and human resources, and narrow notions of training have been united with the main aim of providing more employable and better trained workers to the Portuguese economy.

Obviously, adult education in Portugal had its life outside the state. Moreover, historical analysis shows us the enormous potentialities of CSOs who, having the right context and opportunities, had always answered to diverse challenges with creativity. In short, CSOs were essential to the construction of the Portuguese democracy and to the development of autonomous and emancipatory educational principles. But currently, CSOs in the field of adult education are being co-opted. This co-optation seems to reverse the possibilities for re-contextualisation and re-interpretation of social emancipation of public policies. In most cases, it transforms CSOs into mere extensions of public services trapped within political agendas that transform social emancipation into training and human resources qualification.

We feel that the present trends are difficult to change in Portugal. Coherence between the major global trends, the political guidance delivered by the EU and the specific orientations of the successive national governments is such that local change will not affect an increasingly coordinated scenario. In this moment, all these key-parts of policy and their concrete implementation are heading in the same direction. In order to have some hope in our ability to transform this situation, we need at least one dissonant note in the tune. Under these conditions, to speak of social emancipation in Portugal today, is to go beyond policy. Examples of social emancipation practices could be found as the exception. While we wait for better days to come, we can at least look hard for good examples of resistance, critical thought and action, and give them a place they deserve. History never dies.

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The role of adult educators towards (potential) participants and their contribution to increasing participation in adult education - insights into existing research

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Abstract

Increasing participation in adult education and addressing certain (disadvantaged) target groups is not only a professed aim of educational politics on both the national and the international level, but also a pedagogical goal. Target group and participant orientation are fundamental concepts in this process. This article discusses results of a recent German research project which examined the perspective of adult educators. The question is raised as to how far adult educators believe that target groups and participant oriented quality and the promotion of competences among adult educators may contribute to an increase in enrolment in further education. By examining the attitudes of adult educators with regard to target groups and participant orientation possible ways of improving target group participation and participant orientation on the institutional level are suggested. Furthermore, the article touches upon research questions, asking how research on potential participants and actual participants could be linked to research on educational programmes and the profession.

Keywords: target group orientation; participant orientation; competences of adult educators; increase in participation in adult education

Introduction and outline

Increase in participation as a pedagogical and political aim

Inclusion represents an important aim in adult education[1], be it under economic, democracy-theoretical, socio-political or subjective aspects (cf. Schreiber-Barsch, 2009), - an aim determined both externally, by the expectations levelled at adult education, and internally, by the self-conception of adult education (cf. Wrana, 2006).

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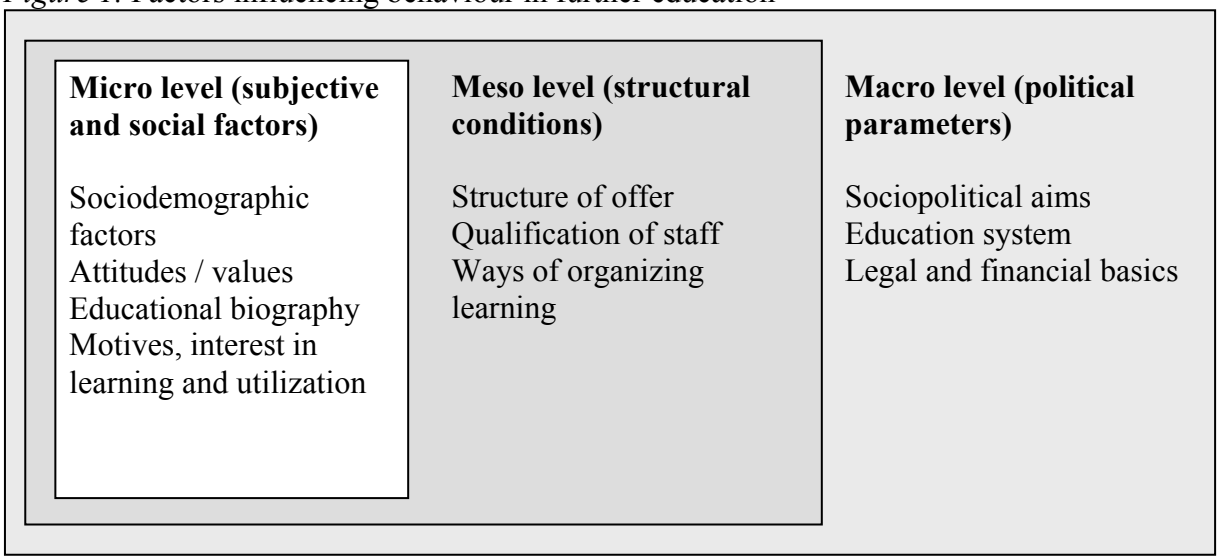
There are three arguments to justify the extension of participation: equity and social justice, pragmatism/expediency and national self-interest (McGivney, 1990). However, this set target has not been achieved to the extent expected, as is shown by the results of research on participation in adult education (on the Adult Education Survey see von Rosenbladt and Bilger, 2008; Eurostat, 2009). The most powerful predictor of participation remains the previous level of education (McGivney, 2001). This is also the case internationally.

Increasing participation in adult education represents a great challenge, both on the German and European level: "Against the background of the demographic challenges with which all European countries are confronted, increasing the participation rate is equally a common and key mission for all" (Egetenmeyer & Strauch, 2008, p. 16; see also Alpine, 2008).

Influencing factors on the participation in adult education

Participation in further education is influenced by different factors, such as motivational, socio-demographic or context-related factors (cf. Brüning, 2002; Wittpoth, 2006). On the micro level these are subjective and socio-demographic factors, on the meso level we have the financial and content-related characteristics of the educational programmes and on the macro level the structural framework conditions (ibid.) (figure below). Educational barriers are not restricted to a single level; instead they gradually build upon one another, thus possibly even enhancing their compulsive character. The levels are linked to one another, but their interaction is difficult to verify empirically. The meso level is also perceived differently by individuals because of different premises on the micro level.

Figure 1. Factors influencing behaviour in further education



Source: Brüning, 2002, p. 19

Factors on the meso level: professionalism and quality

A high standard of educational programmes and courses offered in further education must be ensured in order to reduce social inequality and promote excellence (Tippelt, von Hippel, Reich & Reupold, 2007). Likewise, in order to strengthen equity and good learning results (EU Memorandum, 2006), the promotion of lifelong learning among all groups of individuals is essential.

On the one hand optimization of quality means an increase in the quality of the programmes, the actual realization of these programmes and the results achieved on courses in further education. The importance of the promotion of quality in further education by focusing on the quality of the staff (Committee of the European Communities, 2007), by stressing the capacity of the "lifelong learning workforce" (Schuller & Watson, 2009, p. 8) is indisputable. Professionalism is defined as "masterly professionality, as an indicator of high-quality work" (Nittel, 2000, p. 15) and thus examines the level of professional action. The linking of quality issues with attempts at professionalization and professionality development can be observed since the 1990s (Gieseke, 1997). To this is added the question of a possible contribution of quality and professionality to an increase in enrolment in further education. Professionalization is mostly analyzed within the context of quality development. Aside from its rather objective aspects, quality also has subjective aspects; in this case one could speak of "appropriate quality", the appropriateness of which is determined by the learner (Ehses & Zech, 2002, p. 118), which refers to target groups and participant orientation. In German also the terms "Adressaten" and "Adressatenorientierung" are differentiated, but they're not translatable in English to express the same meaning. "Adressaten" in German means all potential participants, it's slightly different from target group. Participant orientation means the orientation of the adult educator towards the individual learner (his wants, learning biography etc.) during the course. It's the micro-didactic equivalent to target group orientation which refers to the macro-didactic level.

The adult educators (not only the full-time regular members of planning staff, but also and above all the many freelance extra personnel [course instructors and coaches] and also the administrative staff) in the institutions of further education play a crucial role in the construction of quality (Buiskool, Broek, van Lakerveld, Zarifis & Osborne, 2010) – also with regard to profile formation – as they constitute a direct interface with (potential) participants (Tippelt, Reich, von Hippel, Barz & Baum, 2008).

Different studies revealed the central role of the course tutor as a quality factor from the point of view of the participants: technically, didactically and methodologically competent course tutors are the crucial criterion for quality; only then do criteria such as low fees or premises come into play (Tippelt et al., 2008; Loibl, 2003). In-service training courses for staff in further education are of great importance to the professionalization of micro-, meso-, and macro-didactical fields of activity in adult education and thus to the promotion of quality. The realization of lifelong learning presupposes specific competences of adult educators: "Only through an orientation of the teachers' perspective towards the learning adults, their potentials, their capabilities, their interests and towards the demands they are trying to meet, can lifelong learning be realized as a cultural standard." (Emminger, Gieseke & Nuissl, 2001, p. 190) In-service training for those working in further education can be considered as part of a strategy for the promotion of competences among teachers in further education and therefore part of the process of lifelong learning among adults.[2]

Research questions and overview

This article – which discusses results of a recent research project, in order to link them to further research questions – focuses on the meso level and therefore on professional activity, on the competences of adult educators and in this above all on target group and participant orientation as professional action. The article raises the question of how strongly adult educators believe that target group- and participant oriented quality and the promotion of competences among adult educators might contribute to an increase in enrolment in further education.

The focus is thus on the adult educators as central agents in the process of the promotion of lifelong learning among adults. Further training for teachers in adult education is thus not an end in itself, instead further training is meant to improve the quality of the structuring of learning contexts through the competence of adult educators and thus to help reach different target groups. In this way the aims of adult education (promotion of individual competences, economic innovation, social integration and cultural participation) can be better achieved (Tippelt & von Hippel, 2010). By examining the attitudes of teachers in adult education towards target group- and participant orientation possible ways of improving quality on the institutional level are shown too and at the same time the scope of action on the societal level is discussed.

The second section outlines the state of the art in research in this field and the major lines of reasoning in the scientific debate. Here, factors influencing participation are described and target group - and participant-orientation are discussed as important competences for teachers in adult education. The third section outlines the methods and structure of the research project. Selected results of this research project are presented in the fourth section, the focus here being on target group- and participant orientation as a means of increasing enrolment in further education from the perspective of the adult educators. In the concluding section the results are summarized and research desiderata are described.

Latest developments in research and major trends in the recent debate

Definition of terms

Those people targeted by adult education may be considered target groups, insofar as they can be depicted by common socio-structural features. Those taking part in a course may be considered participants (Faulstich & Zeuner, 1999). A target group is a construction, a classification according to a prominent feature (for example age) (Siebert, 2000). Participant and target group orientation means that the planning and the structuring of the micro- and macro-didactical fields of action is oriented by the target group and participant, by his or her needs and interests (see regarding problems of needs assessments, whose needs should be addressed?, Sork, 2005 and regarding the principle of learner-identified needs as central for programme planning theory, Wilson, 2005). In both cases the emphasis is on the anticipation of learning preconditions in the broadest sense; participant orientation is practiced on the didactic level of action constituted by the implementation of educational programmes (micro-didactic), whereas target group orientation is practiced on the level of programme planning (macro-didactic) (cf. Tietgens, 1992). Target group and participant orientation figure among the most important didactic principles in adult education because learning by adults always comprises follow-up learning (Siebert, 2000). Whereas in the past target-group orientation focused on addressing problem or fringe groups, nowadays universal target group orientation is intended. This is based on the insight that all social groups – both those actively taking part in education and those distant from education – have specific expectations regarding further education and have thus to be addressed differently.

Theories and models on factors influencing behaviour in further education

Research on the question of how target group and participant orientation can contribute to an increase in participation in further education is still rather sketchy. On the whole,

the question of what could contribute to an increase in enrolment in further education is difficult to answer empirically because factors of influence are to be found on several levels (micro-, meso-, and macro-level) and their share in contributing to the development is hard to circumscribe. The different studies (for example Eurostat, 2009; Silva, Cahalan & Lacierno-Paquet, 1998) operationalize motives for and obstacles on the way to further education in different ways. Often the individual levels are not separated from each other. Moreover, the usual questionnaires can only explore the attitudes and perceptions of target groups and participants – the influence of course offers is much more difficult to measure. Thus the European Adult Education Survey has described various areas as obstacles which are also related to the perception of the meso level by the potential participants (e.g. conflicts with work schedule (-> time structures), too expensive (-> fixing a price), no facilities at a reachable distance (-> regional structures); Eurostat, 2009). At the same time this example demonstrates the obvious connection between (perception of) the meso level and the micro level. Furthermore, we are lacking a theory of participation in further education which would integrate all the different approaches in research and in theory building. With regard to regulating agents in participation in further education, Wittpoth (2006) calls this the problem of "big questions, small answers" (p. 53). Evaluative studies on the financing of further education for instance, reveal the difficulty of reaching the disadvantaged through financial instruments (cf. Dohmen, 2005; Ehmann, 2003). Research on target groups (cf. von Hippel & Tippelt, 2010) describes the motives and deterring factors on the side of the potential participants; research on the social environment also describes concrete expectations regarding a differentiation according to milieu that a lecturer must fulfil. Research on target group in a way offers the complementary perspective to that of the adult educator with regard to the question of what teachers in adult education can contribute to an increase in participation in further education. However, we do not know of any studies examining the perspective of the adult educators. But it is important to examine these perspectives because they give information on the limits and potentials of the contribution that could be made by institutions of adult education as a whole, because it is the adult educators who determine the didactic structure.

There are a lot of complex conceptual frameworks concerning adult education participation or participatory behaviour in general from different disciplines like economics, social psychology, leisure and recreational studies and time allocation, adult education and consumer behaviour (especially of the 1970s and 1980s) (Silva et al., 1998). Alongside subjective and social factors, the different concepts partially integrate structural conditions as external factors, but generally not the specific role of the images of adults, the focus tending to be more on social factors as well as attitudes. A common model to explain non-participation is the concept of learning barriers (Cross, 1981). Learning barriers are classified into situational (e.g. lack of childcare), institutional (regarding the providers of organized learning) and dispositional (attitudes to self and learning). The current Bounded Agency Model (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009) examines more of the interaction between the macro and micro levels, only marginally touching upon the meso level. Individuals have a degree of agency with regard to their learning behaviours, but a "bounded agency", because they are bounded by structures, contexts and features of the self that restrain choices (Salling-Olesen, 2004). The model includes structural factors and analyzes the interaction between these and individuals' dispositions. It highlights "that welfare state regimes can affect a person's capability to participate through the way it constructs structural conditions and helps individuals overcome both structurally and individually based barriers" (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009, p. 203). Henry and Basile (1994) integrate the instructor into their model as one

of several course attributes. The only model which explicitly examines the matching of teacher, institution and participant is Boshier's Congruence Model (1973), which was empirically verified and which analyzes participation and dropout. It integrates subsequent evaluation of teaching quality by means of a semantic differential. Generally speaking however, previous models are unable to adequately assess from an empirical perspective the qualifications and the competences of adult educators (which are evident in the participant and target group oriented micro- and macro-didactic organization of courses offered) as factors of influence.

One must conclude that at present we have no complete, empirically verified und easily verifiable theory of behaviour in further education: "Innumerable studies have been conducted and many theories developed, but the understanding and prediction of adult learner behaviour has not progressed significantly." (Garrison, 1987, p. 212).

The following section seeks to give an insight into the state of research on factors related to the micro level (subjective and social factors) and the meso level (competences, quality, target group and participant orientation).

Subjective and social factors

Since the beginning of the last century, research on target groups (in German: "Adressatenforschung") has examined the social conditions for (non-)participation in adult education; research on participants on the other hand, focuses instead on the individual learning preconditions and motives (cf. Faulstich & Zeuner, 1999). The central topic of research on target groups is the question of equality and inequality in adult education (cf. Bremer, 2007).

Research on potential participants and participants constitutes an important part of research on further education. The adult is at the centre of this line of research which examines the interests and motives of adults in choosing courses in further education, their expectations with regard to organized learning contexts and possible barriers. Research on potential participants analyzes, from a subject-oriented point of view, subjective and group-related perspectives with regard to lifelong learning, typical interests and deterring factors in further education, the different conceptions of education and individual informal learning. Thus it differentiates potential participants. However, in addition to the task of differentiating potential participants and of addressing them in specific ways, there is also the challenge of integrating different target groups and of offering contexts of experience suitable for these diverse groups. The perspectives and concepts of research on adult learners have become much more diversified during the last twenty years. Influential concepts are those of research on specific target groups (cf. Schiersmann, 1999), socio-demographic research on non-participants and participants such as the German Reporting System Further Education/Adult education Survey or statistics on adult education centres (cf. von Rosenbladt & Bilger, 2008), on attitudes towards adult education (e.g. Blunt & Yang, 2002; Reich-Claassen, 2010), research on biographies (cf. Nittel & Marotzki, 1997; Seitter, 1999), and research on social milieus (cf. Vester, Oertzen, Geiling, Hermann & Müller, 1993; Bremer, 2007; Barz & Tippelt, 2007). Empirical research consistently shows group-specific differences in participation in further education. Central factors of influence on participation in further education are the socio-demographic features age, school and professional education (Boudard & Rubenson, 1994, 2003), occupation, job position, gender and nationality, as well as regional aspects (from Rosenbladt & Bilger, 2008; Eurostat, 2009). Participation in further education is not only influenced by socio-demographic factors, the extent to which the work place promotes learning also plays an important role for the development of learning competences, indeed the work place can

be seen as a "second chance" to reduce disadvantages, but may also increase these if it does not promote learning (cf. Baethge & Baethge-Kinsky, 2004, p. 140). The continued importance of the vertical models detailing circumstances of life, including socio-demographic features such as education, job status and income, are enhanced by the horizontal models depicting lifeworld and milieu-theoretical differentiations (cf. Hradil, 2001). Next to the aforementioned socio-demographic factors some aspects related to motivation and attitude – which in turn are closely related to socio-cultural features – are among the obstacles on the way to further education. Generally speaking people with little school education obviously have more trouble finding their way into further education.

Conditions on the meso level, particularly target group and participant orientation

In dealing with the question of the relevance of target group- and participant orientation to further education, points of contact between research on target groups and on participants as well as between research on programmes and on the profession must be taken into consideration. Research on target groups and on participants investigates the expectations of adult learners, which is necessary for the professional activity of adult educators when planning educational programmes.

With regard to partially decreasing participant numbers and a slightly lower or consistent enrolment in further education in Germany during the last few years (von Rosenbladt & Bilger, 2008) – which is merely in midfield from an international perspective (OECD, 2002) and continues to be strongly dependent on the previous educational level – and with regard to a sometimes high quota of cancelled courses, planners are uncertain about possible reasons. At the same time they are required to increase participation in further education, whilst the regular state subsidies for institutions of further education are decreasing (cf. DIE, 2008). For instance, adult educators value the target group approach of social milieus (Barz & Tippelt, 2007) as a way of increasing their security when planning programmes, their ability to react specifically to interests and barriers in further education and to analyze their previous work (cf. Tippelt et al., 2008). In this context, knowledge of the expectations of different social milieus with regard to offers in further education can be of help in promoting quality development. Here the aim is not the fulfilment of individual demands stated by single participants, but rather an orientation towards target groups on the basis of target-group profiles. Thus, to give an example, the milieu-oriented educational programmes offered within the framework of the project "ImZiel" allowed gaining from 20 to 60 percent new participants (i.e. participants who had up until then never attended the respective institution), depending on the institution and the respective courses offered (Tippelt et al., 2008). Target-group orientation is to be considered one aspect of quality and may lead to recruiting new participants.

A central implication of the results concerning participation in further education in Germany could be a significantly stronger orientation towards target groups. Further education can only create a compensating and equalizing effect if instructors work target group- and participant-oriented by taking into account pluralistic desiderata and expectations of different social groups (e.g. age groups, educational groups, migrant groups, social groups, different living situations and life phases) in planning and designing different pedagogical fields of activity (Tippelt & von Hippel, 2007). More pluralistic target groups shaped by demographic change can only be reached through an improved target group oriented planning of further education.

A uniform and universally valid profile of competences needed for working in adult education does not exist (Kraft, 2006), different technical and pedagogical

competences are required. The expertise required in the various European countries in order to ensure certain standards of quality is different, as are the qualifications required (initial education and training of adult educators) for further education (cf. Lifelonglearning UK, 2007; Milana, 2010; Nuissl & Egetenmeyer, 2009; Sava & Lupou, 2009). At the moment key competences and competence profiles (consisting of activities, context, competences) are being discussed on a European level (Buiskool et al., 2010).

In the following, target group and participant orientation is focused upon as an important competence of adult educators. This can be regarded as a cross-section competence which is relevant to just about all the micro- and macro-didactic activities of an adult educator.

Participant orientation on the micro-didactic level of the course implies that the teacher takes the experiences and interests of the participants as starting points and adapts the didactical methods to them. Target group orientation does not mean that the adult learners´ every wish is anticipated, but instead it implies finding out what both sides consider to be useful. Here the "search movements" (the German term "Suchbewegungen" was coined by Hans Tietgens) on the part of the target groups and on the part of those planning the educational programmes are addressed. The adult educators try to identify the needs and wants of the target groups. The potential participants also try to identify the appropriate programme for them. So both are "searching": whether or in what way organized further learning by adults actually takes place depends on whether the search movements by those who have more or less distinct learning needs and by those who want to mediate learning opportunities do in fact coincide. "What, on the surface of operational performances, appears as the relation between offer and demand is, from an anthropological point of view, to be understood as a search movement." (Tietgens, 1992, p. 127) Adult education materializes through a "concordance of expectations" (Tietgens, 1992, p. 67). The aim is to achieve conformity of supply and demand. The search movement by those offering training programmes is thus interpretative and it is also based on the emphatic anticipation of the potential learners´ expectations and accordingly on target group orientation.

Target group orientation is a central component of professional pedagogical-didactic activity in institutions of adult education. When planning educational programmes, adult educators must mediate between the three conditional factors of social demand, needs of the learners and pedagogical tasks or organizational aims (cf. Siebert, 2000, cf. also von Hippel, 2007); activity on the level of programme planning is thus an action of alignment and refers to processes of co-ordination (cf. Gieseke, 2006). In this, knowledge of the potential participants expectations, as it is provided by research on target groups, is important in programme planning, but it must be weighed against other conditions and expectations. Programme planning can thus be described as a field of tension created by potentially divergent forces and interests; in this, the adult educator must be able to mediate between different expectations and intentions (cf. Cervero & Wilson, 1994). Although target group orientation is a crucial value in adult education, this is also about creating a need, about fitting search movements and not purely about client orientation.

Finally one could say that target group orientation is an important competence among adult educators because it enables them to anticipate the expectations of the potential learners (and participant orientation on the level of the courses carried out). It is crucial to the professional search movement performed by adult educators in the didactic structuring of educational programmes. Target group orientation is thus also an important prerequisite for a differentiated approach to different target groups, be they

groups actively partaking in education or educationally disadvantaged groups. It is a component of the quality of adult education.

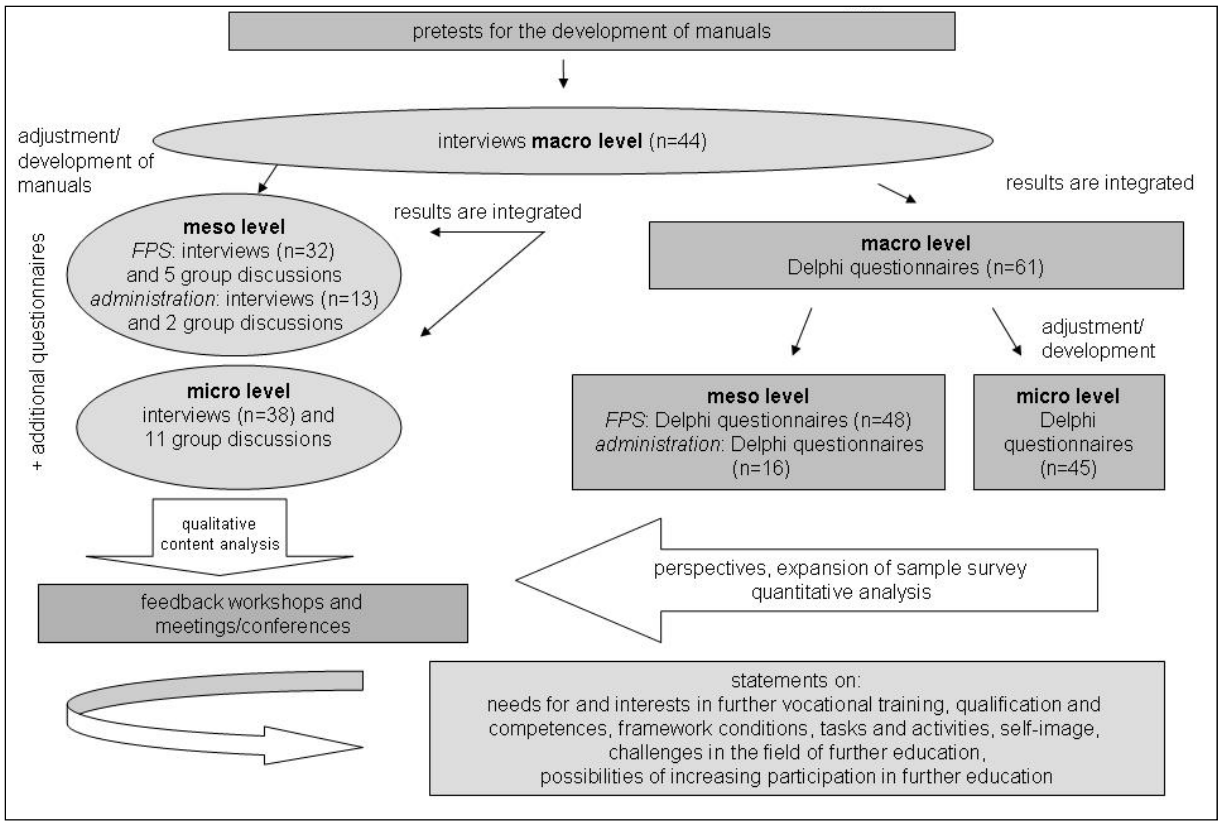
Methods and design

The results explained in the following are derived from the research project "KomWeit" (Increase in Enrolment in Further Education and Improvement of Equal and Just Opportunities through the Promotion of Competences among adult educators) (von Hippel & Tippelt, 2009).[3] In total, 127 interviews and 18 group discussions were conducted on the macro level (association management), meso level (full-time planning staff, administrative staff) and micro level (course tutors). The micro level comprises the course tutors, who constitute a heterogeneous group (e.g. with regard to their occupational status or to their subject-related training). They mostly work as teachers on the micro-didactic level. Traditionally, on the meso level, we have full-time planning staff (FPS) (also programme directors) employed by the respective institutions and whose work also comprises planning and making arrangements (meso- and macro-didactic level) (Nittel, 2000). In addition the administrative staff are also increasingly taking on pedagogical responsibilities such as counselling. On the macro level there are the heads of associations on the federal or the Laender level, the experts on further vocational training for adult educators on the level of the associations, the management level of individual institutions, as well as representatives of science. The institutional structure of adult education in Germany is varied. A high number of different institutions offer adult education programmes in Germany (like companies/employers, the community adult education centres (Volkshochschulen), (vocational) associations, trade unions, chambers of industry and commerce, commercial training institutions, churches, colleges and universities) (Nuissl & Pehl, 2004). In the project different institutions were included like the adult education centres, churches, trade unions and in-house training organizations.

The project was above all characterized by a linking of different perspectives. The research project discussed competences of adult educators and their contribution to an increase in participation in further education.

Within the framework of a method triangulation (Flick, 2004), the interviews were furthermore linked with a survey on the basis of questionnaires, carried out within the framework of a Delphi process (cf. Häder, 2002). On the basis of an iterative research process and through the combination of different methods, a deeper understanding of the research subject was achieved (figure below).

Figure 2. Research design KomWeit study



Source: von Hippel & Tippelt, 2009

Due to the theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1996) (e.g. selection of interviewees according to institution, age, period of employment, discipline, pedagogical/educational background etc.), the surveys carried out in the course of the KomWeit project are of an explorative nature, not statistically representative, but rather representative with regard to content. The aim of these studies is to draw general conclusions from specific examples by means of interpretation, i.e. not to reveal the percentage, but rather to uncover typical patterns. Both the group discussions and the interviews were transcribed verbatim and were then coded and evaluated, using the MAXqda programme (a programme for the computer-aided analysis of qualitative data). This procedure, combined with the method of reviewing the coding by means of the intercoder reliability examination (up to .94), contributes to the quality of the qualitative research (Mayring, 2002). The inter-subjective comprehensibility is therefore increased and the analysis can be documented, thus better meeting the quality criteria of qualitative research, such as procedure documentation and regulated evaluation in particular (Mayring, 2002).

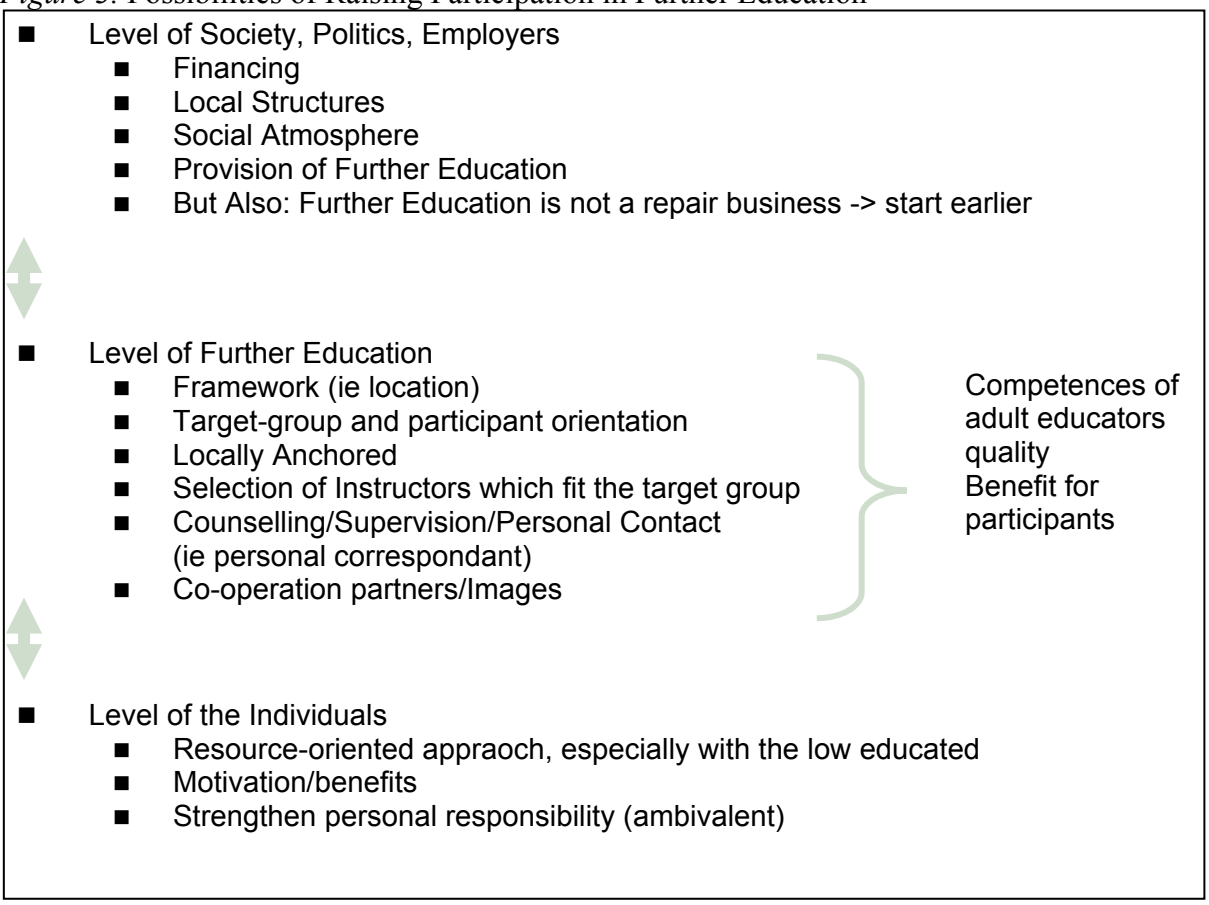
The present article analyzes, from the perspective of the adult educators, to what extent the competence of teachers in further education can contribute to an increase in participation in further education. What adult educators understand by target group orientation was also examined in this context and whether they consider reaching target groups an important topic.

Results and discussion

Various factors and their interaction

From the perspective of the responding adult educators the promotion of competences amongst their occupational group is necessary; however an increase in participation in further education cannot be reached through this alone. Only in combination with one another can the three levels (society, politics, employers; further education; individuals) (see illustration below and 1.2) lead to an increase in further education.

Figure 3. Possibilities of Raising Participation in Further Education



Source: von Hippel & Tippelt, 2009

On the level of society, politics, and economics, the interviewees consider it to be of great importance to maintain funding as well as structures ensuring closeness to the place of residence and to strengthen the social climate in favour of further education. Without financial support it is impossible to organize educational programmes for those distant from education, - the cost of which cannot be covered by fees. Whether the personal financial responsibility of the individual should be relied upon more strongly is being discussed quite controversially in this context. The quality of institutions of further education can only be ensured through financial resources and resources of time. A decrease in public funding may lead to a dangerous "individualization of problems that have not been solved on the educational-political or institutional level (e.g. the reaching of the "disadvantaged")" (Meisel, 2003, p. 107). It must be questioned "whether, in the long run, the breadth and depth of the educational programmes offered as well as their accessibility can be ensured in face of decreasing public funding" (ibid.). Particularly the programmes for the educationally disadvantaged are cost-intensive

(Meisel, 2003). If one looks at the resource that is time, the intensification of the work load among adult educators on the meso level is immediately obvious; according to them, they do not have enough time for quality management or for long-term planning. However, in order to be able to reach target groups, surveys on their needs/needs assessments (Sork, 2005), long-term in-depth strategies as well as concepts of public relations work deduced from these are required:

> The request that we should contribute to the integration of people into the different sectors of society is distinctly aimed at people with migration background, but also at handicapped people or at the socially disadvantaged. We have to find out where they can be reached; for this, however, we basically lack a sort of general concept which would create a link with cooperation partners; what we are talking about is not only a single lecture or course but, rather, a system, that we are in dire need of (FPS, Protestant adult education).

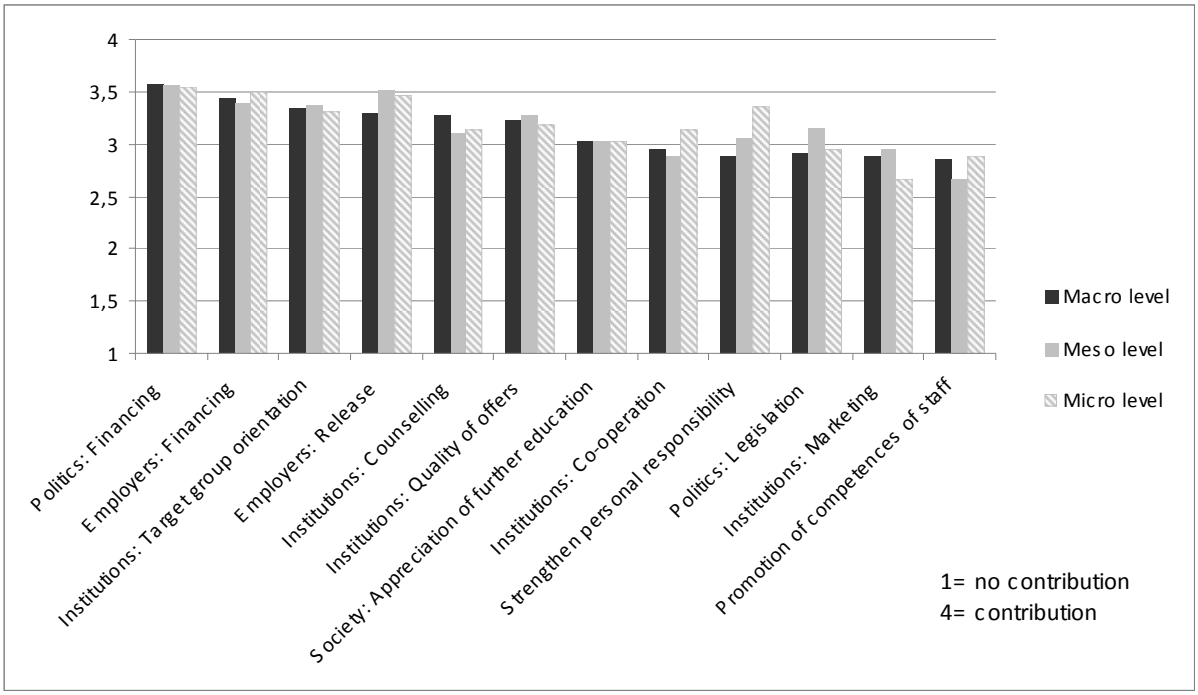
Just as the adult learner need free time to be able to learn, the adult educators need time to organize and structure learning contexts. The adult educators also need time resources in order to be able to react to new challenges and demands brought forth by the target groups:

> You simply have to take the time to think about what people really need. Not so much just sell the course and then something has been completed again but, rather, to create a bond (FPS, folk high schools/adult education centres - FHS).

Here the professional search movement of the adult educator is called upon in order to empathetically anticipate the adult learners´ expectations. Counselling and individual guidance have already been mentioned as important strategies for reaching target groups; in order to fulfil these tasks, qualified personnel and sufficient time during the working day are needed.

The following diagram, taken from the written Delphi survey, substantiates the importance of the framework conditions; thus financing is attributed the greatest significance in increasing participation in further education, followed directly by target-group orientation, the releasing of employees for further training, counselling, and the quality of the programmes offered. This again shows that the institutions´ contribution is to be seen in the quality of the educational programmes and in (potential) participant orientation (which includes counselling).

Figure 4. Impact on the increase in participation in further education – Perspective of the different levels



Data basis: macro = 59, meso = 48, micro = 43

Competences of adult educators and their contribution to increasing participation in further education

According to adult educators, target group- and participant orientation on the institutional level could contribute to the quality of further education and thus simultaneously to an increase in participation in further education. The competence of adult educators – which must be ensured through training and further education - is a crucial factor in the quality of the educational programmes offered and with regard to the benefit the participants might draw from these programmes. Institutional and individual level belong together: institutions of further education must start from the interests and the benefit-related expectations of the potential learners. The local embedding of the institutions and thus the closer proximity on the spot are regarded as important criteria: ”Local community adult education establishments are best suited for providing basic facilities” (EAEA, 2006, p. 58). For instance, potential participants can better be reached through programmes which orient themselves according to the target groups´ lifeworld. All in all, the interviewees show a strong tendency to apply concepts which orient themselves according to the target groups´ lifeworld, such as concepts of social environment, lifeworld or social milieu. The interest of many experts in these concepts is grounded in their wish to find new approaches to reaching specific target groups – especially disadvantaged groups. However, trying to reach the disadvantaged is not the only challenge facing associations of further education today; they are also confronted with the much more general question of how they can work in a target group-oriented way and address specific target groups without simultaneously excluding others.

Each of the occupational groups interviewed saw opportunities for contributing to the development of quality for their own sphere of responsibility. This contribution can refer to both the “quality of education” and the “quality of the organization of the

framework conditions of education" (Ehses & Zech, 1999, p. 20). Administrative staff for instance, mentioned the choice of the appropriate rooms for the respective target groups as a good method, the planning staff on the other hand, listed the selection of well-suited course tutors, which in turn presupposes that they have enough time at their hands to really get to know and to counsel them. The course tutors in turn, saw their possible contribution to quality in a participant-oriented way of working, didactically and methodologically tuned to the respective target groups. Target-group-oriented marketing too is considered to be of significance. The interviewees regard participant orientation as a particularly important factor in promoting continuous participation in further education, for instance when migrants have had positive experiences with specific lecturers. Co-operation with different partners is perceived to be an important building block in jointly reaching target groups which a single institution could not reach, maybe because of its image. In order to better reach target groups distant from education, new co-operations are started and an aimed network of activities. Another common practice is a "compensatory cross-subsidization" within an institution, allowing the financing of educational programmes for disadvantaged groups with profitable courses for educationally active groups. The associations differ with regard to their starting positions and their strategies in the field of target group orientation.

The *Volkshochschulen* (adult education centres) as well as the confessional and political suppliers of further education are faced with the challenge of meeting their task of "reaching each and everyone". Their interest in target group differentiation is above all due to their wanting to reach new target groups – both disadvantaged and educationally active ones. In this context the question arises of how the respective image of an association or institution can be developed in the best possible inclusive way. A different picture presents itself in the case of the career-oriented associations of further education: their target groups are much more clearly defined and they consider the relation between supply and demand to be a "natural match", as one of the experts put it. From their point of view the fitting of target group and association or the letter's basic qualifying task is much more clear-cut. Their aim is to "better" reach their target groups which are already present in the institutions or companies.

Counselling and personal guidance are considered to be an important strategy by the majority of the interviewees. This is of relevance not only to those close to education, but also and above all to those distant from education:

> They need institutions that go after them! That actually call and tell them: Hello. We are here! And then someone would have to go to them and say: That's what I do. And wouldn't you like to join in?" (course tutor, Catholic adult education).

> If we are 'carers' then that also means that we have to give support, to teach how to learn, and that holds even for very private situations when someone is confronted with a whole pile of problems; we have increasingly become 'carers' […]. [Someone] who offers counselling, who, due to his specialized knowledge, his knowledge of the market, is able to give appropriate support to a client who is willing to get further education, to be a sort of guideline, a red thread. (FPS, chamber of industry and commerce [IHK])

In order to do this kind of counselling and guiding work however, one has to be technically and (socio-) educationally qualified.

Thus, from the point of view of the adult educators, target group and participant oriented quality is the central starting point for a possible increase in participation in further education. From the perspective of the participants too, the adult educators are the crucial criterion of quality (see above). The competences of the adult educators –

and thus the quality of the programmes of further education – are, according to most interviewees, the decisive factor leading to a second or further attendance on courses in further education (especially among those distant from education), - the first attendance is, so they think, more strongly decided by the framework conditions. Thus, the institutional level can influence a person's attitude towards further education – which has been shaped by earlier experiences made in further education – through the quality of the courses attended.

If one takes a closer look at the data, it becomes apparent that, throughout all levels, the qualitative and quantitative results reveal no verifiable differences according to the interviewees´ age or duration of employment or to their vocational qualifications or pedagogical background. All in all the adult educators are quite homogeneous in their perception of their contribution to an increase in participation in further education. The statements show that they do not consider themselves to be the only ones responsible for or able to bring about an increase in participation in further education. Instead their perspective reveals different approaches aimed at improving target group and participant orientation and quality on the institutional level whilst at the same time pointing to the importance of public funding and of the employers´ financial support and willingness to release employees.

Outlook

In summary one can say that adult educators consider their personal competences – and amongst these target group and participant orientation - an important component of a strategy aimed at increasing participation in further education. However, it is their opinion that the institutions are not able to achieve this on their own: the funding of further education by society and by the employers is a major prerequisite. As regards secondary contact and withdrawal/retention can be added, they consider the quality of the courses attended – which are to a great extent shaped by the adult educators – the decisive factor. From the point of view of the interviewees, target group-related competences will even gain in importance, for instance individual learning counselling and guidance within the framework of the implementation of lifelong learning.

Although the majority of the full-time planning staff are aware of their responsibility, they do not have enough time to draw up concepts for reaching target groups because of decreasing public funds (similar in other European countries, Karlsson, 2005) and the ensuing increase in their work load. The decrease in public funding and the increase in competitive procedures in the acquisition of funds for projects have led to an increase in the time and the resources needed for administrative processes, thus frequently impeding long-term strategies and perspectives for the commitment of target groups. Additionally, there is the danger that only target groups with money to spend will be addressed[4] because the set target of inclusion and equal opportunities partly contradicts the market principle of efficiency (Heuer, 2003) and because the social profitability is opposed by the financial profitability (Meisel & Nuissl, 1995). This could only be counteracted by stronger public sponsoring of institutions. All in all, a debate on aims and target groups – especially in publicly funded further education – is required on both the social and the institutional level.

What is astonishing when looking at the results is that the adult educators questioned see the macro level as being the most influential, whereas the models for participation in further education mainly focus on the micro level.

This article focused on an analysis of the perspective of the adult educators. It would be desirable for further research to empirically examine the impact of the interaction of different aspects, such as financing on the social level, target group and

participant orientation at the institutional level, motives and deterring factors at the individual level on the participation in further education. We are missing a model of participation which is able to include the meso level in a differentiated way. Two possible paths of research could help close this gap: on the one hand analysis of regional course offers including the programme planning action behind and on the other research on target groups which would include attitudes toward the meso level more than previously. Both paths of research should be combined with regard to layout and results. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches would be another possibility. Furthermore there should be a model for differentiating between first and second contact – this is an important conclusion to draw from the results at hand. Furthermore, the question of how adult educators deal with heterogeneous expectations – also of the potential learners – should be investigated. Thus professional research and research on target groups could be linked more closely in research projects of a multi-perspective and multidimensional design.

Notes

[1] Further education is defined as consisting of intentional educational activity which someone may engage in after a first phase of education, followed by a job or the beginning of a family. The present article focuses on non-formal and formal activity in institutions of adult education.

[2] In Germany access to the occupational field of adult education is not restricted. The lecturers usually work freelance and are only partly pedagogically qualified, whereas the planning members of staff, employed by the institutions, more often are pedagogically qualified, sometimes through diploma courses of studies in adult education implemented during the 1970s.

[3] The project was sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) from May 2007 until May 2009. Main cooperation partners were the member associations of the Council of Further Education – KAW.

[4] Thus, for instance, the institutions of further education surveyed by the *wbmonitor* instead focus on target groups with money to spend, such as executives, as their future target groups to be reached (cf. DIE/BIBB 2009); within the framework of the project "ImZiel" too, most of the suppliers focused on modern social groups with good purchasing power in their pilot programs (cf. Tippelt et al. 2008).

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On the incommensurability of adult education researchers' worlds

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Abstract

The article consists of two parts. The first part shows how the idea of lifelong learning turns away from an earlier understanding of adult education, replacing it with a new vision of learning activities as natural processes of participation in culture. For adult education as a research field this means a paradigmatic shift that is radical, thus difficult and costly. A transition from teaching to learning lays the foundations for a discourse that implicates a reconceptualisation of the most basic theoretical categories and methodological competences of research practices.

This change of leading research paradigm creates a situation that each discipline finds difficult. Analysis presented in the second part of the paper describes the situation among Polish researchers in the field of the education of adults. Describing the divided research community, the author emphasizes the difficult position of young researchers and proposes a typology of their attitudes towards their professional roles and academic career.

Keywords: adult learning; paradigmatic community; paradigmatic shift; adult education research

Introduction

It was Kuhn (2000), who introduced the notion of "incommensurability" to the methodology of science to signify incomparability and the mutual untranslatability of scientific theories created within diverse paradigms. Here I use this concept as a metaphor that, in my opinion, is useful in describing the present state of affairs in scholarly reflection on the education of adults.

Today the discipline of the education of adults possesses neither theoretical continuity nor a coherent system of knowledge. On the contrary, the discipline seems cracked and fragmented into separate and incompatible research areas and the community of adult education scholars are torn between research paradigms that reflect

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competing intellectual traditions. In other words, theorists and researchers dwell in distinct and mutually irreconcilable worlds. One can evaluate this situation negatively and put effort into making a long list of potential damages to the integrity of the scholarly discipline, appealing to emotions and calling for epistemological unity. One can also see this situation as natural, indeed unavoidable in the process of scientific development. Opting for the latter perspective as potentially more constructive, I therefore suggest defining the situation as one of a paradigmatic turn and a shift "from teaching to learning."

Competing paradigms

Drawing on Kuhn's classic view, one can define paradigm as a set of culturally grounded beliefs shared in a given time by a community of scholars, concerning the reality under study and methodologically legitimate ways of exploring it. This definition, selected for the present argument, emphasises world-view, community-making and regulative aspects of a paradigm. Perhaps the most significant dimension of any paradigm is a set of unspoken ontological assumptions about reality. Gouldner (1970) argues that they usually constitute emotionally loaded cognitive tools, shaped early in the process of socialization to a given culture and built deeply into our mental structures.

These assumptions constitute a specific view or a perspective on reality, bounded by a system of conceptual categories recognized by the community. Each perspective embraces and allows us to see a part of reality, but does not reveal its other elements. These other parts are excluded from the purview and removed beyond the disciplinary research field. The cognitive mechanism outlined here enables the construction of an object of cognition and creates an epistemic community (Manterys, 1997) characterised by sameness of beliefs regarding the real. As Mannheim (1936) rightly put it:

> We belong to a group not only because we are born into it, not merely because we profess to belong to it, nor finally because we give it our loyalty and allegiance, but primarily because we see the world and certain things in the world the way it does (i.e. in terms of the meaning of the group in question) (p. 21-22).

Up until late 1980s Polish adult education researchers constituted a well-integrated epistemic community. They believed in an institutionalised system of formal adult education and, without reservation, accepted the underlying idea of continuous education. They argued that formal qualifications were a major component of human capital and contributed to development, progress and common welfare.

One must admit that this belief had some rationale. Indeed, the industrial orientation to social-economic development systematically improved living conditions in material and economic terms, by making social relations more egalitarian and supporting progress and the social advancement of entire groups. That the way towards a better life could only emerge through institutionally grounded education was a common conviction, almost an axiom. Its acceptance legitimised the reduction of adult education to formal relations between the teacher and adult learner, where the central role assigned to teachers and activities of teaching were priority research fields. Adopting such a perspective resulted in reducing the term "learning" to its reactive dimension. As Półturzycki (1997) wrote:

> Learning as a process is organized during teaching. Teaching is a planned and systematic work of a teacher with students, and it is aimed at triggering off desirable and lasting changes in actions, dispositions and the whole personality, through learning and knowledge acquisition, experiencing values as well as practical activities. Teaching is an intentional activity, that is, its intention is to trigger off learning. (p. 90-91)

Making learning a part of the curriculum regime was an act in the pacification of the previously 'autonomous' adult learner. Such declarations masked the reduction of an adult human to student, enclosed in an artificial and intentionally created educational environment. This was an environment where the student was subject to power of school's and teacher's pedagogical authority and channelled in development to preordained qualification standards that were legitimized by an ideology of common good and individual success in life.

Institutional adult education served as a tool for structuring and organizing modern society. Even if we agree that its nature and shape were somehow historically inevitable, it would be hard to accept uncritically the researchers' position concerning its underlying assumptions. It would be particularly difficult to agree with reducing adult learners to their cognitive structures. Especially as the processes of mind-contents formation clearly contradicted the official discourse of respect for adulthood. This latter stressed the importance of adults' life experiences, the need for comprehensive personal development, and necessity for it to stimulate aspirations for self-fulfilment etc. The instrumental-technical notion of knowledge should also raise some doubts. The assumption that the purpose of adult education lies in the adequate matching of means with technical aims, should induce one to pose questions about the rationality of these aims. Furthermore, it should induce one to pose questions and about the interests of the centres of power that legitimise these aims, as well as the consequences for people who are submitted to the effects of instrumental-technical knowledge.

Finally, there comes the question of knowledge as product. This notion is based on two premises. The first premise is that knowledge is objective (i.e. 'true') - it is stable and unchangeable. This allows for the construction of relatively lasting curricula, writing of standard textbooks, measuring of the level of knowledge-acquisition with uniform tests and issuing of diplomas (certificates of educational "processing"). The second premise is that knowledge is a 'finished' - finalised. This assumption of finality can be seen in statements such as that "someone received a good education", "acquired high competence," "was well-educated", and the like. Such expressions conceal not only boundless belief in the right of pedagogical authority to define education, but also the conviction about invariability of the social system, in which the knowledge once acquired and periodically updated (continuous education) should retain its cognitive legitimacy and technological effectiveness.

Comparisons made in Table 1. allow me to state that a socio-cultural approach that uses a proactive notion of learning draws on paradigmatically different assumptions. First and foremost, it rejects the idea that learning is based on sensual data registered as a close reflection of reality, and that knowledge is a configuration of generalisations from these data, built into one's mind. Knowledge is not constructed in a receptive-additive way. As Bruner (1996) argues, knowledge is what becomes collectivised within a discourse, within a "textual" community. This means that knowledge is collective and generated through the social practices of epistemic communities. That is, learning is a function of active participation in worlds of social practices. This kind of perspective focuses on ways in which cultures of practices constantly shape the identities of their adult participants, and at the same time use these identities as tools for an ongoing reproduction of these practices.

Table 1. Reactive/proactive learning

Dimensions of differences	Reactive learning (traditional)	Proactive learning (socio-cultural)
Cognitive being	Autonomous mind	Person is becoming
Educational order	Teacher-student	Culture of practice
Nature of knowledge	Objective, realistic	Socially constructed
Type of knowledge	Universal	Contextual (local)
Content of knowledge	Specialist(thematic)	General, holistic
Knowledge-acquisition	Knowledge as product	Knowledge as process
Nature of learning	Individual	Public, social
Nature of cognition	Intentional, artificial	Natural, spontaneous
Cognitive relationship	Spectator from the outside	Actor, role-performer
Cognitive mechanisms	Internalisation	Practice (action)
Learner's identity	Integrated, stable	Developing, fluid
Learner's status	Student	Autonomous practitioner
Development	According to assumed standards	Legitimised socially

Source: author

A socio-cultural approach breaks with the notion of cognition as reflection of reality, and it questions the reductionism of identifying learning with processes of memorising. It maintains that any construction of a system of meanings concerning self, others and the world is possible only within the symbolic universe of a given culture. As Bruner says:

> The distinctive feature of human evolution is that human mind developed in a way that allowed using tools of culture. Without these symbolic or material tools the human being would remain not merely "naked monkey", but empty abstraction. Therefore culture, being a product of human activity, shapes human mind and enables its functioning. According to this view, learning and thinking are always located in some cultural environment and depend on the degree to which its resources are used. (2006, p. 16-17)

The above statement naturalises the process of learning. It tells us to perceive it as a set of communal cognitive activities directed towards acquiring, reshaping and producing the meanings that regulate individuals' and groups' functioning within their local social practices. As these practices possess everlasting dynamics of changes within roles and tasks performed by practitioners, knowledge and competences, then they must be understood as constituted in a process, unfinished and lifelong. In such a perspective, learning practitioners can be seen as people having constantly developing, fluid and always unfinished identities, as persons "deemed" to endless "becoming through being-in-practice" and never-ending learning of practice.

To understand learning as a kind of human "destiny" in the postmodern world means to abolish the dichotomy between teaching and learning. This issue is extremely important for at least two reasons. Firstly, because a broad notion of "learning" incorporates the concept of "teaching", the latter becomes a set of "auxiliary" endeavours that stimulate and optimise learning efforts. The adult educator loses his or her uncontrolled pedagogical power of judgement. Instead, he or she must accept and adopt a more modest role as that of a consultant and advisor to learning adults. Secondly, because it gives adult learner's subjectivity and the right to agency, i.e. those

distinctive features of adulthood that our culture values particularly high. Each adult person is a student in his or her world of social practices and – we should accept it at last – it is a subjective role.

Dismantling the "teaching-learning" dichotomy redefines relationships between educational institutions and learning adults. Educational institutions have always been a component of the "system." "Adult learners," in turn, have always been "atoms" of education, which should be placed on the "right" socially useful track. Freeing adults from requirements for system-imposed qualifications locates learning in the sphere of culture, outside the narrow "teacher-student" order.

Moreover, learning processes are no longer reduced to individual mental acts. Social structures at the meso and micro levels of society engage in learning. Social organisations and institutions, social movements (e.g. feminist, environmentalist, anti-war etc.) as well as local communities become learning subjects. Finally, the society as a whole acquires the capacity to learn and receives the status of a "learning society." Paradigmatic change "stretches" learning processes beyond individual phenomena and situates them on "higher floors" of the social system. This is possible, on the one hand, because of the deinstitutionalisation of education, and, on the other, because of its individualisation.

Up until recently, educational institutions possessed an unquestionable, state-guaranteed monopoly to educate. They had the right to judge what kinds of knowledge are individually valuable and socially useful. Pedagogical competences assigned to them gave them right to decide about organising education processes, teaching methods and didactic means, forms of control in adult learners' cognitive progress, assessment criteria etc.

To ground this statement, I suggest looking at how the classic proponents of Polish andragogy perceived school and abridged course forms of adult education. One of them, Urbańczyk (1973) describes it in the following manner:

> If a school or a course is to provide its graduate with particular qualifications, it must equip him or her with certain information and skills matching these qualifications. It is clear that a high school for adults, which is a step towards university education..., [must offer curriculum – M. M.] that is uniform for all schools of this type for working adults. Similar is the case of technical secondary schools for working adults, elementary schools and all other kinds of courses... From the perspective of these schools and courses, their curricula must have a high degree of stability, they cannot be changed freely or prepared by their head masters, all the more by teachers. Curriculum constancy implicates similar feature in the way school is organised. Teaching must include predefined number of lesson hours, which means constant and equal number of hours per week in each school (p. 348).

The above quote is unambiguous. The mass-oriented and collective profile of institutionalised adult education that follows standard curricula and stable, indeed ritual, schemes of teacher's work with a student, had made school the teaching institution. Its activity was legitimised by the scientific status of the content of education, and guaranteed by the experts of those fields of science that corresponded with particular components of the curriculum. Pedagogues, in turn, guaranteed the professionalism of teachers as agents of adult learning. As Półturzycki stated: "Good and effective education depends mainly on knowledge of modern didactics and ability to use it" (1997, p. 30).

Educational institutions served as teaching institutions as elements of the education system, i.e. it was believed that they produced the intended cognitive results in adult students. These institutions themselves had been free of any obligation to learn. Various

forms of teachers' supplementary education and training should have been seen not only as learning in the current understanding of the term, but also as activity optimising the functioning of educational institutions by raising the competence of its functionaries.

Going beyond the "teaching-learning" dichotomy turns educational institutions into learning organisations and increases their numbers. Now all types of institutionalised social practices become learning organisations, the most important among them being associations, the above-mentioned social movement groups or local communities. Efforts are taken to make a systematic and comprehensive list of their features (see Argyris, 1982; Waldo, 1990). Not going into details, significant attributes differentiate these from traditional organisations. The latter focus on current problems and solve them using trial-and-error methods. Their functioning is based on a strict division of tasks and the relevant narrow specialisation of staff. They show little sensibility to external impulses, involve a relatively small number of strict procedures, and display reluctance to risk-taking. Learning organisations often have features that contradict these. The literature stresses their sensitivity to changes in the surrounding environment, ability to anticipate future problems and difficulties, as well as ongoing critical self-analysis. Strong ability to adapt to changes results from flexibility of organisational structures, frequent shifts of tasks and acceptance of risk. Consequently, staff are rewarded for entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, while work is organised in a way that does not limit communication among personnel and creates opportunity for professional cooperation and the sharing of skills and knowledge (Duckett, 2002).

Adult learning processes in intentionally designed and developmentally oriented institutions and organisations should posses at least three characteristics. First, they should be holistic. That is, "...knowledge should have a personal character and should become an active part of the learner's identity" (De Weerdt, Corthouts, Martens & Bouwen, 2002, p. 26). Second, learning should be natural. Knowledge should be produced through the interaction between learners and their environment, and based on their experiences and the culture of the milieu (Kolb, 1984). Finally, organisational learning is for a given organisation an ongoing adjustment process of being-in-the-world (ibid.).

The highest level of social structure where learning processes are situated is the society as a whole. This denotes the term "learning society." What is the learning society? Before I provide several answers to this question, I must note that this term is not particularly explored by theorists and researchers in adult education. Quite the contrary, the concept is met with as much scepticism and reluctance and in the case of a modernist category of "continuous education." Ainley says that only poets and science fiction writers can imagine how the learning society would look like and how it would be different from the contemporary world (after: Hughes & Tight, 1995, p. 297).

In their famous article *The Myth of the Learning Society*, Hughes and Tight (1995) argue that the lifelong learning discourse is a modernist myth. Its construction is multilayered. The first and earliest lower level includes the myths of productivity and change, expressing hopes and expectations of people in industrial society. It is on a higher level where myths of lifelong learning and learning organisations have been placed. Dialectical relationships and interdependences between them create strong foundations for another myth, that of the learning society.

The authors argue that the notion of the learning society can be seen as a tool for creating a false consciousness. It is to hide contradiction of interests, mitigate the related tensions between various social groups and power centres, and unite them in artificial alliances made under the pressure of uncertain future and the necessity of life in the risk

society. That is why – as they conclude – the learning society can be understood as an ideological concept serving ideological purposes (ibid.).

Despite the sharp criticism they present, Hughes and Tight do not deny the notion of the learning society and other educational myths some value. They admit that articulating the hopes of the masses, these myths posses enormous potential for social mobilisation, and by serving regulative functions they are able to model collective action towards a socially desirable direction.

According to Wain, the observed rejection of the term "continuous education" and the replacement with the concept of "lifelong learning" indicates the weakening of the power of the "system" and an increase of the subjectiveness of a society that is ready to exercise right to knowledge as a social value (Wain, 1993). Therefore, Wain attempts to see the concept of the learning society in a more descriptive manner:

> There is no 'model' learning society, there are different forms a learning society could take, just as there are different forms the lifelong education programme could take. What distinguishes learning society from the other is precisely the kind of programme it institutionalises within its particular socio-cultural and political context. The political characteristics of the movement's learning society are...democratic ... a shared, pluralistic and participatory 'form of life' in Dewey's sense...This means reassessing the role of the school and of childhood learning ... and prioritizing adult learning on the same level. A fundamental strategy with regard to the latter is to sensitize social institutions, the family, the church, political party, trade union, place of employment, etc., to their educational potential... with respect to their members. To encourage these institutions to regard themselves as potential educative agencies for their members and for wider society. (Wain, 1993, p. 68)

The above quote seems to confirm the suggestion of Hughes and Tight, that the notion of the learning society is in part a description of cognitive practices that really exist in the society, and in part a normative vision of the desirable social order that would create favourable conditions for the development of these kinds of practices.

Edwards and Usher (2001, p. 276) opt for this position. They treat the category of the "learning society" as a metaphor, which content changes adequately to changes in the broader society. Edwards (1997) argues that the metaphor of the "learning society" had three forms. The first, historically the earliest one, belonged to the modernist society and it identified the learning society with the educated society. Its hallmark was a relative balance between the qualification potential of the workforce and the qualification demand of the economy. Another version, that of the late modernity, identified the learning society with the learning market, stressing democratisation of access to education and formal equality of the opportunities it offers. The third version of the metaphor, the postmodern one, establishes a link between the learning society and the expansion of new technologies, which makes it take a form of a learning network. Through learning networks, individuals participate in social life on different levels (local, regional, national, global), with which they identify and which shape their identity. Learning loses its instrumental nature. It is no longer the means of truth searching, problems solving or self-realisation. In return, people begin to define themselves through their own cognitive activity. In the learning society, learners take a cognitive relation to their own life, based on a wide range of resources of knowledge and information allowing them to sustain practices of their lifestyles (ibid.).

The term "learning society" arouses discontent and even annoyance. As Coffield (1997) writes, numerous efforts to define it "...quickly becomes a futile task, because each commentator offers a different set of qualities thought essential to such a society" (p. 450). Despite this, the concept is ever more accepted. Boud (2000, p. 152) argues

that: "The notion of learning society widespread in current debate is problematic and elusive, but it is one we have to work within as it is a part of the central discourse of our times". I doubt this argument can be decisive. Arguments presented by Edwards sound much more seriously.

Human being's whole existence is based on intellectual constructs created by humans themselves. They are the instruments of cognitive control over the world (understanding) and a necessary condition for effective action upon the world, and in result a condition for life and survival. The notion of "lifelong learning" and related concepts ("learning organisation," "learning society") mark a new perspective on the education of adults. We should keep this perspective open, dynamic and relevant to the postmodern world. The point is not to capture and limit the "world that is" to a narrow and rigid definition of Universalist aspirations, even if it was accepted by the majority and offered illusory yet soothing sense of confidence. The point is rather to address the question of the developmental chances for adult education discipline in the paradigmatic perspective of the discourse on adult lifelong learning.

On limits of paradigmatic tolerance

The concept of lifelong learning is an attempt to construct a new categorical perspective able to "capture" dynamic relationships between education and human lives. Contrary to educational tradition, daily experience and common sense, learning is not so much about acquiring new knowledge, as the modernist didactics of adults still tries to convince us to, but about the way of life in the society based on knowledge. That is why learning in postmodernity should be perceived not through its epistemological dimension, but through the ontological one. Learning is an integral feature of daily life in the postmodern world, and recognition of this fact is – as Edwards (1997) insists – one of the basic conditions of the continuation of the postmodern world. If so, the transition "from teaching to learning," which can be observed in the discourse on the education of adults, means a radical shift in philosophical perspective from which analyses of cognitive practices of adults are made, and in the change of paradigm of the scientific discipline interested in such practices.

Is the discussed shift really necessary? Can't theoretical reflection on the education of adults exist and develop as a multi-paradigmatic discipline? A question of this kind was asked in relation to pedagogy during the 6th Polish Pedagogical Congress. Śliwerski (2007) gave a positive answer saying:

> When we formulate the question: What paradigm?, it certainly means acceptance of the fact that the Polish society and humanities that reflect its mental condition are socially and ideologically diverse. Therefore, science should reflect this axionormative diversity; it should talk multiple languages, use tools to read thoughts in a mixture of theories, streams, trends, directions, ideological and worldview doctrines, defending differences, broadening and deepening them or eliminating with the purpose to return to uniformity. We give our attention to diversity of voices and aspects, multiplicity of messages and their interpretations (p. 445).

An ideological framework for the above position was provided by Szahaj (2007). In the paper entitled *Solitude and community*, he distinguished between two opposed kinds of community: organic (unreflexive) and constructionist (reflexive). He described the constructionist community as pluralistic, tolerant, open to critique, respecting subjectivity and individualism of its members, based on their will to belong and

satisfaction gained from being together (ibid.). I have the impression that both authors, by accepting the vision of a constructionist community as complementary to liberal-democratic social order, make it a kind of proto-model for all human collectivities, including the community of theorists and researchers of education. The adopted assumptions inevitably impose only one possible conclusion: pedagogy should be a multi-paradigmatic science.

Thinking about the application of the above conclusion in the theory of adult education, one must notice that it is legitimate to a degree that it is possible to defend its founding premises. So, by asking the "what paradigm" question, Śliwerski assumes that the community of scholars has a choice. I disagree. And, I have equal difficulty with accepting the argument that the community of theorists and researchers within any scientific discipline form (or can form?) a constructionist community. I shall begin with the first problem, and then I will address the second question further in the text.

Paradigm is understood as a set of harmoniously linked ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions; it can be seen as a kind of sub-theoretical matrix that effectively regulates researchers' practices and integrates them in a cognitive community. The source of uniformity of assumptions on reality, nature of knowledge, and methodologically legitimate procedures of fact-finding, lies in the commonality of researchers' generational experiences and the presence of the same socio-cultural elements in their biographies. In this sense, research paradigms are conditioned situationally and historically. As products of their time, they are inevitably particular, fragmented and only temporarily valid, and their changeability usually overlaps generational cycles.

The first post-world war II generation of Polish adult education researchers found themselves living and working in the modernist world created and supervised by an omnipotent ideological state. Their professional competence was formed by the supreme scientistic doctrine of scholarship: rigid, dogmatic and – as Adorno (1984) noticed long ago – well suited to the administered world. One of its components was institutionalised adult education. The latter's function was to discipline and impose meanings. Natural learning, being a result of adults' participation in their life-worlds, went beyond this function, and this is why it was made illegal and excluded from the field of education. Its findings received the status of no-knowledge.

At the beginning researchers just assumed that adult education was a system of institutional pedagogical influences upon adult students, and the research should provide instrumental-technical knowledge, able to optimise didactic activities of teachers, and that this knowledge could be effectively accumulated through a diagnostic survey method. It was not only a technical instrument regulating cognition, but also something more. It was a component of the personal and professional identity of researchers from that generation. That is why it is still alive today. In the Polish adult education literature, we can see endless attempts to sustain the vitality of traditional forms of training of adults and to prove the actuality of continuous education, as well as claim to educate adults through andragogic teaching methods. Some of the papers presented during an adult education conference organised in 2006 at the Jagiellonian University illustrate this situation (see: Aleksander & Barwińska, 2007). Also the conference entitled *Andragogue teacher at the turn of the 21st century*, regularly organised in Wroclaw, provides numerous examples (see e.g. Horyń & Maciejewski, 2002).

The above analysis brings us closer to an answer to the question of the chances of contemporary adult education theory becoming multi-paradigmatic. Even the greatest openness, tolerance and usefulness of the scholarly community has nothing to do with

the number of research theories or paradigms recognised as significant and legitimate. The paradigm itself, or its ontological dimension, to be precise, imposes limits upon researchers. Ontological premises mark boundaries of the real and they have to be "compatible" with educational practice. Otherwise the paradigm will no longer "capture" the reality under study, will lose its regulative ability and turn into an ideological construct, while its adherents will become a scholarly sect. Thus the answer to the "what paradigm" question cannot be an arbitrary choice of a group of scientists. The choice is always limited by the criterion of its socio-cultural adequacy. Respecting this condition is the basic requirement necessary for keeping its methodological legitimacy.

Transition from modernity to postmodernity implicated numerous changes, including the shift in how adult education is perceived and understood. It is no longer identified with the institutional distribution of knowledge and imposition of meanings. Instead, it becomes a space of learning. It is accompanied by the right to a subjective interpretation of the world and to reflexive being in the world. To sum up briefly, this is the nature of the paradigmatic shift "from teaching to learning."

On the situation of young researchers

Today Polish researchers of the education of adults are divided. Some are suspended between the discipline's glorious past and its undetermined and vague future. This situation is difficult for everyone in the field. Followers of the "old" paradigm sense the coming twilight of the hitherto existing model of scholarship. This feeling is usually accompanied by the acute sense of deep professional inappropriateness and fear of the loss of high position in the academic milieu. Adherents of a radical change, tensely await a new paradigm, which is not yet crystallised and which is more of a promise than its fulfilment. Although, as I said, it is a difficult situation for the whole discipline, it is the youngest generation of researchers that experiences its severity the most. Assistants and doctoral students are in a situation of pressure to carry on scientific research, to gain their first or (as in the case of doctors) another scholarly degree. On the other hand, competition between various methodological doctrines and the lack of a common method of research practice (paradigm) leaves them without clear points of orientation.

Searching for the way out of their traumatic predicament, they can take different orientations and attitudes. In order to grasp them, I will make use of two scales. The first is a standard "autonomy-conformity" scale used by researchers for the measurement of behaviour in any social milieu. Another is applied by organisation theorists, and stretches along the "achievements-security" continuum (see: Koralewicz, 2008, part IV). These scales need to be placed in the context of the academic community. It is not a constructionist community in the meaning suggested by Szahaj. Quite the contrary, it is hierarchical. The distribution of positions and statuses, constitutive of the hierarchy of the scientific community, and related distribution of privileges and power, are based on formal criteria of knowledge and competence – scholarly degrees and titles. The oligarchical nature of scientific institutions is somehow neutralised by the system of collegial bodies, equipped with opinion-making and decision-making entitlements. One should not, however, deny that academic democracy is a democracy of professors. Younger scholars participate to a lesser degree. Beginning researchers are practically excluded. In this situation they, understandably, seek security. The source of the latter can be a supervisor or the scientific community.

These scales enable us to create a typology of the major orientations of young researchers in the academic milieu. They are presented in Figure 1.

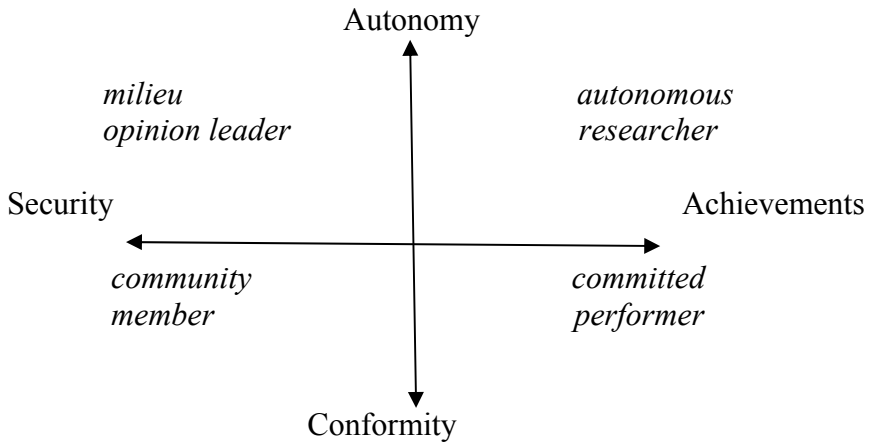

Figure 1. Typology of major orientations of young researchers
Source: author

Autonomous researchers, oriented towards cognitive tasks and their own scholarly development, represent the first type. High competence for research work allows them to make independent decisions concerning research projects. They listen to their colleagues' comments carefully, but usually do not take them into account. They respect suggestions and recommendations by their supervisors only to the extent that they improve their own research ideas.

Committed performers depend on their supervisors. They treat assigned research tasks as their own and realise them carefully and meticulously. They take into account all suggestions and remarks. They believe that under the protection of their scientific authority they will be able to acquire the required professional competences, durable position in the scholarly milieu as well as stable future in life.

Another type of orientation, *community member*, can best be characterised by the need for the sense of security and professional stability. Such persons believe in the academic "milieu." They carefully listen to all stories of "scholarly careers." In their scientific work they tend to take into account opinions and remarks made by their colleagues. They are loyal to group interests of younger scholars. They publicly demonstrate their identification with this group and expect that in a situation where their professional career is in danger, the milieu's opinions will be mobilised in their defence, and that it will guarantee their further presence in the academic science.

The last type of orientation may be represented by people who possess personal influence. Personal characteristics make them *milieu opinion leaders*. Their attributes are the source of their high informal social position, help them become elected to diverse collegial bodies (such as institute and department boards), or become leaders of union organisations or hold other significant social functions. In other words, they enter power structures. They believe that performing administrative functions will guarantee them relative independence from the criteria of scientific assessment and in the worst case allow them liberation from criteria. That is where they rest their current and future sense of security.

In my opinion, the presented typology is of universal value, as it includes situations for candidates entering the field of science in any discipline. However, the requirement of clarity induces me to see it in the perspective of the theory of adults' lifelong

learning. What consequences might the situation of the observed transition "from teaching to learning" have for the pro-scientific orientations of young adult education researchers?

Seeking an answer to this question, one must take into account the fact that the most serious obstacle to build one's own cognitive activity and strategy for professional development is the lack of disciplinary points of theoretical and methodological orientation, which is typical for the "transition" period. Nothing is certain during a paradigmatic shift. One does not know whether the observed socio-cultural changes are radical enough that they will be able to invalidate "old" scientific theories and question the recognised methodological models of research practice. It is also not certain whether adherents and propagators of the new paradigm will manage to make it acceptable to the "disciplinary majority" and establish new and stable models of scholarship. For young people whose professional future depends on assessment of their scholarly achievements by the establishment of professors, it is an enormously traumatic situation. One can assume that it effectively limits the number of people aspiring to the status of *autonomous researcher* and creates a natural temptation to escape under the supervisor's protection. By accepting a candidate, the supervisor is formally obliged to direct his or her scientific development in an effective way. From the point of view of the candidate him/herself, this obligation is of the higher nature. It is a moral obligation, a promise of cognitive, scholarly and life success.

I think the above analysis allows me to conclude that adult education theorists' and researchers' exist in two competing paradigmatic worlds, reducing the developmental perspectives of the discipline. This reduction involves the limiting of the development-oriented aspirations of the youngest generation of researchers. By giving up the identity of the *autonomous author* and seeking that of the *committed performer* instead, they renounce their freedom for security.

The choices have their further consequences. They depend on the scholarship patterns their supervising professors cherish. If they accept the paradigm treating adult education institutionally and justifying it with the idea of the continuous education, their charges will undertake research on methods and forms of adult training, self-education of certain social categories (e.g. Polish Army officers), or – for what guarantees greater security – the history of adult education in Poland. To put it simply: educational thought will be "enclosed" in the heritage park of its glorious past.

Are there chances to change, or – perhaps even more important – prevent this? This question can be formulated in another way: are there chances for Polish researchers of lifelong learning to adopt and adapt the new research paradigm, which understands adult education as learning in the meaning far from its traditional teacher-oriented formula? To such a question, Kurantowicz (2007) gives a pessimistic answer. As she says, "...for some humanities scholars this revolutionary widening of this category (of learning – M.M.) won't be possible to accept for a long time to come" (p. 8). Agreeing with this prognosis, I will add that the hope lies in the phrase "for some." If some researchers are not able to adopt a new paradigm, then "others" will have competences and will to do so. They will find support in the international community of theorists and researchers on the processes of lifelong learning.

Conclusion

Reflection on lifelong learning brings together multiple narratives on the education of adults. Each of them has its own time-spatial location, its own socio-cultural contexts as

well as its own horizon of validity conditioned by the pace of changes. The situation is on the verge of change when changes in social reality become visible, even in common perception making the current paradigm unable to "grasp" key problems of social praxis, and the community of researchers dealing with these problems realize their helplessness. A perspective of paradigmatic shift bears hope as well as resistance. The present situation in the community of researchers is an example of this.

How can we go beyond the "separateness" of the lifelong learning researchers' worlds and induce theorists and researchers to risk crossing the boundaries of the modernist tradition of adult education, and convince them to accept the cognitive horizon that is offered to their discipline by the perspective of lifelong learning? Attempting to address this question, one reaches a conclusion that the greatest threat to science is the uncritical self-identification of scholars with their discipline as well as an imperative of group solidarity that orders them to defend the discipline from any external critique. Worse than that, this imperative might also concern internal critique. Dialogue, then, becomes a deadly silence, and researchers' activity becomes a set of rituals inside the discipline, serving as a form of group therapy. Conferences and scholarly seminars play only the role of events maintaining group convictions that despite everything "it's all right." Those who will not believe such assurances can always invoke the truism that the "future belongs to the young ones." In a prefigurative culture of postmodern world, this banality will surely be met with applause. The point is that professional academic culture is a postfigurative one.

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Riding the lines of flight

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Abstract

Thinking about the future of educational research requires a conceptual resource that is itself both imaginative and multiple and at the same time articulates a world with those self-same characteristics. This is provided by the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Discussion of the future of research is located in a context of lifelong learning in the contemporary moment of ubiquitous electronic communication. I argue that the research process, contrary to the model of science, can be better understood as rhizomatic rather than arborescent and powered by desire rather than objectivity. Lifelong learning is a rhizome and requires a rhizomatic approach and sensibility on the part of the researcher. The hyper-connectivity of the Internet reinforces this development influencing the way research is carried out and the way its knowledge outcomes are distributed and used – a research without hierarchy and authority.

Keywords: Deleuze and Guattari; lines of flight; lifelong learning; electronic communication

To say anything meaningful about the future of educational research is not simply a matter of projecting from current trends. Whilst a certain amount of projection can be done, it needs to be informed by an awareness of relevant contexts and most importantly by conceptual resources which enable imaginative thought as to how the present will develop. Any future-gazing requires a conceptual resource that is itself both imaginative and multiple and which at the same time articulates a world with those self-same characteristics. In what follows, I work with a context, lifelong learning in the contemporary moment of ubiquitous electronic communication, and my conceptual resources are borrowed from the work of Deleuze and Guattari. My argument is that any future developments need to be grounded in a present which is going to strongly inform those developments. At the same time, a conceptual resource is needed that can imaginatively portray the present whilst providing insights into future possibilities free of the oppressive grand narratives of the Western Enlightenment.

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Lifelong learning and connectivity

Lifelong learning has many significations but some common elements can be discerned. As well as ubiquity, it also signifies 'flexibility'. Many policy texts heavily emphasize that there are many different ways to engage in lifelong learning, from the formal certificated education routes to informal learning purely for interest or 'fun'. It is noticeable however that the personal development and active citizenship likely to be gained through lifelong learning are not seen as desirable in their own right but as necessary for the 'knowledge society' and the 'labour market', both of which are nominalized and not in any sense questioned. Or to put it another way, the connotation here is that lifelong learning is becoming a strata that *services* the knowledge society and the contemporary labour market, instrumentally necessary for meeting the exigencies of globalization, economic competition and social exclusion. Although change, the rapidity of change, and the need to constantly adapt to change is highlighted, this not an immanent change.

It is undoubtedly the case that all learning has become and continues to become more diverse in terms of goals, processes, organizational structures, curricula and pedagogy. This both reflects, and is a contributor to, a breakdown of clear and settled demarcations between different sectors of formal education and between formal education and everything that could be considered a source of learning. 'Students' are re-signified as 'learners' and with this, changes follow in what is constituted as 'provision' and 'providers', in the control and content of curricula, and in the position and authority of teachers, and belatedly in educational research too. With lifelong learning therefore formal education can no longer claim a monopoly over learning. A multiplicity of activities in many contexts have sprung up which now are potentially actually coded *as* learning rather than something else.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) and computer mediated communication (CMC), the Internet and the World-Wide Web (WWW) are key factors in the emergence of a society marked by lifelong learning. With electronic communication, where for the first time in the history of the world, one person can now reach another person or a million with equal facility, ICTs increasingly shape many significant dimensions of life. They enable new ways of communicating, new forms of knowledge formation and delivery, and the fostering of new associations and connections among people. All of this has an undoubtedly transformative potential and impacts upon both the what and the how of learning. A world of infinitely extended flows and global connections – a world of all inclusive connectivity – is being produced that contributes to an enveloping of the lifeworld -- a relationality through connectivity.

ICTs have made interconnectivity possible on a global scale, where being connected is a feature of what I term *hyper-connectivity*. This points to the infinite connections of the Internet but also to a situation where it is impossible to envisage the world and one's place in it as not being *always already* connected – or to put it another way as being fashioned through connections and connecting. We are *thrown*[1] into an already connected world and we cannot now imagine living in a world without that connectivity. The structure of this *always already connected* space is that of the rhizomatic network, here signifying both the complex patterning of global interactions and positionings that now takes place, and to the Internet itself which makes this complex network possible and is itself an effect of that patterning.

Knowledge can be widely disseminated directly from individuals, no longer needing to be filtered through organizations and institutions. All this is made possible by a decentralized and non-hierarchical structure that in turn has produced new

structures of interaction. The Internet also decentralizes the apparatuses of cultural production[2], placing cultural acts, such as the writing of texts more in the hands of its participants. So for example, all web pages are in a sense 'publications' that anyone can access. Anyone with a modicum of technical expertise, and at minimal cost, can create their own website and place their cultural products on the Internet. Through hypertext, new expressive possibilities are opened up. With ICTs, knowledge becomes globally transportable with a multiplicity of transnational global knowledge webs where different kinds of knowledge and new approaches to knowing and knowledge can flourish.

With this globally generated and distributed proliferation, the power to define what constitutes knowledge and to dominate over the production and dissemination of knowledge is no longer the exclusive preserve of universities. What constitutes knowledge is now not bound and thus defined by disciplinary canons sourced in, and policed by, the university. Whilst disciplinary knowledge itself is found in abundance on the Internet, so too all kinds of other knowledge flourish in that virtual space.

The removal of time constraints has resulted in an immediacy of communication. As well as allowing a dissemination of texts, it also undermines the traditional authority of the writer. On the Internet, texts are both ephemeral and never closed. In formal education both these characteristics are difficult to accept given the traditional embodiment of knowledge in printed texts characterized by a seeming solidity, permanence, continuity and closure. The Internet works against the fixity of texts, transferring authorship and thereby author-ity from the writer to the reader -- a very Deleuzian process of decentring.

Having sketched in the background context for my argument, I turn now to my conceptual resources. Here, I present some of the main aspects of the work of Deleuze and Guattari and I do so without any pretence to "originality" and "objectivity". I admire and respect their work and I strongly believe that what they are saying suggests far-reaching insights for the contemporary educator.

Selectively presenting the thought of Deleuze and Guattari

Unlike other post-structuralists, such as Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari have had until recently relatively little impact on educational research even though there are signs that this is changing. To a large extent this is because their work is not an easy read, being itself written as a complex rhizome. Yet, like other post-structuralist writers, they attempt to refashion our understanding of, and therefore our practices, in relation to the dominant history of Western modernity. In other words, they do not simply write *about* a subject, but also *perform* the different forms of writing that makes critique possible.

In this performance they concoct neologisms which although they create difficulties in reading are designed to force readers to think outside the square of established modes of common sense that have become naturalized, hegemonic and repressive. This is a common and difficult problem…..how do you critique given that you must do so in the language of that which you are critiquing? Their answer is to coin a vocabulary more appropriate to critique. Although they do not explicitly identify themselves as post-structuralists, their deep critique of modernity's beliefs in unity, hierarchy, identity, foundations, subjectivity and representation while celebrating difference and multiplicity, puts them firmly in this camp.

Central to their work therefore is an undermining or subverting of foundational and fixed views of language and meaning, theory and practice, associated with such

pervasive arboreal metaphors as the 'tree of knowledge', a foundationalism where knowledge becomes something that can grow, be secure and located, and where language truly represents that which is. The arboreal metaphor signifies a logical hierarchy where all is ordered and in its place. In contrast, their concept of the rhizome signifies opposition to the tree of hierarchical structures, stratification, and linear thinking. We can say in relation to our present interest in research that this term describes a research, both as substance and process, that requires multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation, a research which is opposed it to arboreal conceptions that work with dualist categories and binary choices.

The abiding concern in the work of Deleuze and Guattari is with modernity, the historical stage founded on normalizing and repressive discourses and institutions that pervade all aspects of social existence and everyday life. In this, they share similar concerns with Foucault. Unlike Foucault however, their concern is not with disciplinary technologies and power/knowledge regimes but on the ways in which the discourses and institutions of modernity have worked to colonise desire. Here desire, but without its dominant psychoanalytic connotation of 'lack', is for them a more fruitful concept than power.

They are critical of those views of the world that privilege foundational thought and essences and of discourses infiltrated by the grand narratives of the Western Enlightenment. Their target is the powerful myth of the inevitability of hierarchy and authority. For them, it is all about multiplicities or assemblages, both of individual subjects and of institutions. Both at the micro-level of individuals and the macro-level of the social, all are assemblages and for them it is through this lens that social analysis and research is best conducted.

In order to distinguish their work from modernity's dominant logocentric tradition, Deleuze and Guattari develop a 'philosophy of immanence'. They argue that knowledge for example, is always 'in' rather than 'of' the world. As Deleuze said in his interview with Foucault (1977, p. 206-207), 'representation no longer exists; there's only action – theoretical action and practical action which serve as relays and form networks'. Thus representation, the dualist conjoining of world and word is taken apart to be displaced by actions that result in the circulation or flow of meaning. With the rhizome *roots* are displaced by *routes*, with unexpected eruptions where desire plays a role and logic is not privileged.

Deleuze and Guatarri argue that people, who themselves are assemblages, are connected in a multiplicity of assemblages or rhizomatic networks that are in a constant state of movement, flux and flow, setting up fluid spaces that continuously avoid being bound or enclosed -- things are metaphorically and literally 'up-rooted'. Movements and flow are multi-directional, enabling a multiplicity of entwinements -- unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 21).

In challenging the arboreal metaphor, Deleuze and Guattari are challenging the centrality of 'to be' as the fashioning through which the world is represented and the associated view that everything has to be structured in terms of either-or. All arborescent models of thinking, acting, and being amount to restrictive and repressive economies of dominance and oppression. Deleuze and Guattari argue for possible new and different modes of existence where people can overcome repressive forms of identity and stasis for a constant process of becoming, to become what they term "desiring nomads". Here, we find an emphasis on *becoming* as against a modernist emphasis on *being*, a position consonant with their philosophy of immanence.

Deleuze and Guattari, unlike Foucault, present a direct critique of capitalist society even though, like Foucault, they do not identify themselves as Marxists. Their post-structural logic is rather that of difference, perspectives, and fragments. They articulate capitalism as combining anything with anything into assemblages that homogenize everything to the values and demands of the market. As a consequence, it must subvert all territorial groupings such as the church, the family, the group, indeed any social arrangement. Capitalism de-territorializes, something which they welcome in relation to capitalism's destruction of traditional social hierarchies. At the same time however, capitalism needs social groupings in order to function effectively and therefore it must enable re-territorializations, or new social groupings such as new forms of the state, the family, or the group which in turn become stratified. Strata then are always with us but they are subject to the continual movement of de- and re- terrritorialisation. Furthermore, these are not sequential but simultaneous movements. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari characterize the life of any capitalist society as always in the process of both collapsing and being restructured, of de-territorializing and re-territorializing.

We noted earlier the significance of the rhizome. The "tree" is replaced by the "rhizome", the multiply connected, inter-penetrating underground network of growth without any centre. Rhizomes are networks that cut across borders, linking preexisting gaps. They are characterized by decalcomania, forming through continuous negotiation with their context, constantly adapting by experimentation, performing an active resistance against rigid organization and restriction.

Perhaps Deleuze and Guattari's most radical concept is what they refer to as 'lines of flight'. Minimally, these can be understood as a metaphor for everyday resistance but there is perhaps more to it than that. Lines of flight, big or small, are present at any time and can lead in any direction. Rhizomes are always constructed in the struggle between stabilizing and destabilizing forces, produced in the constant struggle between lines of consistency and lines of flight. Deleuze and Guattari suggest thinking about rhizomes as *vectors*, where two kinds of vector -- lines of consistency and lines of flight -- both work across rhizomatic formations. Lines of consistency connect and unify different practices and effects and by so doing establish hierarchies and define relations between center and periphery. They create rules of organization which lead to stasis and solidified strata. Lines of flight in contrast disarticulate relations between and among practices and effects, opening up contexts to their outsides and the possibilities therein. They break-down unity and coherence. They decenter centers, disrupting hierarchies and disarticulating strata.

Deleuze and Guattari are concerned to seek out the points of weakness, the lines of flight in prevailing structures or strata because it is there that possibilities for change and movement are offered. For them, they are the means of escape from the repressive strata that are everywhere. It is the rhizomatic that engenders lines of flight, re-opening flows that the tree-like structures of lines of consistency have shut down. The rhizome with its capacity for endless multiplication and connectivity has the potential to generate virtually boundless lines of flight. In this sense therefore, a line of flight is a *bridge* to a new formation. Whereas the tree builds no bridges, the rhizome is constituted by an endless series of inter-connecting bridges[3]. There is thus a beginninglessness, an endlessness and a multiplicity in rhizomatic meanings and practices.

So whilst a line of flight is 'liberating', it is liberating without the benefit of the grand narratives because these are yet another instance of the normalizations of a repressive or homogenizing order, and as we have seen, a line of flight is precisely a move away from such totalities. Any territoriality or strata has *immanently* within it a movement toward the de-territorialization of lines of flight. Strata are shot through with

lines of flight and this is why Deleuze and Guattari claim that, like strata, lines of flight are everywhere.

At first glance, Deleuze and Guattari sound like revolutionaries but if they are they are not ones in the traditional Left sense. Instead they speak of nomadism, lines of flight, deterritorialization, and their politics is a micro-politics. Their emphasis on the rhizomatic foregrounds the possibility of a 'thousand lines of flight', a multiplicity of exits resisting the totalities of monolithic/homogenized social orders.

In Deleuze and Guatarri's account of the subject there is no mind-body dualism or the subject as an inner core. Instead the subject is defined in terms of its *relationships* to other subjects and things. For them, the body is material and affective where affectivity is characterized as 'fields of intensity'[4]. This is not simply the human experience of mind and body but also includes a domain of worldly experience extending beyond the bounds of individuals. Thus affect exists everywhere, in everyone and in everything. Their subject is a desiring machine, one kind of assemblage among many, but where desire is a force or energy -- potentially creative energy or "desiring-production". Parts of the body are linked to other objects, signs, energy flows in endless patterns of productive activity. The connections which can be made, the channels which can be formed are, in theory, infinite. Subjects are potentially capable of infinite creativity and change.

They refer to the "body without organs" (BwO) as a space of de-territorialization where desire is liberated from the constraints of all over-determined and over-determining systems, for example, both Marxism and capitalism, This contrasts with the re-territorialization dynamic of strata — the restructuring of a place that has experienced de-territorialization, the attempt to re-totalize, to structure hierarchically, to contain through institutions such as religion, the family, and the school. For Deleuze and Guattari the BwO connotes opposition to *organ-ization* and the *organ-ism* where the body is not an organization of parts but de-organ-ized, a body of affective energies, a productive force, a desiring-machine.

For Deleuze and Guatarri, the subject has a nomadic potential that operates outside strata. Here, there is no fixed identity but rather an endless migration across the networks of assemblages of other desiring machines. But the subject can also be frozen by immersion in the strata of capitalism's abstract machine. The subject therefore, and indeed the social order generally, is fashioned by the limiting of connectivity and nomadism, the closing down of the infinitely possible avenues of desiring-production through lines of consistency, the re-territorialization and re-forming of strata. Nomadism is de-territorialization, the taking off on creative lines of flight that work outside the conceptual structures and rationalities of the established order.

As nomads, subjects randomly connect signs, energy flows, data, knowledge, fantasy, objects, and other bodies in new flows of desiring production. Lack, on the other hand, is something that is artificially created by capitalism and desire is not to be identified with lack. It is not an imaginary but a real productive force, desiring production in the social field. Reality itself is constituted as configurations of the two kinds of vector we mentioned earlier– lines of consistency and lines of flight – but ultimately desire constitutes social reality for these are both powered by desire where lines of consistency manifest the desire for stasis, lines of flight for the nomadic. As we have seen earlier, both are always present.

The central problem for Deleuze and Guattari then, the danger that is continually signified in their work, is *totalizing processes*, any theory, philosophy, discourse or practice that becomes monolithic and whose effects can be ubiquitous and destructive (Taylor, 1998). A totalizing theory is a stratum that territorializes and controls.

Everything is seen through its own lens that then, in turn, fashions the world according to that lens -- that of hierarchy and authority. The rhizomatics of Deleuze and Guattari is thus a critique of all totalizing logics, of all systems that attempt to explain everything within one interpretive framework or hierarchical master code.

Lifelong learning through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari

I noted earlier the increased significance of the term "learner". It signifies that rather than there being no choice because there is only a pre-defined curriculum based on a search for enlightenment and the mastery of a canon of knowledge, choice exists, a choice made on the basis of desire. That desire should signify in learning no longer therefore evokes something perverse and un-educational. Those who claim that this is not what learning is 'really' about are still enfolded in a myth where learning is pre-defined and delivered by the pedagogue. Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of immanence subverts this transcendental position.

The need to understand learning in terms of its enfolding within different social practices means that lifelong learning cannot mean simply a structure of provision or a set of principles about education. Learning is to now be more readily understood as carrying many different significations about a diversity of learners and a diversity of learning in a variety of settings and practices, all enfolded within a variety of contemporary social practices, each with different effects of positioning and identity formation.

There is no mention of lifelong learning in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. However, that does not mean their work cannot be deployed to better understand it. On the contrary, they provide valuable conceptual resources through which it is possible to understand lifelong learning differently. This is particularly the case with their concepts of the "rhizome" and "lines of flight". As we have noted earlier, even the most solidified strata, such as capitalist society, carry nomadic lines of flight within themselves. Equally, the work of the rhizome de-territorializes strata, subverts hierarchies and restores desiring-production. It follows the flight of heterogeneity, there is a multiplicity of learning, other ways of knowing, as connections are made and unmade.

To explore this further, we need to note the significance for Deleuze and Guattari of the conjunction "and" in relation to the rhizome:

> The tree imposes the verb 'to be', but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and… and… and'. This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb 'to be'. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 25)

The conjunctive 'and' here becomes integral to rhizomatic approaches that shake the tree of knowledge and disrupt the arboreal. In this disruption, meaning is mobilized rather than grounded. An essentialist ontology of being and the binary logic of either-or are displaced with one of becoming, of flux, movement, flow -- and the "and" of connections and alliances. Deleuze and Guattari's aim is to 'establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 25).

The possible lines of flight in relation to lifelong learning point to the play of difference that contrasts with, and contests, the abstract machine of the governmental, including formal and institutionalized education. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the

'and… and… and' of rhizomatic lines of flight result in a certain tentativeness, a stammering:

> It's easy to stammer, but making language itself stammer is a different affair, it involves placing all linguistic and even nonlinguistic, elements in variation, both variables of expression and variables of content. A new form of redundancy. AND… AND… AND… (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 98)

"And" thus points to the multiple conjoinings and connections made possible by desiring production.

While governments and related institutions want to root the meaning of lifelong learning, on this understanding of the 'and' it is nonetheless ceaselessly de-territorialized, given that rhizomatic variation is always in play:

> 'And' is not simply a connective, joint, hinge between two things, it also implies progression (better and better), causation (and then), great duration (on and on), great numbers (more and more), addition (this and that equals those), differentiation (there are writers and there are writers), variety (X and Y), and succession (walking two and two). (Doel, 1996, p. 422)

Thus "and" does all sorts of supplementing work both completing and *adding to*. Lifelong learning cannot therefore be simply located within any one stratum whether it be the educated society, the learning market or globalisation. Instead "and" mediates, mobilizes, completes and radicalizes. It refers to the ceaseless play of de-territorializing and re-territorializing. It can take multiple forms.

What then are the implications of articulating lifelong learning rhizomatically? It could be argued that learning has itself escaped on a line of flight from the stratum of institutionalised education into the rhizome of lifelong learning only to find that it is in danger of becoming re-territorialized into yet another stratum. The abstract machine of the contemporary order always attempts to stratify learning, to institutionalize it in some form and to make it the instrument of economic policy. One manifestation of this is the foregrounding of the rational in the form of policy, practice and research at the expense of desire. Yet this stratified learning is always in tension with the learning involved in desiring production – affective and always potentially able to take off on a line of flight away from all the stratified signifiers of lifelong learning – including effective technique, flexible skilling, good citizenship and happy, self-fulfilled people. Thus lifelong learning is not any one thing – it is not 'the mere acquisition of any new skill or bit of information, but instead the accession to a new way of perceiving and understanding the world' (Bogue, 2004, p. 328).

The "and" becomes within lifelong learning, the endlessness, the ever-more immanent within it, even with the attempt to root in specific and definitive meanings. Inferences may be drawn from particular contexts, but manifestations elsewhere, as lines of flight, are inherently unpredictable. Indeed if we follow Deleuze and Guattari, there is always learning as the energy of the desiring body and it is always lifelong because this desire is never final.

Learning is rhizomatic, it stretches, bends and conjoins, making all sorts of intended and unintended senses, stretched across time and space in unexpected multiple ways. Our learning is through the connections we make rhizomatically as well as those that are allowed and valued by the abstract machine. "And" therefore inscribes a certain grasping for more, but not necessarily just in terms of climbing trees, perhaps more through following different lines of experimenting, of taking off on lines of flight. Thus

lifelong learning can both give expression, and be subject, to the logic of "and". There is always more and the more can be and often is very different.

Lifelong learning is without beginning and without end across the span of one's life, and this both contributes to, and arises from, the logic of the rhizome. In this sense, lifelong learning can be a line of flight, linking and conjoining in all sorts of unexpected ways. Embodying difference, it cannot be fully regulated by totalizing and technicist practices. Whilst lifelong learning can, and indeed has, become stratified, it is always actually and potentially taking off on lines of flight.

Communicating in the contemporary world

I am going to argue that a society with such vastly expanded and continually expanding communication possibilities looks remarkably like a Deleuzian world of de- and re-territorializations, lines of flight, and the connections and multiplicities of the rhizome.

Communications technology has connected the entire world and created a global culture. Anyone who can access the Internet is part of this culturally diffused community. Once a local culture is part of the global community the process of de-territorialization and re-territorialization continues as the global culture takes from and feeds all the communities that take part in it. The Internet has enabled these processes of de-territorialization and re-territorialization to take place at a global level. For example, when a new area of the world gains access to the Internet, the community also gains access to every other community that has access to the Internet. At that moment, the de-territorializing process begins as the local culture is enveloped by the global community, with re-territorialization occurring immediately after with the local community becoming part of the global culture.

Whilst we must be mindful of Deleuze and Guattari's warning of getting carried away with the 'science fiction' of micro-connectivity (1988, p. 422), it is nonetheless becoming clear that the condition of hyper-connectivity I spoke of earlier is shaping the contemporary world, both physically and in terms of subjectivities. We live in a Deleuzian world. Individualistic accounts of learning are being displaced by relational understandings as forms of connectivity become ever more significant. For lifelong learning, hyper-connectivity constitutes an environment where the Internet and its associated services become accessible and immediate. This means that all learning potentially becomes lifelong learning, just-in-time, just-when-needed, and always-there.

Education as an institution occupies a troubled space within these developments. It is a modernist institution of "spaces of enclosure", such as the printed text, the classroom and the curriculum. These spaces of enclosure are now called into question. Mirroring the rhizomatic features of cyberspace, there are less boundaries and hierarchies. There is more scope for learners to *construct* knowledge rather than just passively receive it. People are more likely to understand their own identity as that of 'learner' and more likely to be in a position to determine their own learning and paths of learning. Learning can thus be now signified more in terms of multiplicity, of multiple paths, non-linear forms, moving from the fixed institution-based space of education to a more open and unbounded terrain of learning.

All the modernist signifiers of centre, margin, hierarchy and linearity in formal education become de-territorialized. Instead, there is multi-linearity, nodes, links and networks, challenging modernist spaces of enclosure and in the process providing the conceptual resources for justifying changes in what constitutes knowledge and the way it is produced (research).

Research through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari

Research is about knowledge production. In the social sciences, with few exceptions, science and rationality have been its measure. All have been neurotically obsessed by the 19th-century scientific model and with this has come the consequent dominance of quantitative and statistical methods. In this model, knowledge is generated only through the objective, inductive activities of science. Observation and experiment reveal fundamental laws of nature that govern both natural and social phenomena. Government and funding bodies favour such research because it legitimizes what they do on the grounds of evidence based policy and practice, in the process reinforcing its power and legitimacy.

Furthermore, in the scientific model rationality is to be understood as a natural kind rather than an outcome of the norms and practices of particular societies. As researchers we extend our knowledge systematically by deploying this invariant and universal standard of rationality. The consequence of this has been the refusal to question how researchers create their texts, the assumption being that the proper use of methods will neutralise personal and political influences. Political stances evaporate, researchers are deemed free of their own cultural confusions. Texts are author(itative) but seemingly without author(ity), obscuring the ways in which researchers *construct* their analyses and narratives - they are written as if researchers were simply vehicles for transmission with no voice of their own. On the contrary, even though it goes largely unrecognised and unacknowledged, what's at work in research is *textuality* - the rhetorical devices and conventions which organise meanings in the research text in particular ways and for particular effects.

There are also issues to do with power. In the relationship between researcher and subjects, it is the former who defines the problem, the nature of the research, the quality of the interaction between researcher and researched, the theoretical framework and the categories of analysis; and of course who writes the final text. Researchers (whether quantitative or qualitative) are essentially in the business of creating coherent master narratives, masterful narratives which require the Other for their coherence but where the Other is never the active agent.

What this implies is that science is in, not above, historical and linguistic processes, in other words, that it cannot free itself of its own cultural confusions. By focusing on writing, text-making and rhetoric what is highlighted is the *constructed* and *contested* nature of all cultural accounts (which research basically is despite its different guises). By deconstructing in this way science and research in the scientific mode, seemingly transparent modes of authority are undermined because what happens is that research is now seen as 're-presenting' rather than representing the world. It also has the effect of showing that all research is implicated in economies of truth and regimes of power.

In relation to this, I want at this point, to consider what Deleuze and Guattari can contribute to our understanding of research in the contemporary moment. I am interested particularly in the kind of methodological issues just raised concerning the *process* of research and the place of the researcher. Also, I touch upon what insights their work might afford as to what we could and should be researching.

First, it is undoubtedly the case that Deleuze and Guattari's work has had a significant influence on so-called 'non-representational theory'. In particular, their concept of *affect* challenges the scientific model's notion of representation and the objectivity of the researcher. Earlier, I argued that affect refers to 'fields of intensity' powered by desire. The project of knowledge generation therefore cannot be properly understood simply as a matter of disinterested objectivity but rather as something that is

driven in its process by desire. So-called objective representations then become an artifact of the research process itself. Furthermore, if subjects are desiring, affective subjects then this further undermines science's positing of affect-less subjects (researchers) who gain knowledge of the truth which they then transmit (represent) transparently to others.

Second, I would argue that seeing research as writing, text-making and rhetoric is simply another way of highlighting research as a desiring production, one which shares the characteristics of all Deleuze and Guattari's social phenomena. Research in the contemporary moment is a stratum, institutionalized in universities and research institutes, financed by government and grant bodies. It has become a regime of power, increasingly more centralized and subject to hierarchical control. Goal-ordered rationality (an economy of truth) in the service of evidence-based policy and practice has become the norm.

In this context it is worth returning briefly to Deleuze and Guattari's argument about capitalism. Capitalism de-territorialises, it shapes everything into a line of consistency. As Colebrook (2002, p. 127) has expressed it – 'any practice, technology, knowledge or belief can be adopted if it allows the flow of capital'. In research as a rapidly growing stratum, capitalism's lines of consistency are clearly discernible. These connect and unify different practices, establish hierarchies and create rules of organization, trends which are clearly discernible in contemporary research[5]. Consistency can be seen in the pressure on researchers for outcomes that are commercialisable rather than curiosity driven and in the emphasis on research as a driver of economic competitiveness in a globalised world.

Equally, however lines of flight are present, even if not so readily discernible. If we accept what Deleuze and Guattari say about lines of flight, every stratified social phenomenon also includes escapes from, and inversions of, its organisation and centralization. As far as research is concerned, this is relevant both to methodology and to the subject(s) of research. In relation to the latter, as we have noted earlier, Deleuze and Guattari anticipate a different mode of life where repressive modern forms of identity and stasis are overcome and where in a constant process of becoming in a rhizomatic society people can be desiring nomads. This, as we have noted earlier, has been accelerated by the introduction of information technology. Mobile phone and Internet based technologies such as SMS, texting and blogs have created forms of communication that are the most obvious manifestation of hyper-connectivity. The effect of this is to encourage nomadism, to set free nomadic otherness[6]. Thus the subject of research comes to be understood as a nomad and the subject (object) of research becomes nomadism. Even the place of desire becomes a site for research into hybridity and non-linear and multi-linear forms.

The recognition both of lines of flight in research and of research itself as a line of flight means that methodology becomes more multiple and flexible, no longer solidly stratified in scientific method as the only guarantor of knowledge, truth and certainty. Methodology too can take off on a line of flight where in terms of approaches to, and in processes of, doing research, difference and multiplicity are emphasized. The authorial omniscience of the researcher, the demand that all research demonstrate completeness and integrity, all have been challenged; a challenge which parallels Deleuze and Guattari's challenge to all totalizing logics and processes, hierarchy and authority.

Getting off a line of flight

I have tried to show that research is a stratum that like all strata manifests contradictory tendencies which following Deleuze and Guattari I refer to as lines of consistency and lines of flight. The research process, contrary to the model of science, can be better understood as rhizomatic rather than arborescent and powered by desire rather than objectivity. In order to "ground" this way of seeing research differently I have taken lifelong learning and electronic communication as both context and catalyst within which to locate and foreground research. There is a powerful symmetry between lifelong learning, hyper-connectivity (which uncannily embodies, and has helped to bring about, a society with rhizomatic characteristics[7]) and Deleuze and Guattari's critique of hierarchy and authority.

For researchers in the field of education both these phenomena and their rhizomatic characteristics have significant implications for doing research. Lifelong learning presents itself as a legitimate area of research and being rhizomatic it requires a rhizomatic approach and sensibility in the researcher. The hyper-connectivity of the Internet reinforces this development influencing the way research is carried out and the way its knowledge outcomes are distributed and used – a research without hierarchy and authority. Thus whilst I would not wish to make predictions per se about research, I would at the same time argue that many of the directions in which the trends are moving are clearly discernible.

Notes

[1] I mean this in a Heidegger an sense
[2] The Internet is also decentralized at a basic level of organization since as a network of networks, new networks may be added provided they conform to standard communications protocols.
[3] Or as Deleuze and Guattari playfully put it: *pas les points, mais les ponts*
[4] These fields of intensity are produced and experienced not only by humans, but by different forms of 'agency' such as animals and computers, or even movement, thought, and space.
[5] I am reminded here of Lyotard's argument that all research in the contemporary becomes "performative"
[6] Of course, underlying nomadic otherness are very often the commercial pressures of contemporary capitalism.
[7] By this I mean that Deleuze and Guattari did not explicitly foresee this although it is immanent in their work

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Workplace 'learning' and adult education

Messy objects, blurry maps and making difference

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Abstract

This article reviews diverse representations of learning evident among published accounts of workplace learning across fields such as adult education, human resource development, management and organisation studies. The discussion critically addresses the question of how to mediate a multiplicity of definitional, ideological and purposive orientations. The argument here is that the issue is not perspectival, but ontological. The critical problem lies in mistaking learning as a single object when in fact it is enacted as multiple objects, as very different things in different logics of study and practice. Particularly in the contested arena of work as a site of economic conflict and production, learning needs to be appreciated as a messy object, existing in different states, or perhaps a series of different objects that are patched together through some manufactured linkages.

Keywords: workplace; learning theory; multiple ontologies

If a field called 'workplace learning' can be argued to exist, it would need to embrace research and interventions now proliferating within a wide range of fields. Adult education is only one of these regions, itself a highly multi-disciplinary, conflictual and elusive group of activities and actors. Adult education finds itself tackling issues of workplace learning alongside fields which often operate with fundamentally different starting points and purposes, yet share equally strong interest and investment in workplace learning. These fields include, at the minimum, human resource development with its focus on developing organizations and individual careers; organization and management studies with primary interests in understanding and improving organizational performance and culture; professional and vocational education concerned with training individuals; and labour studies oriented to workers' well-being and collective empowerment. While the same terms - 'learning', 'development', 'pedagogy' and 'education' – are visible in the discourses of all of these fields, they bear radically different meanings, framed by different logics and questions. These terms

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also are employed towards very different ends. The term *learning* is used, for example, to refer to skill development, information access and personal consciousness-raising for individuals. The same term is employed to describe system processes ranging from innovation and organizational change to knowledge management. Further, as Usher and Edwards (2007) show in their extended discussion of lifelong learning discourses, 'learning' is a wily shapeshifter, conjuring itself in discursive guises such as policy imperative, code for growth, and synonym for education. One is tempted sometimes to abandon the word as utterly hollowed out of any meaning worth discussing.

But in most studies of workplace learning, the term is employed straightforwardly in attempts to represent an actual observed phenomenon. Something happens in work activity, something distinct from other aspects of the ongoing flow of interactions and labour, that is called learning. Not many writers, as this discussion will show, offer precise definitions about what they mean by 'learning' when they present their descriptions of this phenomenon. This tendency to omit explicit definitions of learning, either because it's too difficult or it seems unnecessary, reinforces the problematic assumption that 'learning' is a single object, self-evident and mutually understood. Further, the disparate and often conflicting purposes for promoting learning in the workplace – from increasing a firm's competitiveness or an individual's labour mobility to building economic democracy or sustainable ecologies in organizations – can become so invisible that we sometimes forget to ask the question that should be core in any discussion of learning: learning *what*, exactly? learning *for what*, because *why*?

These two issues of definition and purpose pose problems for anyone studying workplace learning. The nature of these problems is often attributed to interpretation: we all have different perspectives, and just need to be reminded to make them explicit. However, this article argues for a different analysis. The problem is not simply one of perspective, as though all perspectives can be embraced and understood in a single ontology that values things like inclusion and tolerance. The critical problem lies in mistaking learning as a single object when in fact it is enacted as multiple objects, as very different things in different logics of study and practice. At the very least, particularly in the contested arena of work as a site of economic conflict and production, learning needs to be appreciated as a messy object, existing in different states, or perhaps a series of different objects that are patched together through some manufactured linkages. For those who align themselves more with the sensibilities of adult education, however they might define that field, than with fields such as human resource development (HRD), management, organization, vocational or labour studies, there lies a responsibility in surfacing and confronting this problem. Because the understanding of learning is arguably a core tenet of adult education tradition, we should expect adult education researchers to help delineate the diverse objects that have come to be represented under the one over-stretched signifier of 'learning'. Even better, adult education might help extend conceptual strategies for bridging these messy objects calling themselves learning, and suggest languages for tracing their diverse enactments.

The discussion here draws from a review of workplace learning articles published in journals across fields of HRD, organization/management studies, and adult education. This review illustrates the messy object(s) and purposes that are called learning among these publications. The first section of the article outlines the diverse maps of learning that emerged in the study, showing how researchers in diverse fields were conceptualizing and representing various workplace phenomena that they all referred to as learning. The second section discusses the distinctions among these phenomena, arguing that these represent fundamental differences that are not merely definitional, but also ontological: that they actually delineate different objects of study. The third section

discusses these themes with a view to exploring the responsibility of adult education confronting these messy objects and blurry maps of workplace learning. This responsibility is not just about, or even mostly about, normative purposes associated with 'making a (positive) difference', but about making *difference* that resists the press to seek similarity. Making difference resists the assumption that learning is one universally-understood phenomenon and that all workplace learning purposes are benignly aligned: making difference is about highlighting distinctions and provoking debates, as well as about building the partial connections that may be possible between those distinctions.

Different objects and maps of learning

The study from which this discussion draws was a meta-review of workplace learning research published in ten journals within the six-year period 1999-2004. All articles in these journals that focused on topics clearly pertaining to *learning* in and through work (processes, dimensions, relations) were included in the analysis. The journals, all scholarly refereed publications, were selected to represent diverse audiences in adult education, management/organization studies, and HRD (the brackets show the number of articles from that journal included in the review): *Journal of Workplace Learning (52), Management Learning (44), Organization Studies (16), Organization (9), International Journal of Lifelong Education (8), Studies in Continuing Education (21), Studies in the Education of Adults (7), Human Resource Development International (20), and Human Resource Development Quarterly (31)*. Methodological details of article selection and analysis, as well as full discussion of the themes and the study limitations, are reported in Fenwick (2008) and Fenwick and Rubenson (2005). The focus here is on the researchers' diverse objects of inquiry. While most researchers explicitly used the term 'learning' to represent these objects, almost none defined explicitly what they meant by learning. Many invented different models or maps to articulate these objects. We grouped these maps into eight categories. The groupings were emergent, and were intended to capture what seemed to be ontological distinctions in the relations among knowledge, individual minds, experienced events, groups of people in action, and whatever was construed to be the 'organization'. In most of the publications, the focus was on relations of the social and personal, with a concern to distinguishing the 'individual' and various configurations of the 'collective' or group. In a very few publications, authors eschewed such distinctions and worked with more emergent or blurred categories, and even included non-human objects as important actors. These were so few (in this period of workplace learning literature) that we grouped them into one category even though there are significantly different orientations collected there. Of course, the delineation of any categories such as these eight is an imperfect map-making exercise. Some categories overlap. Some may protest this particular map's inclusions, exclusions, and forms of representation. So let us treat these categories as nothing more than provisional and indicative, a way of introducing the discussion that follows in section two. Each theme here is described only briefly to indicate the key distinctions reported in the earlier publications.

1. Sensemaking and reflective dialogue

Here the emphasis is on learning as reflective meaning-making, through language. Appearing in 14 articles or about 6% of the dataset, the sensemaking theme portrays

learning as individual and collective construction of (new or altered) meanings: to identify problems, emerge solutions, or engage in collective inquiry. Research focused on the nature of reflection, and what factors influence particular meaning constructions at work (Svensson, Ellström & Aberg, 2004). The collective was viewed as a prompt for individual critical reflection, a forum for meaning sharing among individuals, and a forum for conflicting meanings that must be worked through to create new knowledge. Further, the collective moulds particular meanings among workers (such as accepting the opinions of those in power). Yet individual intentions shape the meanings they bring to the collective (Jørgensen, 2004). A number of studies took up story-telling for work learning: building the collective, helping it appreciate issues, confront counter stories, reconstruct canonized stories, and name its experiences (e.g. Abma, 2003). However, researchers critical of sensemaking ideas showed the rarity in practice of group critical reflection, dialogue and inquiry. Individuals are disillusioned with such practices (Snell, 2002), and the notion fails to sufficiently account for power relations in workplaces and knowledge hierarchies – including those created by researchers.

2. 'Levels' of learning

Here the organization and individual (and team) are viewed as separate, distinct levels and forms of learning, not intertwined or co-participational. This static layer-cake depiction, present in about 17 articles or 8% of the dataset, is similar to the networks model (#3 below) but goes beyond linear transmission of information to acknowledge practices and politics. Research focused on what happened at different levels, how different levels affected one another, how to link the levels in practice, and how/when to balance the 'exploratory' (knowledge creating) with the 'exploitive' (knowledge diffusion) dynamics. An example is Lehesvirta (2004) analysing interactions among three learning levels (individual, group, organization) and four processes (intuiting, interpreting, integrating, and institutionalising). Brady and Davies (2004) suggested different learning phases (innovation, sharing, routinizing) for different project phases and levels such as individual-to-project. The link between levels was often conceptualised rather mechanistically as cross-fertilization, diffusion, pipeline sharing, and even motoring (Cule & Robey, 2004). Factors affecting the linkage of different learning 'levels' were identified as social (e.g. tensions, caution and blame created between levels of micro-politics), institutional (rules, or protection mechanisms at each level); or personal (individual career aspirations). Only two articles worked more critically within a 'levels' analysis of learning, and both used a critical conflict perspective contrasting collective structures (labour exchange process and human capital ideology of workplace) with workers' learning (conceived as worker empowerment and autonomy).

3. Networks of information transmission

Here, learning refers to individuals and teams sharing useful strategies through networks within and across organizations, often electronically-enabled, primarily for purposes of improving others' performance. Learning is thus information transmission, through networks which operate as linear pipelines. (This orientation, it must be noted, is fundamentally different to the tenets of actor-network theory which, although using the term 'network', conceives networks and their assemblage and power in much more complex terms). Networks as linear information transmission was evident in 19 articles or about 9% of the dataset. The key research preoccupations are improving diffusion: 'capturing', managing and organizing content, removing network barriers, and generally

facilitating efficient, effective information flow or 'knowledge transmission' (just-in-time) through a network. Learning networks are reported to take different shapes related to contexts, work characteristics, interactions, actor dynamics and strategies; interorganizational networks are the most complex and take long time periods to develop.

Most other findings reported in this data set are related to socio-cultural issues. Individuals and teams are willing to share if sharing is valued and supported; and if the organization restructures pay-offs for contributing, increases efficacy perceptions, and makes employees' sense of group identity and personal responsibility more salient (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). Micro-politics inhibit free knowledge sharing (Currie & Kerrin, 2004), affects what information is shared and what is perceived as actual and desired performance. Critique of this network transmission model focuses on its linearity, rational conception of knowledge, and tendency to separate knowledge from activity (Wood & Ferlie, 2003).

4. Communities of practice

This notion, popularized principally by Wenger (2000), views learning as participation, embodied in the joint action of a group of practitioners sharing identity, tasks and/or environment. The individual does not receive particular attention as separate from the community: the relation of individual learning processes to collective processes is rarely actually theorized, so individual difference in perspective, disposition, position, social/cultural capital, and forms of participation is unaccounted for. The CoP orientation, despite its apparent proliferation in workplace learning discourses, appeared in only 24 articles or about 11% of the dataset. Research seeks to explain the adaptation and reconfiguration of practices to meet changing pressures, and identify ways to facilitate these dynamics. Community learning is affected by both relational stability (trust), variety (new ideas, risk), and group structure (networks, competence) (Bogenrieder & Nooteboom, 2004). Learning is constrained by time pressure, deferral, and centralization within and across projects (Keegan & Turner, 2001). At least five articles discussed problems with the CoP model, including its insufficient analysis of macro-politics and solidarities within the community expertise and specialized knowledge (especially how to develop it during rapid change); individual habitus and agency/structure dynamics; and innovation, which appears to occur more at interface of CoPS than within them (Reedy, 2003; Swan, Scarbrough & Robertson, 2002).

5. Individual human development

Here the focus is solidly on the individual, with the assumption that the individual learns and then affects the group. The purpose is mostly about developing individuals, not producing skills and innovation for the organization (Jacobs & Washington, 2003). The general base is constructivist learning, e.g. through reflection, and respect for individual's history, with focus on individual's meaning-making and helping individuals to continually learn. This orientation of individual human development, appearing in about 27 articles or 13% of the dataset, was particularly prominent in discussions of continuing professional education and human resource development. Research preoccupations included how to promote individuals' self-directed learning capability (Straka, 2000), and how to understand the relation of work to individual developmental processes and learning styles. The role of the collective was vague or not mentioned, but the primary assumption was that aspects of context served primarily to foster the individual's learning ability.

6. Individual knowledge acquisition = human capital

These articles presented learning in the most conventional cognitive terms, as an individual human process of mentally acquiring and storing new concepts and skills/behaviours. The focus frequently was on the translation of learning to capabilities or capital that adds value to organizational resources (Nafukho, Hairston & Brooks, 2004). This perspective was present in all journals except two, and appeared to be the dominant perspective in about 34 articles or 16% of the data set (the frequency dropped off after about 2001 in all fields except human resource development). Research tended to focus on how to 'harness', draw out and use the individual's acquired knowledge. Preoccupations included transferring acquired knowledge to practice, measuring competency (reliable valid measures and competence definitions are identified as problematic), narrowing the gap between training investment and results, and turning 'tacit' knowledge acquisition into 'explicit' knowledge (Wiethoff, 2004). A key finding of this review overall was that, despite some movement to more practice-based, socio-material conceptions of learning, where boundaries between individuals and objects are considered mutually constitutive and learning is viewed as relational knowledge production rather than mentalist acquisition, the conception of learning as individual knowledge acquisition persists strongly.

7. Co-participation and emergence

Each of these terms 'co-participation' and 'emergence' arose to characterize an enmeshment of individual and social processes, usually acknowledging the importance of artifacts as mediators in these processes. This category, including 35 articles or 17% of the dataset, embraces various perspectives of learning as knowledge creation through social or even socio-material participation in everyday activity. The conception is of mutual interaction and modification between individual actors, their histories, motivations and perspectives, and the collective (including social structures, cultural norms and histories, other actors). Some theorists retain the individual as an autonomous singularity, distinct from other elements comprising the community. Billett (2004) for instance delineates the agency/biography of individuals as separate but interacting with the affordances/constraints of work environments in a dynamic of 'relational interdependency'. Olesen (2001) also maintains a clear separation between individuals, their subjective experiences and identity, and the collective - particularly the social division of labour and social practices of everyday work – while emphasizing ongoing mutual interaction and influence. Elkjaer (2003), from a pragmatic perspective drawing from Deweyan concepts of experiential learning through inquiry, delineates the collective from individuals and individual processes of thinking 'to acquire' and reflection to pose and solve problems, but views individuals and organizations as 'inseparable' for both are 'products and producers of human beings and knowledge' (p. 491). Other more radical versions expanded the 'collective' to include environmental architecture, discourses and objects, as in actor-network theory (in three articles) where knowledge circulates and is 'translated' in each interaction of one agent mobilizing another. Cultural-historical activity theory (in seven articles) viewed individual and organization in dialectical relationship, where learning is occasioned by questioning practices or contradictions of the system, and is distributed among system elements: perspectives, activities, artefacts, affected by all contributors and clients. Complexity theory (in seven articles) explicitly uses the term 'emergence'. Learning here is

inventive/adaptive activity produced continuously through action and relations of complex systems, occasioned through disturbance.

Most agreed that learning is prompted by particular individuals (guides or mentors), events (conflict or disturbance), leaders (e.g. encouraging inquiry, supporting improvisation), or conditions ('learning architecture'). Issues raised included accreditation and assessment of learning when it's buried in co-participation, how to distinguish desirable from undesirable knowledge development, how to account for changing notions of what is useful knowledge, and identifying different influences of particular groups in the co-participational flux (positional, generational, gendered, etc).

8. Individuals in community

This orientation, evident in about 41 articles or 19% of the dataset, maintains a clear separation between the individual as a being and the community as a sort of monolithic, identifiable container. The individual learns through action in this community, and learning is affected by social, cultural cognitive contexts, but the fundamental focus remains the *individual*. This is a key distinction from the communities of practice orientation. Here, environment is only a *mediating* factor on individual learning and cognition, separate from the individual, not entwined with it. The individual affects the community knowledge by injecting new ideas, and the community affects the individual's behaviour through teaching, providing resources, enabling action opportunities, etc. Research focused on what kinds of environments/communities positively affect individuals' learning and how to generate these conditions; and how individual learning can help improve the community. Findings reported in the data set stress differences among individuals in expectations, preferences and ways of participating (Filstad, 2004) including women and younger workers. Individual differences are affected by the collective's structures and opportunities/barriers to learning. Those with a greater sense of control over their work are more likely to engage in learning (Livingstone, 2001), such as in more democratic work structures or professionals developing individual expertise. The impact of the collective on individual learning is greatest in socialization (task mastery, role clarification, and social integration) and in defining or demanding particular competencies, and in the reward system and values placed on learning. However, even embedded in social structures, the individual retains a 'durable disposition' to act (Mutch, 2003), and workers organize their own learning regardless of management boundaries and innovation expectations (Poell & Van der Krogt, 2003).

Overall, across the different categories and orientations calling themselves 'learning' that emerged in this review of publications from 1999-2004, some general observations might be ventured. First, in this period of literature about work processes and activities, perhaps linked somewhat to the first international conference for *Researching Work and Learning* held in 1999 (at the University of Leeds), there was a flowering of publication about workplace learning across diverse fields ranging from studies in innovation and technology to migration research. Second, a large part of this literature foregrounded some notion of 'context' in its discussions of learning. In particular, the most prominent preoccupation was conceptualize the relations between the individual and the collective: in producing knowledge, in modifying practices, in mutually constituting (or resisting) one another, and in opening or closing opportunities for reciprocity. Third, in a small number of publications, we saw some emphasis on the role of material artefacts, such as texts and tools, in conceptions of learning. However alongside these expanding threads, there persisted more conventional 'mentalist'

orientations to learning as an individual acquisitive phenomenon, often rooted in normative positions of improvement along a linear trajectory of development.

After 2005

What has transpired in the five years since this review was conducted? We did not conduct a systematic follow-up meta-review. However, the following observations are offered in the spirit of informal notes from a dedicated reviewer of workplace learning literature. As such they are subject to the usual limitations, idiosyncracies and fallibilities of any interpretive exercise, particularly an overview. First, it seems clear that these interests in relations between individuals and the collective, and in particular the role of materiality and artefacts in workplace learning, appear to be increasing. A 'practice-based turn' was signalled a decade ago in organizational studies through publications such as Schatzki (2001) and Gherardi (2000). This trend has been growing, claims Gherardi (2009) in her introduction to a recent special issue in *Management Learning* (Vol. 40 No. 2) devoted to views of practice-based learning. This issue features articles that take learning to be the ongoing configurations and reconfigurations of practice – unfolding, emergent, situated in activity, acknowledging the important mediating function of artefacts but still focusing on the human interactions of activity.

Another, related branch of inquiry that receives increased attention of late is Science and Technology Studies or STS. In a recent special issue of *Organization* devoted to STS (*Vol. 16 No. 1*), authors emphasise materiality in learning, as well as ontological politics – people literally juggling different but overlapping realities in practice settings (e.g. Hitchin & Maksymiw, 2009). The relative lack of attention to STS concepts and methods among educational researchers is surprising, particularly in workplace learning issues where digital media and other technologies have become intimately entwined with work activity and knowledge sources. Another socio-material orientation that to date appears only rarely in educational research is critical realism. First promoted in different forms by Roy Bhaskar and Margaret Archer, critical realism is gaining significant attention in organization/management studies of workplace learning, according to Fleetwood (2005). In contrast, the world of cultural-historical activity theory has grown to establish a dominant position in Europe and the UK in educational workplace learning analyses (e.g. Daniels, Edwards, Engeström & Ludvigsen, 2009; Unwin, Felstead, Fuller, Bishop, Lee, Jewson, & Butler, 2007; Sawchuk, 2006) as well as in organization studies.

In studies of professional learning, discussions of learning as reflective practice – still largely conceived as a process of mentalist, individual meditation on lived experience – continue to lead the debates (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Bradbury, Frost, Kilminster & Zukas, 2010; Fook & Gardner, 2007). However, Boud (2010, p. 32) now interrupts what he refers to as 'earlier ideas' treating learning *as* reflection by arguing that 'Reflection connects work and learning; it operates in the space between the two. It provides a link between knowing and producing.' Just what is *learning* in this orientation is not explicit, though Boud's step away from learning as a primarily mentalist reflective process is significant given his historic and frequently-cited contributions to this view. The new journal *Vocations and Learning: Studies in Vocational and Professional Education* (Springer), launched in 2008, features diverse framings but in particular has published several pieces exploring professional identities, and links among professionals' learning, expertise, identity and even policy.

Psychoanalytic understandings of professionals' learning have been flourishing in some isolated pockets of educational research (e.g. see Britzman, 2009; Olesen, 2007; West, 2004). Here, learning is conscious encounters with the raw desires, fears and

messy difficulty of the unconscious or what Lacan calls the 'Real'. Again, such explorations are overlooked in adult education's treatments of workplace learning. A particularly promising body of European work on professional learning has recently emerged to conceptualize 'epistementalities' of professionals, highlighting the relations of individuals' epistemic strategies with professional knowledge cultures, mediated by objects, as these play out in the shifting tensions of particular work activities and challenges (Lahn & Jensen, 2007; Knorr-Cetina, 2007; Nerland, 2010).

Finally, questions of power seem now to enjoy increased importance in analyses of learning in the workplace. In the meta-review focused on publications of 1999-2004, only 15 percent touched upon power relations in learning such as politics of micro-social relations, knowledge and identity, organizational hierarchies and recognitions. Fewer than 10% at that time addressed gender relations and less than 5% mentioned race or class issues in learning. Those articles that discussed power in any depth were almost exclusively theoretical in nature (e.g. Huzzard, 2004). Community-of-practice studies often glossed over cultural-political dynamics or issues of control and centralizing tendencies in such communities. In studies where power was mentioned the reference tended to be to the micropolitics of the organization rather than systemic analyses of how power functions to position people and practices, promote interests, recognize some knowledge and ignore others. However recently, perhaps partly due to the proliferation of texts and talks at least in the UK related to 'critical management studies' (CMS), there have appeared more publications discussing emancipatory learning in the workplace in organization/management studies. Human resource development scholarship in particular has registered growing interest in 'critical HRD' derived from CMS approaches (e.g. see Callahan, 2007 & Stewart, Rigg & Trehan, 2007). More workplace learning studies have appeared recently employing Foucault's conceptions of governmentality, disciplinary circuits producing power, and technologies of the self (e.g. Fejes & Nicoll, 2008). Only three articles of the original meta-review employed Foucauldian concepts, which is odd given the early proliferation of Foucault-inspired analyses in education and learning (Ball, 1990; Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998).

Learning as product, as process, as practice

An inherent source of confusion is the use of the term 'learning' as both a verb (the process of learning) and as a noun (the product of a change process). While process and outcome are related, they are enacted as different phenomena, and provoke different questions. Learning as process is elusive and imminent. It resists representation, and is usually inferred through glimpses such as narrative accounts or 'indicators' awkwardly manufactured from visible activity. Further complicating notions of learning as process are the different foci used by analysts. Some are discussing the process by which an individual constructs new concepts or develops new behaviours, often for purposes of informing pedagogic efforts to support this process. But for organizational developers, what is meant by learning is often the process of collective change, such as knowledge creation as a movement from the birth of an innovation to its embedding in organizational routines. For others, learning is more radical: a transformation in the basic assumptions structuring an individual's core beliefs or a group's cultural practices.

For some, learning is ongoing everyday sense-making, a natural part of the assemblage of one's life narratives, within individuals or among groups – which begs questions about the distinction between 'learning' and breathing, or between learning and experience. In its broadest terms, the learning-as-process view embraces all meaning-making. Billett (2000) writes, if we are thinking and acting we are learning. Learning is continuous active improvisation (Tikkanen, 2002), or continuous collective

construction of a social reality (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). But if learning embraces all conscious experience and sense-making, individual and collective, what then is *not* learning? The object that was learning ultimately dissolves.

In learning studies drawing from a 'practice-based' or participational metaphor, learning is almost conflated with ongoing practice itself. Practices are described in terms of knowledge-circulation, and learning is then a web of micro-interactions socializing workers and their tools to a community. For some the purposes have to do with an individual becoming a fuller participant in practice, while others strive for an outcome of changed or 'reconfigured' practices. Practice is reified and learning limited to actions recognizable within an existing community of routines.

As described in Fenwick (2006), learning is also used to refer to outcomes: the knowledge produced or the evidence of behavioural change. Some clarify their intent to examine product by calling it 'learning outcome', but many simply use learning to mean both knowledge-creating actions as well as new knowledge that has been created and captured (e.g. Macpherson, Jones, Zhang & Wilson, 2003). Hager (2004) argued that the common-sense view of learning is in fact product-oriented: most people think of learning as acquisition of new skills. In these orientations, learning = knowledge which = information. Information is often treated in a static fashion as something that can be created, used, exchanged and stored. Few questions are raised about what is recognized as new, what is 'useful', what is foregrounded as a solution, or from whose vantage point (spatially and temporally) all of these judgments are made. Most critical, the meaning and scope of the term learning as employed by the author(s) or the workplace actors is rarely made explicit in these writings. Not only hidden realities, but also hidden normativities lurk in these enactments.

Whether or not we accept the eight categories into which the meta-review grouped the diverse enactments of learning that were evident in these studies, or whether we agree that learning as product or residue is fundamentally distinct from learning as process, it is difficult to discern much commonality among these understandings. Knowledge acquisition achieved by an individual is arguably a wholely different phenomenon to ongoing human development (emotional, intellectual, social), but also distinct from networks of information flow, or levels of knowledge-making. Processes of meaning-making may share links with the embodied activity of joint participation, but one exists in a world of human interpretation and its representation while the other is located among webs of imminent material enactments. These phenomena appear related, but they are different. Different and the same at once, co-existing, sometimes in the same space. They are messy objects.

Messy objects and multiple ontologies

Why does this matter? Mostly because we can waste a lot of time arguing over definitions and normative prescriptions of learning, or about which theory of learning is the best (has the most explanatory power, is the more robust, fecund, generalizable, etc), or about what workplace learning is the most desirable (most politically supportable, most useful, etc) when we might simply acknowledge that we are talking about different objects. To try to collapse these objects into one and suggest that they are simply different worldviews is to assume that there is one world, one ontology (for example, that of whomever is speaking). Everyone and everything else is appropriated into this one world. Others' worlds of framing, touching, analysis and reality are relegated to being merely a different 'view' of this world. With such a move, then, we can compare

these views and even find them deficient according to the prevailing ontological laws governing our own knowledge. Henare, Holbraad and Wastell (2006) show how classical anthropology often fell into this trap. For example, an ethnographer meets Cuban diviners who try to show him that aché, a substance used in their séances, constitutes divinatory power. Our researcher may understand this as their (naïve) worldview of what is really just white powder. But for the Cuban diviners, the powder *is* magic, it *is* power. In their reality, this object is fundamentally different to the white powder that exists for the researcher. Henare et al. argue that this is an important distinction – to appreciate that the question is not just of different worldviews, but of different ontological worlds. In studies of workplace learning, it seems that a similar thing is happening: we each may be looking at an object that appears to be the same entity, and calling it the same thing, when it actually exists as different co-habiting entities.

Returning to the articles that were compared in the meta-review (Fenwick, 2008), a focus of attention for many of these studies was the *context* of learning. The reality of just *what* constitutes context ranged considerably. Among those adopting the community of practice or co-participation/co-emergence approach, context was a sort of decentered web of relations. Within this relational mesh, there is no discernible learning individual separable from particular actions, cultural norms and practices. But in the majority of articles, particularly evident in the themes of individual acquisition, individual development and individual in community, context was a container in which the individual moves. Most writers ascribed to this container both the social and material environments surrounding the actors named learners, including other people, objects and technologies. Some also acknowledged the larger cultural discourses and practices circulating in this container, to break free from a purely material view of a spatial container.

Within this reality, the 'collective' in learning processes was presented differently on a range of degree and direction of causality. One approach presented the collective as a given environment, a set of conditions, disciplines, practices and objects within which a learning agent interacted. The degree to which this set of conditions was interdependent with or entirely separate from the learning agent varied, but it was not ascribed causality. Few outside the co-participation/co-emergent themes analysed how this environment came into existence, or how its conditions changed through learning interactions. A second presentation ascribed more active pedagogic intervention to the collective, configuring the collective as an agent actively facilitating learning (human mentors, a set of directions, or diffuse affordances and inhibitors of learning embedded within the collective). A third enacted the collective as a causal entity entirely separate from the learner, acting upon the learner through determining ideologies, intentional programs, or organizational structures. A fourth approach most evident in the sensemaking theme reversed the direction of causality, configuring the collective as the outcome of learning, constructed through individuals' meanings or actions.

What is apparent in these four presentations of the pedagogic function of the collective and the ranging perspectives of context are fundamentally different ontological orientations. Those inhabiting a realist world (which appear evident, albeit to different degrees of reflexivity, in the themes of individual acquisition, levels of learning, network utility, and co-participation/co-emergent) assume that the real existence of objects, activities, people and associated occurrences of learning should not be confused with human perceptions of these things. Those adopting a constructivist orientation (which arguably might include the themes of individual in community and individual development) assume that individuals' meaning-making in work is the most

important focus in questions of learning; objects and activities are separate from but not theorized as part of these constructed meanings. And those working within the logics and languages of social constructionism (evident in certain writings grouped here as themes of communities of practice and sensemaking) assume that all things in work – objects, ideas, subjectivities, practices and the learning processes through which they come into being and become adapted and transformed – are constructed through shared meaning-making, and that there is no 'real' beyond these constructions. The argument here is that these are not simply examples of different perspectives, but of different ontologies. Those of us studying workplace learning are often witnessing the enactment of distinct phenomena in fundamentally different realities, that all are referred to as learning. They are messy objects that sometimes overlap and inhabit each other's presence.

If we accept this argument, what then should we do about it? Typically social science researchers want to link with one another's findings, to seek some relation among these enactments, or perhaps extend or apply them. One approach to linkage is to assume that we are all investigating different parts of the same thing (the elephant's tail, ear and trunk) and we just need to feel our way to the big thing. With learning, there is no reason to assume that there is one phenomenon with different parts, but then, there is no reason not to assume this. In fact, we might try interrupting our impulse to synthesize a seamless continuity, to recognize that different things can co-exist in what appears, or is constructed, to be seamless. Another approach is to somehow patch together these different objects, however ambivalent or even incoherent these patches may be. Practitioners in the workplace do this all the time, as Mol (2002) showed in studying how an object like a disease is performed in different locations of healthcare. In her detailed study of lower-limb atherosclerosis, she followed its enactment in physicians' discussions with the patient, radiology's focus on comparing images, laboratory examinations of artery fragments, and surgical procedures. Mol (2002) concluded that this apparently single object of atherosclerosis actually materialised as a very different thing in each of these spaces. A unique assemblage of routines, language and instruments not only created a different world, but produced a different atherosclerosis. Yet of course, all of these co-exist – they are patched together so that the patient can proceed through diagnoses and treatment. Indeed, the actors involved might assume they are all dealing with the same phenomenon, if perhaps from different standpoints. But Mol argues persuasively, the actual objects of atherosclerosis enacted in their different practices bear little similarity. In analysing Mol's work and its implications, Law (2004, p. 55, emphasis in original) writes:

> We are not dealing with different and possibly flawed perspectives on the *same* object. Rather we are dealing with *different objects produced in different method assemblages*. Those objects overlap, yes. Indeed, that is what all the trouble is about: trying to make sure they overlap in productive ways.

These different worlds of radiology, surgical theatre, community health clinic and so forth need to create passages among their different worlds, and to somehow communicate across these ontologies. This communication is a critical problem. The language we use to discuss a phenomenon, whether it's aché, atherosclerosis or learning, is deeply embedded in the ontology we inhabit. From within the methods, desires and instruments available to us in this ontology, and through our participation in the method assemblages of this ontology, particular phenomena materialise that we come to recognise and name as 'learning'. Our tendency when we communicate with others who talk about 'learning' from within a different but co-existing ontology is to

fold these others into our own world. Perhaps we recognise different meanings at play, or different purposes, for the same word. But this is folding, so long as we continue to insist upon one ontology (ours) where different subjective perspectives (theirs) move about. But to what extent can we permit that others are enacting fundamentally different phenomena, *different objects* that are also learning, and that are held together in material assemblages that are more-than-human? As long as we explain away such difference as subjective constructions, or perhaps as rhetorical flexibility, we are sustaining a singular and universal material ontology. Here is where the notion of multiple ontologies becomes tricky. Henare et al. (2006) point to the obvious issue that it is partly through our subjective construction that we engage our world and try to appreciate others' worlds. It is through our conceptual capacity that we attempt to understand these worlds – using the conceptual categories, theoretical resources and other apparatus emerging from our own ontology.

Ultimately, Henare et al. (2006) worry that it may be impossible to communicate across ontologies without dissolving the other's world. Can we ever break sufficiently from our own subjective perspectives to engage in the 'method assemblages' of utterly different ontologies? Some like Helen Verran (2001) in her study of science and African logic have argued not only that this is possible, but that people like the Yoruba children she taught in Nigeria have impressive capacities to move between ontologies – a phenomenon she calls 'being-ontics'. Researchers like Verran have found socio-material and socio-technical approaches useful in apprehending multiple ontologies. These socio-material approaches decenter human agency and perspectives and try to trace materiality in ways not possible with traditional resources of phenomenology, sociology, anthropology, even pragmatism. These researchers have been working through all sorts of issues that erupt with the possibility of accepting different multiple worlds instead of insisting they are different subjective *constructions* of reality. These issues include a problem that Mol first called 'ontological politics' (Mol, 1999); the question of how materiality including consciousness is distributed, the problem of representation and language, and the entanglements of human perspectives in producing material assemblages, including those of researchers (e.g. for writers focused in contexts of learning and education research, see Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Hamilton, 2009; Mulcahy, 2007, 2010; Nespor, 1994, 2002; Sørensen, 2009).

But even if we can identify multiple ontologies without folding them into our own, what do we do with this multiplicity? Law (2009) suggests four possible approaches. One way is to trace different 'reals', examining the intersections and interactions between these worlds. This approach, suggests Law, can counter tendencies to view different realities as simply a question of perspective. It opens possible alternatives, by highlighting the complexity of objects and underscoring ontological incoherence. A second approach is to explore the different 'goods' embedded in each real. For instance in enactments of workplace learning, questions of politics can exist as goods of worker empowerment and resistance to oppressive conditions in labour studies, of strategies for gaining advantage in management studies, and of negotiations of educative content and delivery in adult education. Comparing these helps surface hidden normativities woven into the very fabric of different worlds, and steps aside from ideological deadlock over ethics and purpose. Law's third methodological option is to explore what he calls collateral realities, performing a sort of ontological archaeology to examine the qualities of different objects in different spatialities. This approach, he suggests, can expose hidden enacted realities, their collusions and their limits. A fourth option is juxtaposition, placing noncoherent objects against one another, then moving them

around, to explore the tensions and fluidities that emerge among them in different configurations.

Some writers now are exploring multiple ontologies that are enacted simultaneously as workplace learning (Hitchin & Maksymiw, 2009; Mulcahy, 2007). Suchman (2007) shows in her examinations of work activity: How and where is agency produced? she asks. Where is alienation located in everyday interconnected assemblages of objects, hands, eyes, and intentions? How are new realities constructed from sociomaterial intra-actions? A continuing dilemma in any of this work, taking up any of Law's suggested methodological approaches to study workplace learning, is the researcher's implication in the enactment of the different reals. What is being constructed and represented as multiple ontologies still emanates from a knowledge-making authority. The demands are high in such work for reflexivity, for tracing the researcher's complicity in the webs of action, and for accounts explicitly acknowledging their fragility and their presumptions.

Ultimately, the field of education is inherently purposeful. Debates about purposes for intervening in learning, and about the most desirable directions for learning, are a central dialogue in any educational studies. In adult education, these debates are intimately linked with questions about the common good, and about the kinds of society that support human dignity, well being and fairness for all. This is not to suggest that the job for adult education is to prescribe a normative direction for workplace learning, though some have tried to do so. Amidst the many languages and overlapping territories, old maps of workplace learning are at best blurred or torn. In fluid regions where multiple ontologies are acknowledged, refracted through myriad languages and representations, adult education research could accept a dual challenge. First, as Law (2009) suggests, to focus on making difference rather than making similarity. To accept incoherence and messy objects. Whatever approach is adopted, whether tracing different reals, performing ontological archaeology, comparing different goods, or juxtaposing messy objects, we might consider delineating – and accepting – difference, rather than always seeking relations and seamless continuity.

And second, within these multiple ontologies, adult education might seek to explicitly foreground questions of purpose in workplace learning. To surface hidden normativities, including our own, and to foster debates about purpose. This tacks away from our normative tradition in adult education, which usually drives us to decide the good and critique all else, or prescribe the educational forms and content that will create it. Adult educators and researchers might better invest effort in truly appreciating the multiplicity and undecidable ambivalences enacted in activities we variously call 'workplace learning'. The starting point might be to consider carefully our own purposes in studies and practices linked with workplace learning, as endeavours of education: what we can best contribute, and what we do and don't do well. What is distinct about our world? How are *we* complicit and juxtaposed with the environments we study? How can we appreciate the different other worlds that co-habit workplaces, without either folding them into our own ontology or colonizing them with our own purposes? By no means are such questions meant to advocate abandoning educational purpose. Instead, they interrupt the construction of our purposes, and compel us to closely interrogate the moral imperatives and anterior categories that we may be imposing upon others.

Biesta (2007) writes that to take difference seriously means that we have to give up the idea that we can know otherness before we can adequately engage with it. We differ *in the moment* where we encounter and experience difference – which more often than not means: as it confronts us. We could, then, consider our responsibility with respect to

adult education whether in the workplace or elsewhere as helping to open encounters with difference. That is, encounters for purposes of expanding people's experiences and possibilities of what it means to be human. Again, this is not about simply experiencing diversity, as though *difference* consists of interesting variations that need not disturb our own world's norms, values and interests. As Bhaba points out, diversity 'doesn't generally recognise the universalist and normative stance from which it constructs its cultural and political judgements' (1990, p. 209). Instead, this is a responsibility to do with expanding our own, and others, opportunities to actively meet difference. Not to simply treat it as another worldview, a curiosity, which can be folded into one's own little settled ontology. But to meet difference on its own terms, as a unique and different world to our own. When we focus on making difference, rather than similarity, we might be better positioned to consider the bridges and juxtapositions that can be fruitfully undertaken with collaborators enacting expertise and objects from other worlds.

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Invisible colleges in the adult education research world

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Abstract

Invisible colleges - researchers' networks of communicating academic work - are power-generating actors shaping research fields. A key question concerns the relation between local research communities and their dependence on global actors. A key arena is articles and citations in academic journals. An actor-network-inspired empirical investigation of the geographical origin of articles and references in the journal "Studies in the Education of Adults" and a check of references to journals in "Adult Education Quarterly" was made. The origin of articles and study objects in the International journal of Lifelong education was also analysed. Some conclusions can be drawn from the material. One is the heavy impact of "real" geographical location, i.e. the origins of texts and references are located in very specific areas on the map, i.e. in spite of the possibilities of cyberspace and global mobility. Another conclusion is the unilateral relation between an Anglo-American centre and a periphery in the distribution systems of texts. Adult education is faced with a contradictory situation between culturing invisible colleges in adult education and getting resources in the emerging economy of publications and citations through membership in other invisible colleges.

Keywords: bibliometrics; publications; adult education; invisible college; academic journals

Invisible colleges as actor networks

Researchers often have a personal involvement in their work – they are keen on understanding more about the issue they are exploring. The struggle with research questions and the joy and despair of writing is only the beginning of the process aiming at being recognised by some audiences – a process of making research work meaningful (Larsson, 2004). To trace research with a similar interest, but also the researchers behind the research is part of the joy of doing research. The aim is to make your research noticed or more ambitious – to have some mutual contact. The notion of such communication and collaboration between colleagues as creating "invisible colleges"

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was launched by what is generally considered as the founder of scientometrics – de Solla Price (1986, p. 56 ff). He pointed to the early correspondence in the form of letters by scientists in the 17th and 18th centuries. They wrote letters, since it was not easy to meet, but through the letters they were like colleagues at the same college, but an invisible one. These invisible colleges were often international – botanists in the 18th century could be in intensive contact across borders by means of letters. Academic journals later became a supplement to these "private" links forming communication networks. Nowadays, researchers are in touch with each other in various ways – by e-mail, conferences and not least reading each other's articles in journals. Such links can be used in the invisible colleges of our time: networks where ideas grow and results are communicated. However, the academics are operating more and more in a context of an economy of publications and citations (Larsson, 2009), where articles become units in contemporary forms of governance of higher education. We might view networks of citations as "invisible colleges" in the sense that they include and exclude, i.e. create demarcations between which texts will be recognised and which do not deserve to be mentioned. Invisible colleges are in this respect not referring to networks connecting researchers, but connections between texts.

The notion of invisible colleges can fruitfully be "imbedded" in the more general theoretical framework of actor networks, with their stress on relations between actors, human or non-human, producing effects. Not least, they can present us with a Janus face in the invisible colleges: these networks are not only bridges between researchers enjoying each other's contributions to the collective knowledge, the non-human actor "citations" also exercise power. The citations and the connections they represent, the invisible colleges, affect the struggles in the academic world, with consequences for what counts as academic knowledge: "Scientific activity is not about nature, it is a fierce fight to construct reality" (Latour & Woolgar, 1986, p. 243). As can be seen from the examples above, actors in networks can be seen as both humans and non-human things. The latter also have effects, i.e. are actors according to actor-network thinking. Journals, articles and references are thus actors, together with bibliometric databases and ranking lists, in a sociotechnical order powering the invisible colleges. Law & Hetherington (2002) uses other examples: "Texts such as this, newspapers, the pictures on the television at night, books in the libraries, CD roms, maps, films, statistical tables, spreadsheets, musical scores, architect's drawings, engineering designs, all of these are information – but information in material form." (p. 1). The perspective of actor-networks also places questions about the location in the spotlight: the place where something is done or the space, where something is moving comes to the forefront. Geography and space thus become a key category (Edwards & Usher, 2000; Edwards, 2003). In our case, academic journals pick texts written in specific places, which refer to other texts, written in other places. When published, these texts are referred to in still other texts. In this way, networks are created that connect texts, references, and researchers across space, although not in an accidental way. Such networks include and exclude and they are involved in struggles for positions of power - or rather: this side of the face is part and parcel of academic work, whatever the intentions of researchers are. Invisible colleges are also themselves powerful actors.

The emerging economy of publications and citations

The theme of this article - publications and citations in academic journals - has become a very important issue recent years, when bibliometrics has been introduced as an

instrument for steering academic work, research resources and, indirectly, our reputation. An economy of publications and citations thus emerges (Larsson, 2009). Publications and citations become "disembedded symbolic tokens" (Giddens, 1990, p. 21-22) – like money or grades in schools (Andersson, 2000). Winners and losers are created in this game - on all levels - individual researchers, research groups and universities. The fate of disciplines and research areas is also at stake. There is also a geopolitical aspect of this economy; domination based on geography and languages: continents and countries or regions and how they are related to language domination globally and regionally.

Since these bibliometric measurements are very selective, they actually create special cases of invisible colleges, creating boundaries between texts, which count and excluding those, which do not count in the bibliometric databases. The political context is a new way of governing the public sector – New Public Management, which is a part of a neo-liberal utopia, where a business perspective should be expanded to all sectors of the society. This is also a discourse spreading into higher education and to most corners of the world (Elzinga, 2010). An example is the Bologna process, preparing for competition between universities (Fejes, 2008). Higher education has been a target for a long time in countries such as Australia (Davies, Gottsche & Bansel, 2006), while it has arrived somewhat later at universities in continental Europe, as an example of travelling reforms, often implemented with bizarre consequences in some countries (Steiner-Khamsi, 2009). Globalisation in the policy arenas often have the mission of reducing variation and create worldwide uniformity, as in the Bologna process. However, international cooperation can actually be based on the usefulness of variation (Larsson, Abrandt Dahlgren, Walters, Boud & Sork, 2005). Universities in this framework are considered to be an asset generating economic output in their region, but their uniformity is thought to be the basis for competition and comparison, e.g. to undermine the links of universities to the local context. Another guiding principle is that universities also internally should operate in a businesslike manner, i.e. privatization, deregulation and competition, but also the introduction of uniform performance measurements. This discourse is in sharp contrast to earlier discourses of independent scholars, e.g. the Humboltian utopia, formulated in the early 19th century and revitalized after the World War II. However, in countries like Sweden, there has also been a period where especially educational research became an instrument in the construction of a welfare state after the second world war, often built on shared views of the political agenda between researchers and government.

Bernstein (1977) argues that education is not completely parallel to the organisation of society, it is, rather, a contradictory relation, which may also be the case with higher education, i.e. there is a semi-dependance. Contemporary higher education in countries such as the Nordic countries is not completely, but rather partly, neo-liberal. One might rather say that the neo-liberal agenda is in the process of colonizing higher education in this region, while Davies et al. (2006) argue that the neo-liberal university in Australia has reached its peak. The practice of independent scholars is still respected to some extent. If the logic of a private company had permeated Swedish universities, I would not be allowed to publish an article like the present one – there is no freedom of speech in private companies, e.g. you cannot criticize the quality of a company's products in public if you are employed by the company. The logical consequences of utopias must not be the same as the real consequences, e.g. the neo-liberal utopia generates certain practices, which are not expressed in its theory, i.e. neo-classic liberalism. The real New Public Management has, for instance, resulted in the creation of huge bureaucracies in order to operate quasi-markets, e.g. staff involved in

the measurement of performance and in buying and selling exercises between fractions of the same administration (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow & Tinkler, 2006). Since there is no real market, one has to invent some output, which should be the judge of performance, in order to distribute some kind of reward. Huge resources are used in marketing the universities, based on the usual lofty promises – probably eroding the established image of universities as serious and reliable institutions, e.g. very high in relation to the corporate sector, which, in New Public Management ,is viewed as the exemplary organisation (Statskontoret, 2009). Another effect in higher education is that the academic scholars are disempowered, e.g. a reduction of academic self-governance is the consequence of erecting hierarchies similar to those in the corporate sector. University management, the state authorities and external stakeholders are instead strengthened (Elzinga, 2010, p. 11).

One of the problems with the units, which are used to measure performance, is that they are very crude and not very convincing in terms of validity. When universities are ranked, the Shanghai list is probably most often used (ARWU, 2010). The ranking is primarily based on awards (e.g. Nobel prizes) and publication and citation in high ranked journals, especially in the natural sciences. The consequence is that the whole performance of a university is judged from the performance of very few scientists. When such lists are appropriated by public opinion, these very few scientists represent all kinds of aspects of a university, which they have no part in whatsoever – all kinds of teaching and research, also in faculties that do not count. Dunleavy et. al. (2006) discuss what they call perverted incentives as a consequence of the New Public Management, i.e. civil servants do what pays according to the performance criteria and not what they think is rational or reasonable or in the interest of the public good. In the case of research, this is obvious – in order to generate resources one has to concentrate on publishing in a selection of academic journals and not writing books for broader audiences. The most popular tool for bibliometric measurements is ISI/Web of Science – it is used by e.g. the Shanghai list and by the Swedish government as a basis for the allocation of a share of the research resources to the Swedish universities, etc. This database does not recognize books or any other way of communicating, only a selection of academic journals. This gap between what is measured and what is commonly considered to be good performance is, among other things, a consequence of the use of uniform units, which are valid for small sectors of the activities in higher education, but irrelevant in other. One has to develop “citation consciousness” (Paasi, 2005, p. 783) in order to have resources for research. Wright (2009) points out that audit systems teach academics to be accountable selves in order to do what counts (p. 22). Other aspects can be used in order to measure research performance, e.g. how much money researchers or groups of researchers have received from external sources historically. Typically, this kind of performance measure is used to steer resources to these who are already well resourced. However, the lack of validity and rationality is not a very successful argument in practice – it does not stop the practices from being implemented. It would actually not be a good idea to neglect these measurement criteria – the risk is that such a neglect would ruin your chancesto do research. Ironically, a lack of quality in the measurements is typical when the quality of performance of higher education is measured in the New Public Management.

The ruler of the rules

Invisible colleges themselves operate in the conditions of the hierarchy of the economy of publications and citations. One might say that ISI/Web of Science and their selection of media, i.e. journals and then the selection among the journals, set the rules for the invisible colleges: it is a matter of ruling by producing the rules for rulers on a lower level – they judge what counts as valuable research. Only one of the journals on adult education is indexed in ISI: Adult Education Quarterly – it is the only journal where it pays to cited. ISI is owned by a trans-national company, Thomson Reuters. It has occupied the position of constructing the "machinery" and have in this way gained a kind of ultimate power on a meta-level level over academic research. ISI has become a very strong actor in the globalisation of research, creating a trans-national geopolitical order. Today, ISI and its indexes have what is close to a monopoly, strengthened by many actors – the Shanghai list is partly based on ISI, governments such as the Swedish government distribute part of the financial resources to universities based on ISI indexes, and local universities use it as a yard stick in the internal struggles for research resources between disciplines and research groups. However, the swiftly changing technology and economy might mean that ISI will be replaced by e.g. Google. We should therefore focus on the machinery as such, which might be more long-lived: the economy of publication and citations in various versions.

What has so far been even more sustainable is the operation of invisible colleges and their acts of inclusion and exclusion. Viewing their operation from a geopolitical perspective can therefore also be fruitful. This means in our case that we can also look at other journals than those indexed by ISI.

Significant actors: Money and language

Research in adult education as well as research generally is unevenly distributed over the world. There are various reasons for this. The inequalities in material resources between regions of the world are one obvious background. Poor universities cannot afford good libraries. Related to this is the concrete condition of the systems, which make existing research available to researchers – the distribution systems of books and journals and reports etc. This is right now in a flux – from reports and books to journals and from paper distribution to electronic distribution. The new phenomenon of open access, which might reduce the present exclusion of universities and researchers in poor countries from access to articles, is gaining momentum. However, there are other actors than money that have a strong impact. Language is one.

What can you do to be recognized in social science? A first answer should be: Write articles in a language that can be read by many researchers. Nowadays, English has taken the dominating role of being the "lingua franca" in many parts of the world. This situation has accelerated during the post World War II period. Earlier, languages like French and German were many intellectuals' second and third languages. However, this does not seem to be the case anymore. One paradoxical example is how "gurus" like the German "Habermas" and the Frenchman "Foucault" are referred to in English translations and the academic discussion in their own mother tongue is seldom commented on in articles in English. It is like there is a separate invisible college of Foucault in English. Several languages are spoken by more persons than is English – slightly more than 5% of the world population has English as their mother tongue (Ethnologue, 2010). Language domination in the academic world creates various

advantages for those places where English is the local lingua in the economy of publications and citations. One is that there is no separation between publication for a local audience and a world audience – this split in most countries in the world creates more work. An empirical investigation of some science disciplines using the ISI index concludes that "the vast majority of the highly cited papers in a speciality is in fact domestic" (Persson, 2010, p. 398). This is due to US researchers' preference of domestic citations, while researchers in small countries are international. If you write a book in English, it will also be readable in countries where English is the first and second language, but if you are a Polish researcher you might publish in English, but will lose most readers in Poland unless you write a version in Polish. The effects of languages on the construction and operation of invisible colleges is probably fundamental: local languages create networks, connecting researchers, research groups and texts through local language conferences, journals and publishing companies as key actors. It also creates boundaries, which exclude those who does not understand. An investigation of Spanish universities showed that a large proportion of scholars, who were rated as prestigious, do not appear in ISI or Scopus (Extebarria & Gomez-Uranga, 2010).

When there is a globalised economy based on publications and citations, language becomes one important actor in the production of a geopolitical hierarchy. It can also be seen as a tool for other actors, e.g. ISI, which on the whole neglects journals using languages other than English. These positions created by languages are without doubt becoming more and more significant if one want to understand the acts of researchers in the struggles in the economy of publications and citations. Ignoring these aspects of the game can be very risky, e.g. not publishing in English, not cooperating with researchers from the countries that dominate the English-writing academia. Researchers in dominating countries will also be in a position where they need the other researchers to be recognised since the new economy will probably pkace these researchers in a global market of publications and citations. They will probably face falling shares of citations, when researchers from other parts of the world become more skilled in the game. The National Science Foundation (2007) in US actually complained about such falling shares of US research.

Another actor: Geography

The main theme of this article is to discuss the geographical aspect. Basu (2010) shows that the number of journals included in Scopus (Elsevier's bibliometric database, less influential than ISI) from a country explains 80% of the variation in citations from that same country. If the four dominating countries are excluded, the number of journals in a country, which are included in Scopus, explains as much as 87% of the variance. A researcher's citation score in Scopus is more a question of how many journals the have included from the researchers country than the quality as such. This is due to the importance of domestic citations. It shows the importance of geography – in order to be cited you have to have your own country's journals in the databases. Almost all journals in Education and Educational research, which are selected by ISI, are British or North American. Persson (2010) found that the most cited papers were domestic and these were mostly from US, while smaller countries had to be international. Since articles in adult education on the whole will end up in journals classified as education or educational research, we can start by having some empirical data on such ISI indexed journals and how citations are distributed on countries. In which country should you

work in order to be recognized by other academics in ISI indexed journals? The answer suggests that a few countries could be preferred: 89.1% of all citations in ISI-indexed academic journals on education were in articles from five countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and USA[1]. The irony here is that when governments outside of the five dominating countries begin to use ISI to judge the value of their own researchers' work, ISI-indexed academic journals, which consider themselves as primarily British or North American, will probably be invaded by researchers, from other countries, who were not very interested before. If they resist, they will be actors in discrimination, since they have discrimination effects on researchers outside their own countries, whose academic position and success is measured by being published and cited in these journals. As we can see, this is a reciprocal process. This is a part of the globalisation process, where global powers invade local contexts in a way that was not done earlier except during colonial occupation. Higher education has always been international, but in earlier times relations were based on other structures of power. One might say that we are in a dramatic globalisation process in academia, not only as regards research but also as a result of the emergence of a trans-national "export industry" of higher education (Larsson et al., 2005).

Another answer concerns the actual size of research in terms of resources – this might explain the uneven distribution of citations. However, if we look at statistics about OECD countries' investments in Research & Development in relation to GNP, we find that all the five dominating countries, except the US have investments in Research & Development, which are below the OECD average, and US is not among the highest (OECD, 2010).

Invisible colleges in adult education research

It seems that research fields and disciplines varies in the construction of the "actor-network", which the discipline is constituted as. Nespor (1996) writes about Physics as a very narrow actor network and about Management as open and wide, using the notion of actor-networks in an ethnographic study. We might think of adult education research in a similar way, e.g. trying to characterize the practice of this research. In my case, the focus is on artefacts of researchers' work: texts, published in a few journals, which have the potential to be read in many corners of the world. We can ask: Are the indicated invisible colleges e.g. provincial or international, or international in what sense?

Adult education research is not defined and delimited in a very clear way. There can be many reasons, but I want to highlight two. The first has to do with the lack of a common knowledge base, i.e. what could be common knowledge among those who are doing the research. This is not particularly surprising, since it is also the case with educational research in general and also areas such management, gender studies, etc. – research areas, which are more defined by their study object than by a perspective. What becomes more troublesome is the lack of common delimitations of what constitutes this study object: Is it adults who are taught or also adults who are learning without being taught, or is the educational system provided for adults, etc. Does higher education belong here and what about human resource development? The answers are provisional and shift according to the region in which the research activity takes place. In relation to academic journals, there is a difficulty since various invisible colleges operate at least partly independently from each other, e.g. in higher education, human resource development and in learning in the workplace. The second problem concerns the tendency for researchers to belong to several sub-disciplines. A lot of adult education

research is sociological and some of it develops themes, which could be part of educational philosophy. Some researchers use learning theory as a result of which they participate in conferences, where all the participants are connected by such theory, which operate as a producer of a node in an actor-network. One might say that many adult education researchers belong to several invisible colleges or are at least faced with such choices. The challenge for a new journal, like RELA, is a difficult one since some of these rival sub-disciplines offer better rewards, e.g. have journals, which are indexed in ISI. Higher education had, for instance, 13 such journals among ISI's selection in education and educational research in 2007 (Larsson, 2009). This lack of concentration, i.e. that the researcher is often connected to several invisible colleges, has an undermining effect on the strength of adult education research as a collective – it becomes a loose network that cannot act forcefully. This is the condition for a new journal and nothing can really be done in the short term to have it included in the selective databases.

The invisible colleges can be viewed as less volatile, slowly transforming entities. My analysis is therefore not delimited to the indexes and their selection of journals, but concerns the more general question about the invisible colleges or networks of references to texts and their location in journals. On the other hand, invisible colleges and their power also change and are to some extent dialectically related to the technology of the EPC and similar managerial tools.

Since I want to have my conclusions and reasoning empirically grounded, journals in adult education/lifelong education and their citations could give some contribution to the reasoning. We can look upon references as an indication of which texts counts in the sense that the author want to give a sign that the text is valuable. One can then look for the geographical origin of the text and then have a map of the connections. On such a basis we might characterize our research field in terms of actor-networks as they are described by the choice of references.

Data

Empirical data consist of origins of first authors of articles and also authors of the articles, which are referred to in the reference lists of the articles in two volumes of "Studies in the Education of Adults": Volume 2005 as well as the autumn 2008/spring 2009 issues. The origin of the first author was traced through Google Scholar or sometimes just Google, but also by tracing the article or book. A second investigation concerned "Adult Education Quarterly". Here, I looked for the journals referred to in the articles of the only ISI-indexed journal in our field. This is used for a discussion about their geographical origin. Do authors publishing in this journal refer to articles in other academic journals, i.e. what is the chance of being cited in AEQ and in this way become noted in ISI's index? A third empirical example is the "International Journal of Lifelong education", where the origin of authors was investigated as well as the contexts of empirical studies. I also looked at the texts in Studies of the education of Adults in order to see how the articles contextualise their interpretations: if they care to relate to empirical results from other countries or if they try to explain the context of their text in a way that makes it accessible for an international audience.

The idea was to have a selection of journals, which could give some indication of how journals act in adult education research with consequences for the invisible colleges and their trajectories across time and space.

Studies in the education of adults

The first cases to be presented are the 2005 volume and autumn 2008/ spring 2009 volume of Studies in the Education of Adults. The journal represents a British context, e.g. eight members on the editorial board are currently English and two are Scottish. It is one of only a few alternatives if adult education researchers want to have an international audience, i.e. it is in English and might be available outside its local context. The journal is also important as an actor, which might build invisible colleges focusing on adult education research. The editor recently discussed this, although from a purely British perspective (Zukas, 2009). However, on one occasion, another editor declared an international ambition, i.e. that the board "has consistently made the decision that we wish Studies to be at the forefront of research and scholarship in the education of adults internationally" (Edwards, 2003, p. 121)

On the first level, we can look at the origin of the articles in the 2005 volume in terms of the academic institution the authors are affiliated to. These are the figures: UK: 5, Canada: 4, Australia: 2, Germany: 1. These countries are distributed over three continents and can give the impression of being beyond doubt international. One first obvious limitation is the lack of articles from any poor country – maybe mirroring a lack of research in such countries. A second limitation is that 11 out of 12 articles are from the five countries that dominate the ISI in educational research generally – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA with 89% of all citations. Another question is: are the issues dealt with relevant outside their own country? A check tells us that all articles, except one, elaborate on the author's own context or engage in conceptual matters. The exception is an article on Thailand. A peculiar fact, when we discuss the conditions for international publication, is that all the articles, except the German one, originate in countries where Elisabeth II is head of state. She seems to represent connections that constitute the fabric of academic relations – a colonial heritage transformed into an academic empire. However, only three rich countries in the broader context of the former British empire are represented – there are close to 60 countries in the world with such a background. The English language may play a role here – it is the mother tongue of most of the citizens in these countries. On the other hand, English is the language used in academic contexts in many other countries and academics routinely publish in English since it is the dominating lingua franca in international communication, e.g. conferences etc. The conclusion will therefore be that language is not a sufficient explanation of the domination pattern.

If we look at the autumn 2008/ spring 2009 issues, we can follow the development of the combined acts of authors thinking it is worthwhile to select this journal for their manuscripts and the gatekeepers' work, i.e. basically the editor and reviewers: eight articles are written by authors from the UK and one each from Germany, Sweden and Canada. If we look at the content of the articles and the issues they deal with - how they contexualise their work, we can see how there are few signs of any interest in being international in the texts from UK, with one exception. There is no comparison with similar studies from other countries or no obvious effort to describe what is peculiar in the British system, which would make the text accessible for a foreigner. Some signs of such ambitions can be seen in the non-British articles: the German text uses comparative data from many countries to put the German data into context and also explain this local context. The Swedish text makes some effort to describe what is peculiar about the Swedish health system and the Canadian text relates the issue to the UN and FAO. The British exception is a text about the concept of self, which seems to treat the topic as a transnational phenomenon.

This picture may be further explored by looking at the lists of references. This is where we can spot the invisible colleges, i.e. which texts or maybe which authors are connected to the text. It is without a doubt possible that authors read more widely than indicated by the origin of the references selected. One can imagine the case where an author is part of an international discourse, informed by a broad base of references from all parts of the world, choosing to neglect everything else but references with a local origin, e.g. related to the study object. On the other hand, if there is one common international adult education research community, it should result in a substantial spread of references over the world, even if the study object and authors are situated in a specific country: If everyone follows each other's work and uses it, it should have an effect in the references. An empirical check of the origins of the references can indicate an answer. There were a total of 453 references in the 2005 volume of "Studies of the Education of Adults". In 10 cases, it was impossible to trace their origin. 443 remain, which could be classified by their origins. These were the results: UK: 37%, US: 32%, Canada: 11%, Australia: 9%. These four get 89%. The rest of the world gets 11% of the references of which 4% are from Germany. This picture falsifies the image of a broad international invisible college, and instead indicates reading that is limited to texts originating in pretty much the same regions of the globe as the articles. The only important expansion is that the authors include texts from the US in their reference list, in spite of the fact that no article originated from there. We can also note that the pattern in the journals in education, selected by ISI is repeated here.

In the autumn 2008/spring 2009 issues, there were a total of 555 references, where the origin of the first author could be identified. Of these, were 60% from UK, 15% were from US, 6 % from Canada and 5% from Australia. These four countries get 86% of all references. Countries in Europe get 11% and the world outside of Europe, the US, Australia and Canada get 1%. Of 4% German references, 3% come from the only article in the journal, which has a German author. The Swedish article has 20% references from Sweden, most of the rest are from the UK and the US.

What we can see is very few signs of a broader invisible college: adult education research, represented in this journal, does not seem to connect to other adult education research trans-nationally. It not only collects data locally, but most facts indicate that there is little interest in trying to compare or relate to what happens anywhere else. There is little indication of reading habits that include some information about what could be seen as international. In the case of Studies in the Education of Adults, its Britishness is stressed by the non-British texts being the ones that have to explain their local context, while it is taken for granted in the text from the UK.

Gatekeeper of the economy of publications and citations: Adult education quarterly

From the perspective of collecting rewards from the recent systems of measuring quality, the journal "Studies of the Education of Adults" is only an intermediary – it is not indexed by ISI, but if researchers read the journal and notice the articles, they could end up in journals as references, which are indexed. Adult Education Quarterly has been given the position of deciding on successes on the global level, when ISI indexes are used for promoting academics in various countries in the world, sometimes also salaries are based on ISI (Larsson, 2009). It is therefore a powerful actor in that it shapes networks, in this case invisible colleges, by offering texts that can be connected to.

If the texts in Adult Education Quarterly refer to articles in "Studies in the Education of Adults", the latter would operate effectively as a mediator in the EPC. I therefore checked how many references there were to articles published in "Studies in the Education of Adults" in the 2005 volume of Adult Education Quarterly. There were none. The distribution of references to adult education journals in "Adult Education Quarterly" 2005 volume is the following: Adult Education Quarterly: 24, Adult Basic Education: 7, New Directions in Adult and Continuing Education: 4, Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education: 2, Convergence: 2 and one each to Adult Learning, New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning and International Journal of Lifelong Education. All references to adult education journals except four (4) were to North American journals. The invisible college indicated here, seems to have very strong boundaries. In spite of its role in the emerging global academic economy, it has a provincial character with its boundary being North America.

Returning to the same question some years later investigating the 4 issues from 2009 of Adult Education Quarterly, there seems to have been a slight change in various ways. The number of references this time was 881 in all. The references to journals in adult education and related research fields were now distributed in this fashion: Adult Education Quarterly: 56, New Directions in Adult and Continuing Education: 10, Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education: 3, Convergence: 6, Adult Learning: 7, International Journal of Lifelong Education: 16, Studies in the Education of Adults: 3, Management Learning: 6, Human Resource Development International: 4 and the Chronicle of Higher Education: 3. One or two references to journals in the same research areas amount to 23. One change is a striking increase in numbers of references to journals focused on adult education, lifelong education, higher education and human resource development - from 42 to 137. The focus on references to journals from the North-American continent is however still remarkable, but UK-dominated journals are given a share this time. Connections between North America and the British Isles have no doubt developed.

Adult Education Quarterly seems to be an actor, which so far excludes most of the world, in spite of its position in the academic global economy. A connection to the UK has developed in the recent years, but it is still tenuous and mostly related to the most international of the academic journals for adult education research: the International Journal for Lifelong Education, although based in the UK.

Including some of the others: The international journal of lifelong education

This is a journal, which promises in its title to be international. However, it is dominated by British academics on the editorial board, i.e. all the editors are British. There seems to be a more international mix of text, than in the journals so far discussed in spite of the editors' uni-nationality. We should look more closely at this journal - it might bring hope of an actor that promotes a more international invisible college.

I have looked at the 2009 volume, which has 6 issues. My focus in this case was on the origin of first authors. The 2009 volume has articles that originate from 19 countries and from every continent except Latin America.

Europe dominates with 24 articles, 10 originating from the UK and 6 from Scandinavia. Eight are from North America and 5 from Asia. Here, Turkey is counted as European (being both in Europe and in Asia. Five are from Oceania and one from Africa. What can be understood from this is that there are more from Britain and Scandinavia, than could be expected in a truly international journal, but the general

picture is that this journal seems to be an actor, which affects or at least has the potential to affect the invisible colleges to be more international. If we look at the study objects, this actually adds to this latter image. Two articles are comparative – one French and one Swedish. A number of articles have foreign countries as their study object: Two articles contribute to knowledge about African contexts – a Canadian article about Nigeria and a Lebanese article about Egypt. Four articles focus on have Asian contexts – a Canadian article about Thailand, a Swedish article about Japan, a British article about China and an article from the US about Bangladesh. These figures compensate somewhat for the relatively low number of articles from Africa and Asia. A reasonable conclusion would be that the International Journal of Lifelong Education in many respects is international. As an actor, it can also contribute to a more international invisible college, if the readers pay attention to the full span of articles. Time has not permitted a more elaborated empirical calculus of the references and their origins. This is a pity since it would give some indications of the authors' distribution of references. It is still a possibility that the texts comes from all corners of the world, but still refer to a few places as in the case of empires, where the centre of the empire is all that counts in the cultural sphere, positioned like a queen bee in a colony of bees.

The International Journal of Lifelong Education operates as an actor that can support the emergence of an international invisible college. Another aspect of this fact is that the journal will also be the closest competitor to the new European journal – both being alternatives for a broad international community of researchers, if the new journal chooses to be truly international.

Conclusions and some notes on the contradictory effects of bibliometrics

Adult education research is definitely not a tight international actor-network. There is more support for the conclusion that there are a number of national actor-networks, but the empirical basis here cannot give a clear picture of how tight these national networks are. The tenuous connections between the national contexts or bi-national networks in adult education research are only one problem here – the other is the habit of spreading texts to journals that differ in their focus, e.g. sociology, policy or general education, i.e. which are not focussed on adult education. In this sense, adult education research is unclear as a sub-discipline, i.e. it is not an international actor-network, which includes and excludes in a clear way. If we think about Nespor's conclusions comparing physics and management, adult education research might in this latter perspective operate as management - a loose actor-network, with many, but not very strong connections. It is not much of an invisible college, rather part of many invisible colleges, often in the margin. With this comes short-sightedness – one can always open new connections and leave old ones, not caring much about the research fields and its development since there are several actor-networks, weakly connected and somewhat like amoebas.

An obvious consequence is the contradiction between the means to survive, i.e. get credit for your publications through citations in recognized journals, with one exception not focused on adult education, and the means to develop the research area of adult education, which should mean a concentration towards the latter kind of journals. The result might be that adult education will disappear as academic research and be only a field of practice. Another consequence is that researchers with the label adult education actually do not belong to an invisible college related to adult education, they only exploit the positions and then cultivate some other invisible colleges in their academic journals, etc.

The global domination pattern is obvious. How stable is this? It fits into a pattern of Anglo-American domination in academic research since the end of World War II. There is no reason to believe that such domination will last for ever – history tells us that power centres shift. Due to general changes in global relations, academic domination might also shift in the decades to come. Academia is increasingly considered to be important economically and politically, which might persuade otherwise powerful parts of the world to use power to position their own academia in the centre, e.g. EU. There is growing cooperation among European researchers, but on the same level as growing global cooperation (Tijssen, 2008). Google's growing ambition to expand its control to more areas of information processing might change something, e.g. Google Scholar can deal with more languages than just English.

The invisible colleges in adult education become weak when there are not many journals to publish in. The network of citations is quite simply limited. In this sense, it would be good if there were more academic journals, since this would mean more "conversations", i.e. more research exposed through articles and more researchers recognising texts that are relevant to their own research.

One aspect of the recent changes is that more resources than before must be acquired through negotiation, competition or bargaining. We might compare alternative tools to get resources for research in adult education, where publishing and promoting your work to get citations in order to cash in on bibliometric measurement is only one mode of getting research resources. Another is to get resources through the micro-politics of universities or by negotiating contracts with various private, public or civil organisations. A third is to acquire research resources by applying to various research funds, which are open to researcher-generated questions. In some countries, it is possible for some scholars to be independent of these sources, e.g. acting like an autonomous scholar in the Humboltian fashion, but for most scholars abstaining from taking part in such money-generating activities will often result in a heroic death as a researcher or turn research into a hobby. It is difficult to stay outside the existing economy, i.e. one has to evaluate the alternatives and their relative merits. The notion of a new kind of scholar has been discussed – entrepreneurial, flexible and useful rather than stubbornly independent and truth-seeking, which was earlier a popular figure in the discourse on academics. The alternatives mentioned above result in different conditions for adult education researchers – my judgement here is based on my own experience, which is certainly limited, but I take the risk of reflecting on these conditions.

Unfortunately, adult education is often not in a very favourable position in the university hierarchy, with the possible exception of those who are doing research on higher education. This has to do with differences in prestige and where adult education suffers in to ways: first, education is not very highly regarded by our colleges in other disciplines (van Zanten, 2009, p. 56), secondly, adult education is not a proper discipline, but a sub-discipline or something cross-disciplinary, which is also, with few exceptions, seen as being less valuable. In some cases adult education is seen as part of teacher education, where all the focus is on children and adult education is marginal.

Another tool is doing commissioned research, i.e. when researchers work as subcontractors. This is often a possibility and often constitutes a significant part of the resources for adult education researchers. However, it has a price, e.g. the external partner must like your research and also have plenty of resources. This means that it is easier to get money in the rich area of working life education than in the poor civil society. It is also very difficult to get any money for something that is critical in a different way than suits the one who pays (Kogan, 2005). Another aspect is that policy discourses invade academia or replace proper theory (van Zanten, 2009, p. 56). A

standard context in contracts with the public sector is evaluation, i.e. researchers become a standard tool in the operation of the New Public Management. Gaining some academic knowledge from the work with the evaluation is possible, but not always easy. Following a scholarly-driven research agenda presupposes that the interest of the researchers and those who pay the bills are the same. It is not academic autonomy but might look like it.

Getting money for research from research council funds, which are governed by academics, is often difficult, but it often gives more space for the research interest of the researchers and sometimes even supports critical perspectives. Adult education is probably suffering also here from lack of prestige in many countries, but sometimes it is the application and not the research area that is evaluated. However, political agendas often colonise also research funds, not least for educational research – either by formulating research questions as in Denmark (DSF, 2010) or through general directions for their use as in Sweden. However, a variety of funds provide reasonable conditions for research focused on the accumulation and development of research-driven agendas. Sometimes, some success in the economy of publication and citations is necessary to get funding.

If we view the conditions for working under a "bibliometric regime" and compare it with the other regimes, e.g. university micropolitics, external sub-contracts, research council funding, a contradictory picture can be painted. It is in many ways very difficult for adult education researchers to be successful in all these games. However, in the bibliometric regime, there are some advantages for critical research or research that is not immediately useful if we compare it with external contracts. The same might also be said in relation to university micropolitics in universities, where the rulers are often anxious to have good relations with local authorities in order to maintain their position as subcontractors. The bibliometric regime is less aware of content, since it is a machine at a distance. In the case of adult education, this unfortunately means that you have to publish in other journals than those focusing on adult education, since only one is indexed by ISI. This might also mean that researchers have to subordinate themselves to the Anglo-American issues if they want to be cited. For such researchers, who have established relations with more or less local money sources and appreciate usefulness in a more practice-oriented way, the bibliometric regime seems to be unimportant since they are not dependent on their university position, where bibliometric measurements translate into an influence on the fate of individual researchers. Instead, they are dependent on their contract- partners. However, here there might be more complicated interdependences between these different regimes, varying between countries. In many countries, academic freedom and its prerequisite job security are granted in various documentary forms. Often this is limited to a narrow selection of professors and often the duties of teaching reduce research to a hobby for the dedicated university teacher, thus making other "regimes" influential. On the other hand, in some countries academics might still have a more independent position, as in the Humboltian utopia of job security and "lehr-freiheit" and with reasonable time for doing research. However, this utopia is actually the opposite of the view of the civil servant in the New Public Management, where civil servants should be surveilled and monitored rather than trusted.

As pointed out earlier, the contemporary steering system using bibliometrics, ISI, etc., may change rather rapidly in various ways, while the invisible colleges should be more sustainable since they represent the researchers' habit of referring to each other's work. How can we handle the difficult situation of adult education research – publishing and cultivating invisible colleges in other areas, if we want to acquire a position through

bibliometrics, but on the other hand cultivate an invisible college, where adult education is important in the actor-network? In the long run, is this question related to the survival of adult education as a field of research? Is there any point in an adult education invisible college when it is not supported by the contemporary steering system? I think the answer is yes, i.e. in order to survive, adult education researchers may have to live with the contradiction. Increasingly, they have to keep an eye on the economy of publication and citation, which means that they have to be part of various invisible colleges with strong representation in ISI-indexed journals. However, if they do not at the same time care about adult education invisible colleges, some of them might lose the advantages of having the identity of being an adult education researcher, e.g. running programmes, research units or conferences with an adult education profile.

Another aspect is the importance of having elaborated communication in adult education research in order to generate a reasonably advanced and informed discourse – the whole collective of adult education researchers suffers from thin and unfocused communication. Such communication contributes to the content of texts, teaching and the formulation of research questions. This communication can take many forms – it can be conferences, networks and visits, but it can also be books and collections and articles in academic journals. The elaboration of such communication should benefit from being international – it results in a broader mindset, but also the awareness of issues that are transnational. Contemporary technology, such as open access academic journals, makes it easier to reach everybody who is interested – library budgets are not an obstacle when articles are open to everybody on the web. This opportunity vitalises adult education as an academic area by inviting academics from more countries to take part, not least in poor countries, i.e. where the majority lives. There is a double benefit here: those who were excluded can learn more and elaborate their own work, one side of which is that they can also contribute articles of good quality. This would make the adult education richer as an actor-network. And would be a very nice prospect.

Note

[1] Articles in the categories education and educational research published in 2003, measured in 2008 by ISI. Calculations are made by the bibliometric group at Linköping University library (Larsson, 2009).

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Aggression, recognition and qualification

On the social psychology of adult education in everyday life

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Abstract

The article analyses the emotional aspects of a professional training process in the light of the participants' experienced societal status. A detailed text analysis of interviews with a group of social pedagogue staff in Danish Youth clubs focuses on a particular vulnerability and their aggressive perception of other students with social problems, and interprets it partly as a reaction on the paradoxical situation adults in continuing education, and partly in the perspective of their experience of not being recognized as a profession. The last section of the article further explains the deep hermeneutic text analysis applied, which combines psychoanalytical concepts of socialisation with a language game approach.

Keywords: professional identity; recognition; emotional aspects of adult learning; pedagogue; social work

Individuals appear to meet general pressure for engaging in lifelong learning with very different feelings. In the political discourses this fact is mostly perceived as a "problem of reaching those who are negative and react with resistance", often assuming that they do not know their own interests, where as obedient willingness to engage is appreciated. In Denmark there appears to be considerable enthusiasm for adult education and training, especially amongst women. Often, men will refuse to participate, particularly if the activity in question is not training which is directly relevant for work or employment. However, when looking into individual motivation, a more mixed and complex picture appears. This is of crucial interest for understanding the dynamics of learning.

In this article I shall focus on populations whose subjective motivations for participating in adult education and training were certainly explicitly ambivalent both cognitively and emotionally. We shall see that these ambivalences were constituted by perceptions and experiences that were deeply personal and individual, yet collective and historically significant.

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Employment requires education

In several empirical projects my colleagues and I have dealt with adult learners who were exposed to an employment related pressure to engage in formally qualifying educational programmes. We have studied the subjective dimensions of such learning processes.[1] The empirical populations are exemplary objects of the current function of adult education which is to not only supply the qualifications allegedly needed in the jobs available, but to furthermore constitute the space where fundamental changes of work identity and general future orientation may develop. In this article I will bring an example from a group interview by a mixed gender group of adults working as pedagogical/social workers in youth clubs - but not possessing any formal qualifications within social pedagogy and certain institutions for people with specific developmental or social needs). The present group completed a two year part time programme especially designed to match their job, which they kept during the entire period of training, but which they would lose if they did not complete the training. The youth clubs are institutions for leisure activities of young people, very much meant to "keep them away from the street". They offer a free space, protected from parents and authorities, engaged adults, a place to be, leisure activities more or less organized, music etc. They are publicly funded (municipal) institutions, but they have a tradition from civil society organisation back in the middle of the previous century, mainly initiated by labour movement, and they have traditionally been employing people with a social and organisational experience rather than a formal pedagogical and social education as "club pedagogues". There is still a strong tradition to see informal, personal and social experiences as the core qualification for this work. While the institutions have become a more formal element in social work, the club pedagogues have also received some training, but typically as in-service training, or courses after they have been employed.

The empirical research materials in the following analysis are text transcriptions produced in thematized group discussions by a group of such employees who are joining a relatively comprehensive and systematic course. In the first place I undertook an evaluation study of some of these courses, together with a research assistant[2], and the interviews were part of the material underpinning the evaluation, which was reported (in Danish) at the time to the stakeholders in the education programme. The following analysis is an attempt to come deeper into the subjective dimensions of learning for professional work.

The method used can be described as a deep hermeneutic interpretation of thematized group discussions. An already existing "natural" group is invited to participate in a discussion of a theme defined by the researchers which is supposed to fuel an interaction and discussion which reveals core aspects of experience and concern in the group. The interaction is audio-recorded, and the method builds on in-depth analysis of the transcribed interaction in a group of researchers, in this case within the life history project. The point of departure is the observation of ambiguous, surprising or obviously conflictual aspects of meaning in the interaction provided, and the analysis seeks to provide interpretations of these subjective phenomena in the wider social and societal context, at the same time as extending them to the whole text. This article also intends to exemplify the procedure of analysis by carrying out a step by step commented interpretation. At the end of the article I will give some further background for this method. I will also refer to a similar population in what could be viewed as a similar situation, which, for reasons of space, can not be discussed in detail here. Some of the results from this analysis have been published elsewhere (Weber & Salling

Olesen, 2002).

The subjective journeys of the skilled painter or welder, and the shifts of life perspective of the hairdresser towards becoming a social worker, are considerable. As such, the explicit ambiguities voiced in the group discussions could be anticipated. The discussion group - and their colleagues - had good reasons to be concerned about their future employment, income and social status. They are explicitly dependent on the specific economic organization, designed to keep them on track, of their programme. The agreed agenda, which was that of subjectively relevant and societally necessary qualification for the job, was repeatedly overlaid or interrupted by an instrumental attitude. Much fussing and complaining in the text can be attributed to the laborious psychological processes of harmonizing what is basically a compulsion to participate with a self-identity as an autonomous adult. Here, one must manage the competing motivations of infantalisation and boredom versus the obviously interesting - at least occasionally! - substance of the educational discourse and the subjective need to attribute some kind of meaning to the perspective of doing this job for a considerable number of years, if not for the rest of one's life.

The fact that the educational programme was subject to evaluation may have accentuated the perception of this implicit motivational conflict. The participants did not think of themselves as contributors to educational evaluations or to any other major political problems. In any event, the message to research subjects[3] is always a double one: in the context the research subjects are the most important people on earth, the chosen, those receiving attention; at the same time they might be substituted by somebody else, because the research agenda is oriented to a general understanding of subjectivity in this type of situation. The methodological implications of this double bind is a research field in itself. Likewise the different modes of text production, the informing group interview (cf. Kvale, 1996) and the thematized group discussion (cf. Cohn, 1976; Mangold, 1960; Leithäuser & Volmerg, 1985) represent separate fields of interest. In the present context, however, only the fact that the texts are group produced, and the fact that they comprise culturally significant outbursts of aggression, are looked into.

The subjective conflict outlined is interesting and its analysis can yield considerable inspiration to improvement or renewal of educational settings. The focus of this particular analysis is on a number of "uncouth" outbursts of aggression, on collectively agreed statements about others that were surprising and disquieting even in the relaxed and permissible context of research interviewing and discussion. It might be argued that such outbursts belong to ordinary human communication and that they should be condoned. Every text production comprises irrelevancies, and is it not the function of the researcher to sort this out, to get the discussion back on the track, to condense the objective and impartial? In my approach this is not necessarily so! This is a question for the interpretation. The organization of the thematic group discussion building on existing social organization aims at bringing out the explicit as well as the implicit substance and the legitimate as well as the illegitimate psychological energies immanent in the social setting. The presupposition is that "thinking is a highly emotional affair" (Becker-Schmidt, 1987). Factual and functional attitudes and opinions are products of multidimensional subjective processes that are cognitive, social, emotional as well as physical - and the group processes contribute to the exposition of this complexity. The irrational, even the idiosyncratic, surplus is an invaluable spur to interpretation. This is a point highly relevant for our conceptions of learning, e.g. in that it approaches the everyday situation in education where teachers and administrators often face diffuse complaints (cf. Weber, 2001). I shall return to this point as part of my

elaboration of a theoretical framework once I have presented the text example and my provisional analyses.

The misfits in the classrooms - on the perception of passive classmates

The following dialogue took place during the group interview on possible improvements to the education for social work in youth clubs. The interviewer is the research assistant Uffe Lund, and the passage is selected and translated from the background material in the Danish evaluation report (see note 2) (Lund & Weber, 2001, p. 57 ff.).

It is just one example - and a fairly moderate and well argued one - of participants talking derogatorily about their fellow students. The textual reproduction does not display the speed of the talk or the vibrating anger of the group that could be felt, nor does it catch the vehemence of the initial statement by Anna - on the factual surface she is simply stating:

> Anna: "There is one thing about the club education, though, and that is that when you start, that is on the first day, and people introduce themselves ... and it happens both here and on other courses ... you often hear that people are subject to rehabilitation [i.e. being supported by labour market authorities because of physical or social handicaps (inserted by the author)]. And it is maybe 15 or 20%, that represent, in a class, that actually is that. It's not as if there's any wrong in that, mind you, and I do agree that it's a fine thing to be social and to help a lot of people, but I do have a feeling that if you can't become anything else, or if you are unable to keep the job you once have, then you can always become a Club Pedagogue [Danish: Klubpædagog, the name of the un-skilled social workers in youth clubs (inserted by the author)]. And I can't help feeling that the education sort of falls down a bit because of that"
>
> Kenneth: "Not just those that have a bad back, but if they have problems that cannot be combined with our profession, then I think it's wrong. And there is much debate about it around, actually!
>
> Des: "Yes, but that is because people are so different here, and because their background is so mixed. And of course there are some that are not so used to these here things. To formulate things verbally or in writing, that is - you can feel that, it's all very different, and the teachers must pay attention to the differences. And sometimes you feel that it's ... a bit heavy ... there must be space for all"
>
> Anna: "And I absolutely do agree that there must, and I would not think it wrong if it were only a few, but it's many (....) And there's nobody around to look after people who maybe have a hard time. But I do think that the general level sort of drops because of that (...)"
>
> Kenneth: "But they are allowed in along the same lines as everybody ...."
>
> Peter (interrupting): "No, no, I don't think so. There is a lot of people who do not have enough points, but who get in because of their background. It is basically a downgrading of our trade"
>
> Anna: "That's my point. That's what I'm getting at. I think that the education is degraded"

Kenneth: "You get a world of problems later on, when you get out, when you have problems with yourself, and then have to work with other people who have problems. That's where it is bound to go totally wrong"

Val: "I don't think it's acceptable. I don't think we should just live with it, for I consider our way of working an important part of the life of young people. We are there to help them, and to guide them, and to instruct them, and it simply cannot be right that there are some people who have problems themselves, and who cannot tackle their own problems, and then to go in and work with children and youngsters (...) And for anybody to just come in from the street, apply for a club job, and the get it, because we need staff. That's dangerous, I feel"

Kenneth: "I agree. It cannot be right that any number of nut-cases can get into this. It's not that they are dyslectic, it's not that. (....) You can get a diploma here even if you have a severe alcohol problem. There are people here who have really grave problems with themselves ... with alcohol or with other things ... and it's them that a lot of people want out"

Peter: "But don't people sort that out for themselves?"

Val: "No, I'm not sure, because there are some who'd say that: I need to hang on to this because I need the 10.000 kroner every month. And there's no other way to get it"

Facts and fiction

If we look, firstly, at the factual content of the passage, of the presentation of the educational context, a number of lines are arresting: The fact that some participants are subject to rehabilitation is verifiably true, but the registered number is exaggerated. Another stated fact is that some people are allowed in especially because they are handicapped, which is not formally possible. A third is that any 'nutcase' can get in from the street and that you can get a diploma in spite of alcoholism, intimations that are basically unfounded. The verifications of these facts with the administrative authorities of the college is solid. The identification of factual faults or inconsistencies in the communication is not motivated by any drive to "correct" things, but is a means to identify the energy and motivations present in the group. Of course evaluators and researchers should not communicate gossip and rumour as such, but in this approach gossip and rumour communicates something important besides their factual irregularities. So we take it on face value, we test it against the reality that we know something of, but which we may also learn about.

On the whole the college is given little credit: it has few resources, it lets people in against rules, it accepts general dissipation, and hands out diplomas at random! This contrasts heavily with the explicit satisfaction with the education evident in other parts of the text.

So the impact of the passage is that the group - as opposed to the college - is concerned with a potential dilemma well known in education, namely how far a given education should accept participants that need special attention for social and health reasons, and that it is so concerned that some exaggeration is needed to convince the interviewer. The group is aware of this dilemma. Several lines meet with envisaged contradictions that they are discriminating people who do not deserve it, i.e. the bad backs and the dyslectics. The concern is on behalf of the status of the education, of the profession, and of the children and youngsters in the clubs. Skilled and professional

labour is actually in great demand in the Danish health and social sector. It is an acknowledged fact that there are "too many unskilled pedagogues" at work not only in clubs, but also in day care. This is due to the educational policies of the liberal government in the 80'es, which restricted access to human service training and education considerably. That is why Danish municipalities demand that they complete the education programme that is the subject of our interview. Furthermore the club sector by tradition recruits non-professional staff, and so it is vulnerable to general stigmatisation when staff problems occur - which invariably they do, as Kenneth confirms. So the important point here is not so much that the group points to a problem, but that in the public and administrative eye they are themselves the very population that is problematic - in the sense that they are not formally qualified for their societally important work of socialisation and integration.

Whether the individual participant suffers from a bad back or is recovering from drug abuse, whether he or she is in education - and working in the youth club - because he or she fell out of university, because the building industries are down or hairdressing is not much of a business these days - these facts are immaterial and intangible - both in the public eye, in the bureaucratic sense and as far as the educational measures are concerned. And contrary to the assumption implied in the discussion of the group there is no documented covariance between rehabilitation, dyslexia, alcoholism and having problems with oneself. In fact some of the texts in this project could support the opposite thesis: A number of the rehabilitating colleagues appear lively, intelligent and well motivated participants with a realistic attitude to their handicap. Whereas some of the university drop outs could be said to signal problems of self esteem, and some of the skilled workers to manage the shift from production to social work less than well. But these are mere assumptions, associations in the research team, who have obviously been severely provoked by the group's unanimous problem identification. It is inherent in our approach not to censor such associations, but to register them, and to confront them with the text. You can say that at first we serve as a screen on to which the allegations of the group are projected. And next we react, and serve as a complementary mirror. Neither the construction of the group nor the associations of the research team are "true" in the literal sense, but they each constitute possible perceptions and dimensions of experience.

The concluding line - Val's accusation that the rehabilitating colleagues are strictly instrumentally, economically, motivated - is also strange. It is generally agreed that more or less everybody in this education is dependent on upholding their income while they qualify. The education is designed for such people, for adults, with adult lives and obligations. The characterization of the club pedagogue's task - as "helping, guiding and instructing" (Val) - is noticeable: It is true that working with the young is societally important, and that youth need reliable adults! But social advisors, school teachers and other professional groups would smile, to say the least, at the club pedagogue's ambitious self-understanding. Youth clubs do work with fringe groups, but much everyday life in youth clubs comprise a number of relaxed leisurely activities. Furthermore in the Danish context the references to the work as "profession" (Kenneth) and "our trade" (Peter) is peculiar. They signal a well defined line of work, social recognition and standards of quality - in short: professionalism. Not even the professional educations of 3½ or 4 years' duration - such as those of pedagogue, nurse or school teacher - can claim proper professional identity in the strict sociological sense, and when they try current modernization quickly get the better of them with further demands of flexibility and employability (Weber, 2001). Actually the culturally established profile of the "club pedagogues" is that of the informal, comradely and loyal

companion - undisturbed by professional distance, defying control and disciplinary dimensions of the job. This collective understanding of the sector is confirmed throughout the present project, and although it may be said to make a virtue of out necessity, it appears well founded in the subjective experience of the staff. If this syndrome is perhaps also nurtured by subjective and objective inferiority, it is at least a popular one ... but it is remarkably absent in this passage. Here we meet professional concern only.

One interesting feature of the dialogue is the way factual corrections are turned around and used to opposite ends: The group denies the fact that the rehabilitating colleagues are allowed in along the general rules (as suggested by Kenneth) and it refutes the possibility that they might themselves be capable of assessing their competence (as imagined by Peter). Both attempts at modifying Anna's initial definition of the problem are used to further degrade the colleagues.

Finally the group builds a consistent argument that people who "have problems with themselves", i.e. who are psychologically unstable, should not work in the caring professions, concluding that they only in it for the money, anyway. The preoccupation with the psychological resources is a valid and recurrent debate all over the social and health sectors, and it does possess its own relevance in this short-term educational programme. But there is little, if any, reason that this general problem should arise in the context of the discussion.

It seems that when the text is confronted with the reality it refers to, the text has little reliability of information. On the other hand the group is remarkably at ease with itself, it is in relative agreement - it is obviously sharing an important experience with us (the researchers).

Communicative dimensions

The next step of interpretation focuses on the communicative dimensions. How does the group go about it? Which features in their way of talking and which figures of speech convey the message to us? As mentioned above, the lines are spoken rapidly, with a high level of dedication, and there is a generally positive and corroborative atmosphere. People are eager and responding, almost echoing, and the energy grows steadily throughout the quoted passage.

As it turns out Anna's opening statement sets a theme, and also launches a pattern of formulation that are kept up by the group during the paragraph. Anna repeats a lot. She uses a number of parallel, slightly droning sentences, as well as literal repetitions. She expresses emotions, even if allegedly she doesn't want to, thus calling for explication of this conflict between emotion and rational argument. The theme is that of the others, developed as a definition of intruders. The imagery of intrusion is supplemented by that of the education falling down, and the general framework of right and wrong is introduced.

The intrusion is defined by the "wrong" presence of the others. Their getting into the introduction is echoed all through: they make the space heavy, they are allowed in wrongly by the system, they go in the work, and they get into this, until at last they are wanted out - of the education, to prevent them from getting out in the workplaces.

Anna's perception is that the education "falls down a bit" as if the education might bring her down. This is no error of translation, she actually uses this slightly awkward, very concrete image. Combined with the inevitability of the feeling the fear of being forced down or falling is frightening. "A bit" is a paradoxical colloquialism, literally

modifying, but substantially augmenting. It is echoed in the space getting "a bit heavy" (Des), and in the "sort of" dropping level (Anna herself). Finally the image is qualified in the "downgrading of our trade" (Peter) and the "degrading of the education" (Anna herself).

The theme of right and wrong is paradoxical from the outset: Anna distinguishes in the peculiar way that something is wrong (the number of participants in rehabilitation), which there's "nothing wrong in" because it's social and helpful and (therefore) right. It is within this paradoxical framework that she must modify her statement, she "can't help" feeling, despite herself. In her second remark Anna reiterates both structure and content of the first: She confirms her original "nothing wrong", assessing that "absolutely" must there be space for all - only not for all, because there are too many. She accelerates the discomfort by denying her own reassurance of the right, that she thinks wrong, you cannot do that much right, too much right makes wrong, and she substantiates her point by alluding to the (too small) resources of the college, again ending up in a down falling image, this time of the education dropping. The wrong is first substantiated by Kenneth, modified (into difference) by Des, enhanced by Kenneth (into totally wrong), civilized as well as dramatized (into not acceptable as well as downright dangerous) by Val, and confirmed (it cannot be right) by Kenneth, who also elaborates qualitatively as well as quantitatively on the danger: the intruders are 'nut-cases', they come in any number, their problems are severe and really grave, and the problem is alcohol as well as other things, intimating drug problems. The culmination of the definition of the wrong is the explication of the attitude of the others. They are dishonest, they are in the education on pretence.

Do not degrade us!

Criss-crossing these consistent figures is the emotional presence of the "we" of the (insider) group as called upon by Anna's anxiety, in opposition to the others, who represent the explicit danger of the club-pedagogues being considered of no value ("if you can't become anything else") - a fear well-founded in the current hierarchies of the social and health labour market, a much wider problem with no direct connection to a possible number of misfits in the education. This is made explicit again when Anna - happily: "That's my point! That's what I'm getting at!" - answers to Peter's "they are let in", where she also changes the "downgrading of the trade" to the "degrading of the education". She is herself part of the education, she is indeed within it in the very interview situation, so if the education is degraded, she is herself degraded. The unconscious thematic collusion of the group is: We do not want to be degraded. And at this point the more vicious attacks on the others (Kenneth's remark and Val's denunciation of their morals) have become legitimate. And the somewhat pompous sketch of our own importance in "helping, guiding and instructing" falls into place.

So the real danger is one facing the group itself, and the unconscious danger is that the degradation might be justified. After all "problems with oneself" and a fair amount of daily alcohol intake are not uncommon - neither with the population in general or with the low-skilled segment with an unstable labour market position that the group represents. Although in the interview situation the individuals come out as winners, there is no reason that they should not be as ambivalent facing the challenges of their job of social work as anybody else, and their labour market carriers are probably as mixed. The life history of the group was not focussed on in the interviews. But we know what they are doing: Anna's task in the leisure centre is in the kitchen, where she bakes

with the school children every afternoon; Kenneth dropped out of technical college and has made a career of working in the national organization of youth clubs, thus so far making further education unnecessary; Des is an immigrant with ten years of unskilled social work behind him, specialising in computer games and music; Peter is young and has no education or labour market experience other than that in the social project he is employed in; Val has an education as a teacher of textile work, i.e. she is working beneath her status, but indeed she does run the sewing workshop in her workplace. In structural terms the group represents one layer or level in a Chinese box, where income and cultural status form the objective foundation of individual and collective inferiority, substantiated by the imagined shortcomings of other professional groups. Thus traditional dichotomies like school-teachers vs. pedagogues, pedagogues vs. unskilled staff, unskilled staff versus unemployed, etc. are well known. Of course they have their objective foundation in different status of the societal tasks, of income and status, but they are often voiced with more vigour than the objective differences would vouch.

As a result of the secondary analysis of the group discussions we have gained two results which are less directly relevant to the original evaluation project, but never the less important for understanding professional competences. First, it takes very little to bring out an intolerant and aggressive attitude towards people with social problems in the club pedagogues to be in direct opposition to the consciously intended result of the education. Second, club pedagogues-to-be are in serious need of recognition. These observations can be said to seriously question the general suitability of the unskilled social workers to their jobs. But they also indicate that the educational setting and the position of being a student may contribute to these two states of mind.

Individuals, texts and group dynamics

The individuals who spoke the lines quoted were brought together in their special capacities as participants in an educational setting that was being explored and evaluated. They brought into the research setting not only their shared experience of the educations, but also the general experience of their everyday life and their respective life histories. This is not a question of statistical reliability, although by age and labour market position the populations may well mirror their social strata. Within the context of the club education the groups have been composed with a view to comprising the most characteristic empirical profiles - gender-wise and by educational background. Our populations are plausible examples of unskilled adults in education (for a discussion of validity in qualitative research see Kvale, 1991; Altheide & Johnson, 1998). In this respect they are representative of the unskilled populations that in current years are more or less willingly training or retraining for the changing and increasingly qualifications demanding labour market. Their labour market experience is a mixed bag: this segment of the labour force is the one to immediately feel ups and downs of trades and the general economy. Participants' experience comprises a number of contradictory motivations. The jobs they seek are much wanted, if not for their content then for the income. The road to get there is, however, paved with a number of imposed regressions, the structural position of being a pupil perhaps being the most basic and at the same time the most challenging.

So the general background of experience is contradictory: jobs wanted, training unwanted, followed by training accepted, and infantile position unwanted. At an individual level, with each adult man or woman it is of course much more complex. Some adults actually want the training, but not the job. Class and gender form different

foundations for handling the dilemma. But in a strategy of theorizing the motivational conflicts one has to simplify, in this case by stating a common structural dilemma. We are not surprised that there is an explicit need to let out some steam of aggression, for these adult pupils have surely had a number of reasons to be angry along their ways, and have not been offered appropriate arenas for voicing their experience and putting it into words.

The group communication will implicitly and sometimes explicitly appeal to each participant to search emotionally and cognitively for the shared experience of the group. The underlying references here are the tradition from Pollock onwards, the group therapy (Foulkes) and communication in groups (Bion). Of course the experience of the research setting is immediately shared, as is the implicit subjective pressure to contribute. The interview situation bears some structural resemblance to the teaching, which holds its own kind of pressure, and the teaching in its turn refers to the work situation, which holds another kind of pressure. It may even be argued that the interplay between these levels of experience of pressure is in itself anxiety provoking and will produce regressive resistance. So if there is anxiety around it is sure to be exposed, and as we have seen in the texts, it does, and it is managed by means of collective rationalization. The analysis might at this point be extended in terms of exposing institutionalised defence mechanisms (cf. Menzies-Lyth, 1988).

So voicing shared experience referring to any of these levels invariably brings about qualities of perception that cannot be understood in terms of the factual events referred to only. The challenges of social work and dealing with patients have long ago activated emotions, strategies of action and understandings from other phases of the life course, from family settings as well as from other workplaces. In the communication a gradual and intuitive selection of experience suitable in the group takes place, and emotional qualities and intellectual insights are attributed to the common production of meaning. This does not happen randomly, but not in a purely rational manner either. Contributions are formed in a subjective navigation between the reservoirs of individual experience and the theme perceived developing in the group. In this respect the research setting actually reproduces a characteristic of every day life communication, where the attitudes and emotions of people are often not articulate until they are offered a communicative arena, until they are voiced in a social situation. The group thus develops its own explicit meaning, drawing on dimensions of experience, and indeed formulations, from the individual participants, who in their turn have contributed, not what they are, who they are, or what they think, but what this setting and communication allowed them to feel, remember and articulate - and avoid. The meaning developed by the group is not simply the sum of the attitudes and opinions of the participants, nor are the participants victims of external group dynamics. The group produces a unique and original text that communicates shared experience, not exhaustingly so, but relevant and carefully voiced dimensions of experience.

Recognition, aggression and educational results

The present empirical population has produced texts that explicitly and implicitly voice the need for personal and professional recognition by superiors and by society. It has also “texted” a professional concern - for the well-being of psychiatric patients and for the reputation of the education for social pedagogic work in youth clubs - thus legitimizing not only the demand for recognition, but also the apparent emotional state of readiness to perceive degradation and humiliation. In this case, the group verbalized

its message in a roundabout manner by abusing a specific population of others, indeed they collectively constructed the rehabilitating colleagues: not only as less able but as morally corrupt as well. We have found a similar position in the interpretation of another group (Weber & Salling Olesen, 2002). In that case, a group of unemployed men being retrained for social work in a psychiatric ward directed strong aggressions against a group of female teaching nurses. The images produced and confirmed each correspond depressingly well with cultural clichés active in popular or populist political rhetoric and in everyday folklore. As recognizable figures, they serve to simplify and thus make bearable the complex and multitudinous experience of everyday life, and as organizers of subjective collective energy they contribute powerfully to corrupting political civilization and gender equality. It is safe to say that the attitudes texted above are not the intended outcome of the respective training programmes. They have certainly nothing to do neither with the formal curriculum nor with the intended communication of workplace culture or general political implications of being public sector social service staff. They even disavow the professional ethos that they serve to establish in the texts.

So have these educational processes been counterproductive? Is the educational outcome that poor? And are the individuals so politically blind (labelling socially deprived groups) and so male chauvinist? Hopefully not. My exposition of the regressive images in the collective unconscious of the groups is on the one hand a research produced artefact that - on the other hand - exposes a potential of subjective energies, organized within the framework of the consciousness of everyday life (Leithäuser, 1977). A general cultural disposition to employ reductive schemes of understanding in complex and challenging situations is reproduced. The interpretation has focussed on the frightening aspects of the collective subjectivity - with good reason, I should think - but the texts themselves comprise reference to the contradictions reacted to. There is a framework of ambition of being and doing "right" in the club pedagogues' discussion – a professional ambition - and beside the defensive aspects of the aggression of the men in the psychiatric hospital we also found sound observations of a routinized and (too?) highly gendered workplace culture. So the scapegoat figures of munching women and morally corrupt colleagues are also inversions of a general humanist and/or professional ethic - the claim that education and social work should be for the benefit of the users - children, youngsters, patients, etc. In fact random elements of such ethics are employed to construct the villainous images. And in contemporary institutionalised and bureaucratic public sector contexts such ambitions, however fragmented, are far from irrelevant.

My general line of arguments has been that the interplay between an experienced lack of recognition at different levels is decisive in producing the resultant defensive reactions. That is where the experience at classroom level does come into it.

The classroom experience is a double agenda of having to accept to be a pupil in spite of being an adult, employed person and a curriculum of welfare state legislation, psychology, pedagogy, cultural studies, etc. in line with the self understanding of being a competent professional, though in abstract and general terms. Although teachers probably strive to meet the subjective experience of the work they are qualifying people for, they work within a set of rules describing the context of the education in terms of subjects and disciplines, which the students must acquire, not as experienced problems.

In educational terms the analysis thus points to the relevance of problem-oriented curricula, and to the need of explicitly reflecting the background experience and the subjective motivations of participants within the framework of education. It also reminds us that teachers should respect that subjective motivations are only one version

of the multitudinous sensations and perceptions that adults possess. e.g. aggression may be an integral part of regressive defences as well as progressive orientations.

Finally, as stated at the outset of this paper, a number of the mixed and functionally inappropriate motivations are in fact embodiments of the economic and societal paradoxes that constitute everyday life in and around education: adult pupils and men in women's jobs, are empirical evidence of contradictory demands of modernization, rationalization and labour market development, and a rational appropriation process will reflect such paradoxes.

Some remarks on the methodology

The general framework of my interpretation is that of a psychoanalytically oriented social psychology, that acknowledges preconscious and unconscious dimensions and dynamics in everyday life communication. It also appreciates participants' life history experience, the everyday life experience and the interplay between these subjective reservoirs.

In contrast to the well known clinical psychoanalysis, this approach is concerned with general cultural patterns of subjectivity, where a potential of politics of repression as well as of liberation is stored. Of course collective subjectivity is constituted by the interaction of individuals, and by the collusion of individual drives and dispositions. It might, for example, be productive to see the aggression of the men in the hospital as collectively re-iterated scenes of primary socialization, where identifications with mother and father respectively comprised not only "becoming like", but also counter-positioning, fights and ambivalent possession. For the men are under regressive pressure, they are infantilised and denied their status (and identity) as men. It is likewise interesting to consider the discriminating and rigid appropriation of "right" by the club pedagogues as an identification with a mighty if abstract aggressor in momentary need of more specific, tangible and realistic ideals. Such deepening of the current analysis is possible, but it might create the impression that I was aiming at a redefinition of the educational setting into a form of collective therapy. Although I am sure that educational settings are often the arenas of subjective liberation, including liberation from inner compulsions, the therapeutic fallacy (Alheit, 1994) is not mine. The primary socialization of participants is only relevant in this context insofar as it is activated and becomes decisive in the interaction, in the production of the meaning of everyday culture, including that of education and professional collective consciousness. In that context the energies and search processes of participants must be respected. They must find their own - devious - ways (cf. Weber, 1995).

Learning and socialization is always a progressive-regressive process, and it always activates the inner resources of the learner. So the focus of the educationally relevant analysis is on the interaction with reality and on how it is voiced.

A social psychology that draws on the tradition of psychoanalysis in the analysis of learning and consciousness faces the theoretical challenge of understanding subjective energies not as natural instincts or fateful drives, but as energies organizing reality. This is in line with the general ambition to redefine psychoanalysis as an interactionist, social theory of the psyche. The German social psychologist Alfred Lorenzer defines drives as a product of primary and secondary socialization with a view to societal and interactional logics meeting with the individual, shaping subjectivity but also being changed by the specific ways in which these logics are appropriated (Lorenzer, 1970, 1972). The concepts of ambivalence as defined by the Hungarian psychoanalyst Sandor

Ferenczi: inner ambivalence stems from the contradictory qualities of reality, not from the confrontation of libido and thanatos (Ferenczi, 1926/1972), as well as the whole tradition of object relations theory (e.g. Winnicott, 1965/1987) point to the same concern for the outside world. With Lorenzer, however, it is an explicit point that unconscious processes themselves are not individual reactions on social repression, but societally produced cultural meanings. Life history is thus an ongoing process of socialization, not just an adaptation of individuals to reality, but a dynamic continuation of society and culture as such: subjectivity is society in a specific historical and social mediation of individual sensation - bodily, emotional, cognitive perceptions - with language as the primary medium (Salling Olesen, 2007b). His approach has been successfully developed into a psychoanalytically oriented understanding of culture in general, comprising not only literature and media analyses, but also understandings of architecture, physical space in general, etc. (Lorenzer, 1986).

Theorizing everyday life is a well established tradition in cultural studies and sociology, and the very concepts of every day life is developed into a theory of late modern consciousness by Thomas Leithäuser, who sees the different sections of everyday life as arenas of experience, adapting to necessities, repressing socially illegitimate sensations and reactions as well as developing wishes and ambitions. Leithäuser's concept of consciousness of everyday life points to the fact that attitudes and opinions may be understood as pragmatic and situated, individual or collective s–ubjectivity. It thereby questions the established concept of identity, as well as indeed the validity of any positivist registration of attitudes. Together with Birgit Volmerg and the Institute of Psychology and Social Research in Bremen the approach has produced a number of empirical studies, comprising workplace experience and experience in public space (Volmerg, Senghaas-Knobloch & Leithäuser, 1986, 1993; Leithäuser, 1999).

Integrating a Marxian analysis of society - the separation of private and public sphere and the logics of production and reproduction - with psychoanalytical social psychology and biography, Regina Becker-Schmidt has produced a number of analyses of women's experience in work and family life. Becker-Schmidt applies Ferenczi's concept of ambivalence as well as concepts of identification processes to the field of girls' and women's lives, and she contributes substantially to a gender-specific and historically sensitive understanding of socialization (e.g. 1995, 1998, 2000).

The brief account of the approaches hardly does them justice, but they each served as inspiration to the analysis presented above. The theorizing of learning settings gains by a societal dimension that can see actions and attitudes, not as individual fallacies or shortcomings, but as valid reactions to complex and partly invisible logics. Before concluding this paper I shall elaborate the underlying understanding of our media of communication: language.

Language games and interaction-forms

Language as an integral dimension of interaction and bodily experience has been theorized by Alfred Lorenzer, who sees the dynamics of subjectivity - of inner nature - and societal structure as authentically experienced bodily interactions, established as interaction-forms. They constitute the basic socialization, and they are progressively differentiated and refined as language is introduced. Only language also serves to render some interaction-forms acceptable, while others remain as bodily perceptions, pre-verbal - but none the less psychologically active. The basic epitome of the interaction-form is the mother and child, the dyad - not only because this stage in socialization

holds importance, but also because it serves to illustrate the dialectic of refinement and deprivation that socialization is about. No verbalization, no establishment of symbolic interaction, takes place without leaving something behind, organizing perceptions, leaving some out and "forgetting" them systematically. Pre-verbal interaction forms melt into the symbolic ones as interaction-forms and language relate. Lorenzer ses this process as a potential for later reflected experiments (in the psychoanalytic sense: "Probehandlungen") of action and expression.

Lorenzer's ambition is to theorize language, interaction and bodily experience in the context of their mutual societal settings and functions. The concept of language game, which stems originally from Wittgenstein, situates language practically and societally. The language game is a complex unity of the actual use of language, its practical functions and the general understanding of its life world. It mediates subjective and objective structures, and its genesis is indeed the constitution of the relation between individual and society. Language and consciousness are integral parts of societal praxis, and language games are accordingly the medium of subjective structuring of reality. In this sense individual subjectivity is societal from the outset.

In an intact language game the agents share pre-verbal interaction-forms as well as its specific verbalization, in language becoming a symbolic interaction-form - in short: that agents understand each other and empathically share explicit and implicit meanings.

Lorenzer introduces the concept of disturbed language to understand the process of the "re-division" of language games. Once accomplished competencies of symbolization - putting subjective structures to language - may, in specific situations, that recalls and activates inner conflict, cease to work. The capacity of expressing subjective experience is lost facing the confrontation of contradictory and irreconcilable interaction-forms. Pre-verbal interaction forms that have never been integrated into the language games at all may well be part of such conflict, although they are systematically left over to the unconscious. In such cases, language is unfounded in experience, the words stand stripped of authentic meaning. Lorenzer uses the concept of sign about this language with no foundation in interaction-forms. Accomplished symbolic interactions may also be broken up for psychodynamic and/or societal reasons, the word stripped of its symbolic meaning, but still representing dynamic inner scenes - which, in their turn, may be activated without access to relevant means of communication.

Language games will not only echo interest and power relations in the social situation, they will also develop meanings of their own, register and comprise factual as well as implicit cultural and psychological meaning. They are dialectical unities of the use of language, everyday life as it is in fact lived practically, and the attitudes, opinions and ideologies it develops and makes use of. In the research situation we have "only" the words, but if we look at the communications in terms of a language game we have also a symbolic life world. In the language game subjective structures are mediated with reality, with social and societal structures. When the appropriation of reality demands emotional or cognitive accommodation, the language becomes vague. This in turn, gives the communication of everyday life its well known specific quality of implicit congeniality and of indefinite allusions that comprise a variety of different sensations and recollections. To each individual, words and concepts possess an aura of implicit meanings founded in earlier experience, and in interaction and communication these meanings are sorted out and established as new collective formulations, that merge with the general cultural reservoir, confirming and changing culture. In this process factual information and authentic experience may find words - become symbolized - but as we have seen they may also be censored, withdrawn, only to sink back into the pre-verbal

consciousness of individuals and institutions.

The club pedagogues certainly go through a process of negotiating and sorting out the relevant phrases before their implicit aggressions are finally focussed on the "danger" and dubious morals of the rehabilitating colleagues. They are bringing together vague anxieties stemming from number of different settings. On this background we may look at the text as a frozen version of specific interaction. We may look at the referential level, which is immediately understood because words refer to recognizable objects and situations, and where the cultural connotations are shared. As I have shown even this level raises a number of questions: the text possesses a referential value that is unknown to the interviewer or discussion leader, and which he, in his turn, tries to come to terms with. Of course the interviewer may simply get new information, but in the texts above, we are given to wonder, because the information we get does not agree with our existing knowledge of the field: We are cognitively as well as emotionally aroused. We think we know, for instance, that the administrators of the club education are not reckless, and we are disturbed by the prospect of alcoholics in social work. We react on behalf of the general cultural framework: this cannot or should not be so. Of course the individual characteristics of the researcher come into this process, both in the face to face interaction and in the interpretation. So we should reflect our idiosyncrasies and, our loyalties as well as our theoretical perspective in terms of transference and counter-transference (for a discussion see e.g. Hunt, 1989; Andersen, 2003).

So we move on to other potential sources of information in the text, to the communicative dimension and to be empathic on the communicative level as well: How does the mode of communication add or detract from the phrases, and which figures of rhetoric are employed? By confronting these levels of reading, answering the research question: how do they talk about what? In this process new structures of subjective meaning, embracing implicit meanings as well as explicit ones, are formed, and we approach a motivational and perhaps an experiential, perceptual understanding.

Such understanding might inspire adult education, and particularly professional education and training, to some abstaining from directing the learning processes towards specific curricular goals, and to a critical reflection of the relation between teaching and learning in general. People learn what they want to learn, and their desires are complex and ambivalent. Their ambitions of being recognized themselves well as changing the world for the better are much easier developed if they are allowed to - and supported in - sorting out their ambiguities and reflecting on them.

Notes

[1] The empirical material produced within the research context of the "Life History Project", a project on the subjective interplay between adult education, every day life and life history (Weber 1997, 1999b; Andersen 2000; Salling Olesen 2001; Weber & Salling Olesen 2002), which included a large number of empirical studies by a number of authors. Case analyses in English in Weber 1996, 1998, 1999a, 2007, 2009 and Salling Olesen 2004, 2007a.

[2] Besides myself research assistant cand.pæd. Uffe Lund, presently an education officer at the pedagogues´union in Denmark took part in the evaluation project. He left the project when we had completed the evaluation report (Lund & Weber 2001) and given feed back to participants and the union.

[3] The concept of "research subjects" refers to the population of informants and participants stem from Hollway and Jefferson, 2000. It signals the perception of the people involved as dynamic and autonomous subjects, opposed to the status of objects under positivist scrutiny.

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A democracy we can eat: a livelihoods approach to TVET policy and provision

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Abstract

In Southern Africa, theories of adult education have remained modelled on imported paradigms. The urgency of particularly the first of the Millennium Development Goals, 'to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger' generally translates into policy and provision of skills training based on purely economistic considerations. In practice, lifelong education and learning occurs most commonly as part of other social practices and in the guise of community development. This article outlines the livelihood approach as a conceptual and methodological tool for a locally grounded understanding of what constitutes 'work' particularly in the context of poverty and high-risk environments. It argues that the principles of interconnectedness, relationality and agency are central to understanding livelihood practices and that participatory processes of data collection, dialogue and analysis should inform education and training policy. Programmes and curricula that fit in with the livelihood strategies of people have a greater chance of being supported and the process that leads to such understanding could provide a democratic model for adult education elsewhere.

Keywords: participatory development; livelihoods approach; interconnection

Introduction: Crossroads trading

As my car stops at the traffic lights a young man wearing a tall hat made out of recycled cardboard comes to the window, smiling broadly and greeting me. His name is Themba and he tries is to persuade me to pay anything ("funny money") for a two-page folded pamphlet with jokes. Behind him, Winston waves; he knows I have no interest in purchasing a cellular phone holder for my car, but he is ready for a brief chat and laugh. Across the lights young men from the DRC offer brightly coloured paintings of Table Mountain with the newly built 2010 World Cup soccer stadium in the foreground. Unlike the joke-sellers they are not licensed and every now and then they scatter from police and run to hide behind hedges and walls. Others work in shifts; they trade in

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newspapers, beaded wire-flowers and 'Big Issue' magazines. In the late afternoon, local men arrive to sell fruit and flowers. All share the 'window of opportunity' when the lights on their side of the crossing turn red, and all spend hours in the hot sun and wind hoping to make enough for a meal and their bus-fare home. But this is where the similarities end.

Themba had to leave school when his father was retrenched two years ago. Shortly afterwards his older sister brought her baby to live with them and soon afterwards she died from Aids. Themba's father is still unemployed and his mother carries the main burden for the household. She has a part-time job as a domestic worker which brings in some cash to pay for Themba's little sister's school fees and other necessities. She grows vegetables on the public verge near their township house and she is the treasurer of a woman's saving club. Themba heard about the joke business through a friend who sings in the church choir with him. The friend also told him how to apply for a child support grant for his little sister and the baby. The grant will make a big difference. Winston is a refugee a few years older and, together with a home 'connection' rents a room adjacent to a shack in an informal settlement some 21 km away from the crossroads. They have no cooking or sanitation facilities but at least their roof does not leak in the rain. His business is doing very poorly as no one wants Chinese phone holders and he is not sure how he will pay the rent at the end of the month.

What factors endanger or support these men's daily livelihood activities? What access to assets such as cash, support and influence does each one have? What would make a substantial difference to their ability to work and generate an income and produce a sense of wellbeing? Their vulnerabilities and capabilities vary greatly and depending on who they are – young/old, local/foreigner etc - they have access to different assets and resources. For example, as part of a household with a diversity of livelihood strategies, strong social connections and the potential income from social grants Themba has much more resilience than Winston whose only source of potential support is the 'home connection' he lives with.

Marginal and economically vulnerable young men and women like Themba and Winston and the other sellers at the intersection would be the potential target population for much of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) offered in response to unemployment and growing poverty. Yet, they are generally excluded from training opportunities. As Willis, McKenzie and Harris (2009, p. 1) argue, current policies, systems, programmes are failing 'to adapt to the changing nature of work and society and are thereby missing a crucial opportunity to enable the growth of more sustainable and equitable communities'. This paper adds another voice to the growing number of studies and calls for change collected in 'Rethinking work and learning' and 'Turning work and lifelong learning inside out'. (Willis et al., 2009; Cooper & Walters, 2009) Recognising unemployment, the ever-increasing growth of the informal economy in the majority world, and the precarious nature of multiple activities undertaken by poor people and especially women and youth in order to make a living, this paper proposes a 'turn' to a livelihood approach as the basis for planning more appropriate technical and vocational education and training (TVET) interventions.

The sustainable livelihood approach challenges single-sector interventions to development and was central to rural development debates before also being applied to urban studies. It drew economists into discussions on questions of access, built on methodologies experimented with by social anthropologists, roped in political ecologists and is underpinned by a strong sense of Freirean philosophy. Importantly, it is a conceptual and methodological tool developed in the Global South and it has, I

believe, a lot to offer both 'developed countries' and adult education as an approach to research and planning.

Overview

The title of this paper derives from a colleague in the Philippines, Edicio dela Torre, (2009, p. 229) who recalls Thai activists demanding 'a democracy that we can eat'. Outlining the recent history in the Philippines he discusses some of the tensions for adult educators engaged in the struggle for democracy. The deposal of elite leaders and holding of democratic elections do not automatically lead to food for the people – and democracy means very little unless it has real practical benefits for all.

This paper addresses the first of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that aims to 'Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger'. Poverty is most often described as 'hunger' rather than the absence of things: we know people are poor 'when the cat sleeps on the hearth' because there is no cooking happening.[1] Hunger is the most potent manifestation of poverty. Malnutrition contributes to at least half of the 10.8 million children who die before their time; it acts together with infection in a vicious cycle increasing susceptibility to further infection, exacerbates the effect of childhood diseases and has long-term effects on cognitive development. Malnourished women give birth to underweight babies and thus contribute to the next cycle of malnutrition, ill health and morbidity. If an already vulnerable situation of food insecurity is made worse by the impact of another threat such as the world economic crisis those who are most at risk from malnutrition will suffer most. According to the Food and Agriculture organisation (FAO) the economic crisis has pushed the number of undernourished people up by 105 million to more than one billion – about one sixth of the global population. How is adult education responding?

In the first part of the paper I will briefly address the shortage of conceptual and theoretical research and writing on African adult education appropriate to conditions on the ground. Both the practice and conceptual understanding of adult education and training in (Southern) Africa have remained largely modelled on imported adult education history and paradigms. Secondly, connecting adult education firmly with development I then suggest that the livelihood approach offers a conceptual and methodological tool that builds on theories of participatory development. It recognises that poor people live under precarious and uncertain conditions and that they spend extraordinary energies on devising ways to avert threats to daily survival and building safety nets for unexpected new shocks. Only they can describe how they make sense of their lives and how they invent strategies to both cope and improve their wellbeing. If we truly want to address 'poverty and hunger' we need to listen.

Thirdly, after outlining and illustrating some of the principles and methodological tools underpinning a livelihoods framework I argue its relevance for adult education, particularly in the majority world[2]. Finally, I propose we turn 'work and learning' not just inside out but also upside down by looking to the livelihoods approach developed in the majority world as a model for potentially new forms of researching and educating/learning, in the 'developed countries'. This, I suggest, would also be a way in which adult education can contribute to deepening democracy in the interests of food security for all.

Adult education and development in Southern Africa

Esteva (1997, p. 6-7) has argued that U.S. president Truman created a 'new perception of one's own self, and of the other' the day he announced a programme for the 'improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas', on January 20,1949.

> Two hundred years of social construction of the historical-political meaning of the term, development, were successfully usurped and transmogrified.(…) On that day, two billion people became underdeveloped. In a real sense, from that time on, they ceased being what they were, in all their diversity, and were transmogrified into an inverted mirror of others' reality: a mirror that belittles them and sends them off to the end of the queue.

Since then, multiple approaches have been advanced for the 'upgrading' of 'the Third World', ranging from classical and neo-liberal development theories to structuralism, neo-Marxism, grassroots and people-based development. Adult education in the 'developing world' has generally mirrored or deflected the dominant development approach of the day. Depending on the organisational and social contexts within which educators of adults have worked their orientation would support the agenda of government, big business or NGOs working within 'the politics of resistance' or 'the politics of participation' (dela Torre, 2009, p. 230)

The practice of adult education in countries in Africa has a long history (Indabawa & Mpofu, 2006), yet activities concerned with adults learning new skills, or youth, women or specially selected people being inducted into cultural and social practices have rarely been framed as adult education. 'Initiation', 'socialisation', 'health promotion' and 'agricultural extension services' are part of life-long development processes, offered by elders, local experts, non-governmental organisations, church-leaders or government agents. Indabawa and Mpofu (2006, p. 6) have pointed out that the old perception that adult education means literacy and remedial education persists: 'The concept of adult education remains hazy in most African countries and, consequently, there is very little commitment to the promotion of adult education activities.' They suggest: 'A historical overview of the provision of education in Africa may help explain why most institutional providers of adult education are not aware that they are engaged in adult learning.'

Little has been written about the history of adult education in Africa (Walters & Watters, 2000, p. 49; Oduaran, 2000). What exists is either fairly dated and covers colonial histories rather than more current policies and provision (Nafukho, Amutabi & Otunga, 2005), offers a broad overview rather than in-depth study of a particular region (Walters & Watters, 2000) or concentrates on literacy (Aitchison, 2008). There are no regularly published journals on adult education in Africa (Oduaran, 2000) and a review of English-language materials and textbooks used at higher education institutions reveals that the majority are published in the UK and USA. Many are irrelevant for the context of adult education in Africa as examples and references given are largely derived from advanced industrialized countries in the West and often suggest inappropriate examples and models. (Oduaran, 2000; Youngman, 2005). There are a few exceptions; here I will mention two.

In 2000, a most welcome book was published: The State of Adult and Continuing Education in Africa. As the foreword penned by Peter Jarvis (2000, p. vii) points out,

> (Secondly,) for too long the continent has been exposed to Western thought and ideas without having its own established baseline by which to evaluate these. Indeed, many of the ideas from the North have been imposed on the peoples of Africa. Not it is time to

> develop African bodies of knowledge that reflect the culture of the South and evaluate and critique the ideas from African thought.

Sadly, the book does not live up to the hope that readers will find a critique of Northern/Western thought from the perspective of African thought. If anything, beyond the rhetoric of anti-colonialism and cultural imperialism many of the case studies in the book reflect too closely a continued adherence to western adult education conceptual frameworks and practices (von Kotze, 2002). Most country reports show that, generally, adult education is underpinned by instrumental expectations: it is to contribute to the advancement of individuals and communities, either in the form of human resource development (as in vocational and skills trainings), or as community development (for example associated with health promotion or agricultural extension work). As Walters and Watters (2000, p. 51) have correctly pointed out adult education policies 'were strongly influenced by modernization theory and they were seen as integral to national development'. Just one example illustrates this: Omolewa (2000, p. 11) assesses that 'Africa is currently in an urgent need of a vibrant adult and continuing education programme to address the variety of problems', because

> Unless Africa is able to explore the possibility of developing her adult population to respond to the demands of new technology and professional development, Africa may remain a passive observer living in the 17th century when the whole world moves to the 21st century. (Omolewa, 2000, p. 15)

He reflects what Esteva (1997, p. 10) has described as the misery of two-thirds of the world's people for whom development is what they are *not*: 'It is a reminder of an undesirable, undignified condition. To escape from it, they need to be enslaved to others' experiences and dreams'. On the whole, development means economic growth based on the expansion of the modern sector and the export of primary products (Youngman, 2000) and in continuation of the modernist tradition the role of adult education is primarily to contribute to economic growth through skills development programmes. The basis for such programmes is a deficit model and curricula are constructed on the basis of the perceived needs of industry with a strong human resource development orientation.

The second exception to the dearth of writings on adult education in Africa is the publication of a series of 'relevant, affordable and available textbooks that reflect African social realities, theoretical and cultural perspectives, policies and modes of practice' (Youngman, 2005, p. xiv). The series 'African perspectives on adult learning', written and edited by African writers or writers in Africa goes some way towards filling the gap. The 'foundations' and 'social context' books include topics such as 'opportunities and access for adult learners', 'gender and development', and 'Globalisation', 'social change and development', 'social class', 'race, ethnicity, religion' and 'empowerment.' It is hoped that tertiary curricula for the education and training for adult educators will be adjusted to reflect African perspectives, concerns and methodologies giving rise to rigorous theorising, debate and critique around adut education in Africa.

Julius Nyerere (1978, p. 29-30), Mwalimu (the teacher), asserted that adult education has two primary aims: firstly, to 'Inspire both a desire for change, and an understanding that change is possible', and secondly, 'Help people to make their own decisions, and to implement those decisions for themselves'. In the following I want to show how a livelihood approach offers could inform both policy and provision of an adult education that helps people make their own decisions and act on them. Based on

rigorous processes in which people examine the actions and strategies they employ to live within a precarious context of ever-changing pressures, their voices can make recommendations that inform designers of policy and curricula towards the provision of education and learning processes that enhance the sustainability agenda both in terms of food security and environmental and natural resource protection.

From 'work' to 'livelihood'

Elsewhere (von Kotze, 2008, 2009a, 2009b) I have suggested that the narrow definition of work as employment in the formal economy does not serve the conditions in the South where the majority of youth and adults, especially women, make a living working in the interstices between formal and informal economy, and where the informal economy is a bigger employer than the formal one. Studies that look at what people do in order to make a living have shown that the notion of single purpose economies in which people have *one* job that generates the income for their livelihood must be rejected. Despite the majority of working people in the world now being engaged in subsistence production, self-employed or working in the informal economy, the perception remains that what constitutes 'work' is employment in the formal economy: Work is seen as a paid activity that is measurable and quantifiable, both in terms of income/expenditure, taxation, contribution to gross domestic product, modes of production, and in terms of status (blue-collar / white collar jobs) and knowledge that, for the purpose of training, is broken down into neat modules and discrete competencies.

Such a conception of 'work' excludes the efforts and energy expanded in performing specific tasks related to sustaining life, as well as all unpaid activities such as housework, food preparation, all kinds of care-work, home-building and gardening, fuel collection and the myriad of small but important interactions involved in community-building and establishing social protection. Much of this unpaid / unseen work is performed by women and it remains unacknowledged and under-valued. Worse, still, is the emphasis almost wholly on economic considerations instead of life and living. The title of this paper re-connects work with food within a particular political context: democracy. By linking work to nutrition and the opportunity to have a say in the daily 'running' of a society I propose that the fundamental underlying reason for why people in the majority world engage in strenuous activities is not the accumulation of (dead) commodities but to sustain and reproduce life. (Gorz, 1999; Krog, 2009) The response to the quest to 'make a decent living' should not be training programmes that funnel people into dehumanising labour. Generic skills training or technical and vocational education and training (TVET) designed by specialists in highly industrialised countries for the purposes of poverty eradication in poor ones have clearly not been the answer to food and livelihood insecurity in the majority world. Work and learning must go beyond a narrow economistic framework.

Why a livelihood approach to research and learning?

Mojab (2009, p. 10) has asked 'How do we uncover the social relations of work and learning that are not visible on the surface?' I believe the livelihood approach has developed tools and processes for doing just that – not in a 'quick fix' way but by relating the data from various different processes and dialogues to each other.

A livelihood approach deals with people as subjects rather than simply workers, employees, clients, customers etc. It considers people as active agents who draw on particular locally available resources in order to create the means for life and living. Crucially, a livelihood approach does not assume problems, deficiencies and gaps, nor does it begin by defining needs. Instead it recognizes that people, however poor, have developed and mobilise coping mechanisms, capabilities, knowledge and skills. People draw on local knowledge and locally available resources – including experts and people in positions of power - in order to make a living and deal with daily obstacles and uncertainties. In times of increased stress they make decisions by weighing up available options in terms of immediate, medium and long-term pressures. Outsiders often assume that poor people are passive victims or act out of ignorance. For example, a woman exposing herself to the potential of being infected with HIV by having unprotected sex may do so because she has to generate cash in order to pay for public transport to take her sick child to a clinic. She has weighed up the long-term risk of being infected with HIV and getting sick in years to come against the short-term risk of loosing her sick child.

Chambers and Conway (1992, p. 7) formulated a livelihood as comprising 'the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living.' The resources used, whether they be material, personal, educational, social, political, are connected to broader aspects of peoples' lives that is, the changing social, political, economic, environmental circumstances that allow them to have access to such resources, or not. A livelihoods approach contextualises work as diverse and divergent activities irrespective of whether they are income generating or not. It asks questions such as: How do people make their living in the context of competing demands and dynamics? How do they juggle multiple responsibilities? People are not solitary creatures and they generally do not live and work alone. The less access to means of production and control over resources they have the more they work with others sharing, exchanging, and collaborating in an intricate system of reciprocity. (Lund & Nicholson, 2003) Therefore, especially in conditions of poverty and unemployment people living in / constituting a household pool resources and diversify strategies to deal with risks of insufficiency and the unit of analysis in a livelihood study is often an individual as part of a household.

Given this more holistic approach to people's activities a livelihood approach affords insights into poverty – not just as an absence of material goods but a specific high-risk condition that often forces people to make decisions to avert further immediate crises to the detriment of longer-term developments. An analysis of livelihoods takes into account the ways in which subjects negotiate access to and use assets and mobilise capabilities. Examining stores, resources and claims accessed helps to ascertain what enables or prevents a person from activating knowledge and skills within an environment of risk factors and opportunities.

Poverty is often associated with a lack of income, or availability of cash. An integrated holistic understanding of poverty would consider the socio-political context, the relations of power, gendered divisions of labour, the particular economic and institutional factors of the environment. It recognizes that poverty is a complex web of social, cultural, political relations rather than a simple 'dollar a day' or 'calories a day' calculation. The array of activities in which household members engage each day extends far beyond market-related actions and the approach provides a tool for analysing and understanding how people allocate energies in the fight for food security and happiness.

Each household member's contribution is regarded in relation to those of others and each activity exists in the context of others complementing or supplementing them. The importance of each livelihoods strategy is relational and in response to or anticipation of another within a larger framework of vulnerability and risk. Livelihood studies integrate contextual micro and macro pressures, actors, institutions and processes affecting the household. Insight into comparative risk factors could generate understanding about decisions made about transport, energies spent on one activity over another, savings or loans and the like.

With regards to the men at the crossroads, rather than simply looking at the selling work performed a livelihood approach would not simply dismiss the activity as 'unskilled and low-income work'. Instead, it may ask questions about the considerations informing what to sell at the street-corner. The decision what to sell depends on a number of variables, such as, first, available financial assets, that is the amount of cash available to purchase goods; second, access to goods through social connections that point the way or open doors to affordable goods, and/or access to small loans as 'starter capital'; third, the capability to engage with motorists, such as the ability to attract enough attention for a driver to roll down the window and be persuaded to part with some cash in exchange for an unwanted article, or to elicit the goodwill to purchase jokes; fourth, the tools, materials and skill to make something from wire and beads or boards and paint; fifth, the necessary level of numeracy to bargain successfully. Furthermore, beyond identifying and analysing the assets and capabilities involved in the decision to sell essentially unnecessary goods at an intersection, the process can also generate insight into other reasons for doing selling-work, such as access to information circulated amongst sellers, the affirmation or not of personal dignity and the management of social relations. All these contribute to understanding the risk profile of both the selling activity and individual sellers' lives. Such information should significantly inform education and training policy and provision.

A livelihood approach is also an extremely useful tool for and process of participatory inquiry in which both facilitators and the subjects of research learn from and with each other about interventions that are already in place: 'The livelihood lens (also) shows the macro environment more clearly by showing how policies and events at a regional, provincial, national and international level affect the livelihoods of people at a local level' (de Satge, Holloway, Mullins, Nchabeleng & Ward, 2002, p. 71) . Thus, it can act as a means to ascertain how existing actions impact positively or negatively on people's attempts to make a living. With regards to education and training, the information generated in processes of data production and analysis helps us to understand what policies and programmes might offer opportunities for resource-poor people towards creating sustainable livelihoods.

A livelihood approach is based on perspectives from 'below': it recognizes that only the people themselves know the great variety of activities engaged in and combination of resources utilized. Thus, the principle of strong participation is crucial, that is, participation not just as tokenism, or simply as collaboration where the stronger 'stakeholder's agenda dominates, nor as 'a politically attractive slogan' or 'economically, an appealing proposition' (Rahnema, 1997, p. 118), but participation at every stage of assessment and decision-making. As participants in livelihood analyses focus on complex realities and the multiple roles they play while navigating power relations and interests and trading information, they construct new insights into their lives within the broader context of threats and pressures. Therefore, the process is one of investigation and analysis for both the subjects of investigation and for (outside)

researchers who wish to gain a deeper understanding in order to suggest appropriate interventions.

The livelihoods framework

For such inquiries to be systematic, livelihoods frameworks offer conceptual and methodological tools. Generally, livelihoods frameworks focus on assets, capabilities and activities and the relations between these. More broadly, they include particular risk factors, analyzing particular hazards and threats – whether they be economic, political, environmental, climatic or social – and the specific vulnerabilities (structural, social, personal, economic and so on) and resilience factors that can be activated to mitigate the potential impact.

Livelihoods frameworks are based on a range of principles and beliefs about bottom-up participatory development. de Satge et al. (2002, p. 3) have pointed out how there are differences of interpretation and different variations of the livelihoods framework; yet, they all build on earlier development theory:

> These include aspects of the integrated rural development planning (IRDP) approaches of the 1970's; food security initiatives during the 1980's; rapid rural appraisal (RRA); participatory rural appraisal (PRA); farming systems research; gender analysis; new understandings of poverty and well-being; risk and vulnerability assessment; and agrarian reform.

Scoones (2009, p. 178) describes in some detail the history of how the livelihood approach and various frameworks were developed, over years, in practice and dialogues and workshops, across disciplines and sector-specific research and action,

> with enthusiasm and commitment from a new group of people with often a quite radical vision, and a government seemingly committed to doing something about it. This was not the old world of natural resources specialists (archetypically concerned with soils not people) and economists (with their interest in growth and trickle down), but a new, integrated perspective centred on normative, political commitments to banish poverty – and later supported by widespread public campaigns, at least in the UK, from Jubilee 2000 to Make Poverty History.

Government agencies and funders, NGOs and civil society organisations, social movements and academics all worked together towards a general agreement described by Murray (2001) as follows:

> Firstly, the approach is 'people-centred', in that the making of policy is based on understanding the realities of struggle of poor people themselves, on the principle of their participation in determining priorities for practical intervention, and on their need to influence the institutional structures and processes that govern their lives. Secondly, it is 'holistic' in that it is 'non-sectoral' and it recognises multiple influences, multiple actors, multiple strategies and multiple outcomes. Thirdly, it is 'dynamic' in that it attempts to understand change, complex cause-and-effect relationships and 'iterative chains of events'. Fourthly, it starts with analysis of strengths rather than of needs, and seeks to build on everyone's inherent potential. Fifthly, it attempts to 'bridge the gap' between macro- and micro-levels. Sixthly, it is committed explicitly to several different dimensions of sustainability: environmental, economic, social and institutional.

This has clear methodological implications.

Methodology of researching and learning

Essentially, a livelihood analysis is a process of social inquiry and learning akin to action research for the purposes of planning change. The principles of people-centeredness, interconnectedness, holism, dynamism and agency translate into an inclusive methodology that works mainly with oral and visual tools so that literacy is not a pre-condition for participation. Employing a variety of participatory tools many of which derive from rapid rural appraisal (RRA), participatory rural appraisal (PRA) or participatory action learning (PAL) facilitators of livelihood studies initiate processes of detailed data collection and in-depth analysis of daily living conditions and social practices.

Generally, the process begins with stock-taking: naming what is there. This often involves the production of 'maps' – these may be geographical and show available facilities and resources drawn on in daily life, or social detailing institutions, organisations and resource people. Maps can focus on environmental, physical, political factors and indicate both the sources of shocks and stresses and the assets and resources people use to make a living, as much as taking account of who has what particular knowledge and know-how within a household or community. Such a map was produced by streetchildren as part of a process of telling their story to inform appropriate interventions. (Trent & von Kotze, 2009)

A series of story-telling exercises may lead to the construction of a time-line in which, collectively, participants construct the history of their place and identify crucial events or moments that may have constituted turning-points. A visual representation of the seasons in a diagram or calendar assists in pinpointing times of increased stress or wellbeing. Recording the beginning and finishing points of particular activities helps to create a detailed and nuanced picture of busy times and serves to highlight more or less access to particular resources such as food, water and labour power.

On the basis of 'activity clocks' detailing all the activities undertaken in the course of a day participants may analyse the knowledge, know-how and resources drawn on in order to perform the activity. The clocks register all the activities whose primary purpose is to maintain and sustain the daily conditions of life as well as the 'other' 'non-scientific, nontechnical work', the work generally done by women and not recognised and acknowledged as work, and hence unpaid, as Hart (2002, p. 37) describes

> the "bad" kind of work that administers to the body and its needs, a body that gets born and dies and that gets us in touch with the earth and its materials, with dirt, blood and excrement, that is, with life in the primary, "primitive" sense of the word.

Like all subsistence work – or what Hart calls 'life-affirming work' – such activities have been so 'naturalised' as part of women's lives that it is often hard to make them visible and count as energy-sapping work. An activity clock is one way to take stock and often men and women compare their 'clocks' and draw conclusions about the gendered division of labour.

Once base-line information has been gathered, cross-analyses offer in-depth understanding. For example, a ranking exercise can generate information about power and authority within a household. The question: 'Who has the most or least access to nutritious foods' may see the 'mother' figure standing at the end of the line despite her being the one who cooked the meal. The question of 'decision-making powers' sees her move up the line, just above the young daughters, because she does have a say over the rights, roles and responsibilities of the children in the home. There may be some indecision whether she should be ranked last again in response to 'access to

opportunities': women often have few choices in their lives despite contributing most to household food security and income. Her status will be an important consideration when planning women's attendance at training interventions. Based on the exploration of position and status a facilitator might steer the ranking exercise towards a dialogue on nutrition and health as issues of power and culture rather than knowledge about micronutrients and agricultural practices, especially for women and girl-children. Finally, there is a move to practical responses: What would be democratic practices in terms of food distribution? How can we change relations at home and in our communities so that all have sufficient nutritious food?

Clearly, the aim of any livelihood analysis is practical: to plan for action. Calendars and seasonality maps in conjunction with activity charts give a clear message about 'slacker' times when potential education and training activities could be slotted into daily routines. Once suggestions have been advanced each is examined in terms of competing demands, pressures, and constraints. Finally, participants identify opportunities and the necessary resources and capabilities needed to access and realise such opportunities.

Participation at each stage of decision-making in the investigation and planning is crucial if the action finally proposed is to enjoy a sense of ownership and commitment. Importantly, participation is also a way to learn about democratic processes.

A livelihood approach for adult education and training

Asserting his belief in the importance of TVET as a means to creating skilled workers 'central to achieving all eight goals and associated targets in the Millennium Development Goals', Maclean (2009, p. xii) reiterates that 'TVET should be relevant to the needs of the labour market, be of high quality, and broadly accessible to all.' He regrets that 'However, this ideal is often not being met, particularly in developing nations, economies in transition, and those in a post-conflict situation.' Here, I have suggested that top-down provision of TVET programmes that do not take local conditions into account may be one of the reasons for why the ideal is not being met, and that research involving livelihood analyses with target groups may generate the information necessary to make TVET accessible and relevant. Below, I will outline how and why I believe the approach to be directly useful for designing and offering an adult education that strengthens local capacities and shifts the emphasis away from purely economic considerations.

Firstly, rooted in a bottom-up people-centred approach to development the process of generating information and making sense of it is *participatory* at each stage of enquiry and decision-making. As de Satge et al. (2002, p. 22) point out

> Good livelihoods planning is based on a collaborative enquiry to discover how people live, what resources they have access to, what works, and what has potential to work. It identifies how different people in different households are able to transform their assets and capabilities into livelihood strategies. It explores what people see as desirable livelihood outcomes – these will vary from household to household.

Principles and process are based on dialogue as 'an act of creation' underpinned by a facilitator's love as 'a commitment to other men' (sic): 'Dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanised'; therefore, 'this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's 'depositing' ideas in another, nor can it become a simple

exchange of ideas to be 'consumed' by the participants in the discussion.' (Freire, 1972, p. 61-62). The subjects of inquiry 'name the world' in response to a facilitator's questions. The facilitator / educator assists in making connections between the micro- and macro aspects of the emerging picture, by challenging and probing and by adding information, if necessary, in order to extend the analysis. In a livelihood approach the questions 'whose voice counts?' and 'whose perceptions are important?' are answered with a clear reference to the subjects whom education and training provision so often render into passive recipients.

Secondly, therefore, learner-participants are acknowledged to have both *knowledge and agency*. The basis of the enquiry and later planning are existing strengths, assets, capabilities and, importantly, knowledge. Rather than assuming deficits and needs the livelihood approach recognises people as actors in their own development in the sense that Nyerere (1978) has highlighted:

> It is in the process of deciding for himself (sic)what is development, and deciding in what direction it should take his society, and in implementing those decisions, that Man develops himself. For man does not develop himself in a vacuum, in isolation from his society and his environment; and he certainly cannot be developed by others. Man's consciousness is developed in the process of thinking, and deciding and of acting. His capacity is developed in the process of doing things.

For example, there is a common practice of planting particular weeds in between rows of vegetable crops as a way of protecting soil fertility and humidity, deterring insects and harmful weeds and creating a source of edible or medicinal greens. This practice contradicts commercial agricultural conventions and 'modernist' extension officers label farmers 'ignorant' and 'backwards' and demand that they remove the weeds. (Busingye, forthcoming) A livelihood analysis would have ensured the officers to learn about local technologies and indigenous botanical knowledge and hence recognize the importance of wild foods particularly for times of stress and shortage. For education, the process of dialogue and learning can facilitate the re-discovery and naming of such knowledge in the interests of more appropriate curriculum design.

Thirdly, the livelihoods framework is holistic and based on *interconnectedness*. It recognizes that work is not a discrete activity pursued in isolation from living and the pressures of life, other people, the constraints and opportunities of institutions, policies and pressures. Rather, work is 'integrated into a multi-active life as one of its components', and working time is integrated 'into the differentiated temporality of a multi-dimensional life' (Gorz, 1999, p. 73). Similarly, the knowledge and know-how necessary for performing work are not seen as 'belonging' to particular work but integral to life and (making a) living. Part of the process of dialogue may be to identify how competencies and insights drawn on in one area of life may be utilised for another. Once this complex system has been made visible and conscious people are in a much better position to propose how, why, when and where they could fit planned learning and education activities into the day. Only then can policy and programme planning strengthen and support existing activities so that continued and sustained participation in a programme is assured.

Fourthly, different people devise *different livelihood strategies* contingent upon their particular assets, capabilities and access to resources. Instead of assuming that a 'one size fits all' approach to education and training policy a livelihoods study generates insights into what education and training would be appropriate for different people. Instead of being driven by an outcomes-based regiment of 'generic competencies' that are assumed to be transferrable the livelihood approach leads to suggestions of how to

improve and extend particular actions and the production of goods that support life rather than add to the accumulation of superfluous commodities.

Fifthly, the livelihoods perspective re-connects development and education with *politics*. Integral to analysis and planning are questions of power relations as they shape the actions of all participants both in time and space, that is, tied to particular moments/events such as global crises. The focus goes beyond economic and market relations to include pressures of environmental (climate) change. Facilitating ordinary people to participate fully in the process of analysis and planning is a deeply democratic act that recognises the reciprocal 'I am through you'. The outcome must be practical and food security should be the top priority.

Conclusion

The main challenge remains to make visible how deeply intertwined adult learning and education are with development in an ongoing dynamic process rather than a quick-fix injection of skills and information. The participatory design of any development programme or project should explicitly include considerations of learning. In this paper I have tried to show how a particular tool invented and refined in development action in the various countries of the South could become a useful basis for evolving recommendations for policy and provision in adult education. In this regard, action flowing from the Bonn Declaration issued by participants at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in March/April 2009 is most welcomed. The declaration called for the establishment of 'regional and country-level committees, networks and communities of practice for ESD that strengthen local-national, and national-global links, and that enhance North-South-South and South-South co-operation' (Bonn Declaration 2009). Writing from South Africa, such cooperation may be happening economically – however, in adult education links must be strengthened and maintained through a continuous exchange of experiences, insights and approaches.

A look at principles and practices developed in the majority world also shows that there are models that could teach important lessons about new social realities, changing forms of work and sustainable resource use, food security and ethics for the North. While such knowledges and technologies may be local in terms of their invention, application and cultural practices they often have wider applicability. Such knowledge is often still dismissed as 'local ways of doing', 'witchcraft' and 'indigenous craft' rather than scientific technological knowledge. Yet, attempts to patent seeds, plants and production processes show clearly that the value of such knowledge has been recognized and is being harnessed for commercial exploitative purposes. As Nafukho et al. (2005, p. 30) suggest

> (However) it is possible that through mutual respect and trust, traditional knowledge experts can work with those from other knowledge systems to generate more effective solutions for contemporary problems in Africa and the world. After all, the 'tape and weigh view' of measuring and weighing science, implying excessive reliance on specific methods of solving problems, has never helped in taking scientific research very far. Traditional contexts reflect and embed certain rules about how interaction with nature, with each other and with our inner selves can help to generate sustainable and compassionate approaches to solving problems.

We have but one planet and new ways of working, acting and hoping together need to

be rooted in 'the old ideas of a livelihood based on love, conviviality and simplicity, and also in helping people to resist the disruptive effects of economization.' (Rahnema, 1997, p. 127) Alternatives to neo-liberal global capitalism are developed in dialogue across disciplines, continents and cultures – but such dialogue must be based on respectful listening in recognition that what binds us is our common humanity, and that poverty and hunger in one part of the world deeply implicates people in the other part.

The old strategy of training people for one job in the hope that they might find employment will not generate sustainable livelihood security. A livelihood approach to education policy would bring disparate perspectives together, allow conversations over disciplinary and professional divides and provide an institutional bridging function linking people, professions and practices in new ways. (Scoones, 2009) A TVET policy and provision based on a livelihood approach would bridge disciplines and professions and would have to link training with working capital, connect people with markets both for buying materials and selling products, create facilities to manufacture or provide services, offer healthcare and child-support, and do so while respecting the necessity of local people to participate directly in ongoing negotiated decision-making – not as beneficiaries, but as subjects. In that way TVET may contribute to a 'democracy we can eat'.

Notes

[1] Proverbs offer useful insights into changing local perceptions and interpretations of problems such as poverty.

[2] Although the 'group of 8' countries represent a tiny fraction of humankind they continue to make the decisions that affect the majority of the world's peoples. I have chosen the term 'majority world' to indicate that the majority of humankind lives in many of the poorest countries not all of which are in the Global South.

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Book review

The State, civil society and the citizen: Exploring relationships in the field of adult education in Europe

By Michal Bron Jr., Paula Guimarães and Rui Viera de Castro (Eds.) (Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2009) 229 pp., 42.50 €, ISBN 978-3-631-58593-1

In the edited collection - *The State, Civil Society and the Citizen Exploring relationships in the Field of Adult Education in Europe*- 18 researchers and adult educators across Europe explore some of the contemporary issues pertaining to the field of adult education.

The texts originate from papers presented at a conference organized by the Active Democratic Citizenship and Adult Learning research network part of the European society for research on the education of adults (ESREA) in Braga, Portugal, 2007. The edited collection, which hereby forms a part in the more extensive series of books on lifelong learning and adult learning previously published by ESREA, is edited by Michal Bron Jr., Paula Guimarães and Rui Viera de Castro. Most of the contributors come from Portugal (9) and Sweden (4). Even though the geographic variation perhaps could have been wider, the themes and issues dealt with are not limited.

The book is divided into three sections. After a clarifying introductory text written by the editors, the first part of the book is named *The State, civil society and the citizen Towards a cosmopolitan adult education?*. All of the contributors in this part of the book argues for a new "cosmopolitical education" to arise, albeit they work from different theoretical perspectives. This is arguably the most abstract part of the book and the part that I have chosen to concentrate on in this review.

The second part of the book *Adult educational policies. Shifts in discourses in international and national contexts* turn our attention to the policies and texts produced for, or at least in relation to, adult educational practices. This part consists of three critical policy analyses of national and international documents and some case studies from courses and other educational activities in Portugal and Sweden. The last section *Citizenships in transition: Changes in roles, times and spaces* includes two participatory research initiatives, one from Seville (Spain) and one from northern Portugal. The section also has a chapter on the long lasting effects among adult education professionals when the unification process in Germany began in 1989. The focal point in the last part then is on changes and transitions that occur in the field of adult education, either contextual, systemic, temporal or whatever.

The editors open the book by stating that this edited collection appears in the "time of transition" that seems to be monitored by globalization-processes and "a growing importance of supra-national and international organizations". As a consequence of that (and reason *for* that) we get a rather tilted role for the nation-states, whom no longer prove sufficient or any safe harbor (if they ever were). The organizations of civil society are also challenged by these transitions, it seems. So the field of adult education stand before "new possibilities, and new problems" according to the editors. At the same time as globalization give rise to serious problems it also opens up conditions for new

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educational practices, loyalties and perspectives. This introductory text also functions as an important backdrop to the first three chapters on cosmopolitanism. The question soon arises: ”is globalization just what we needed for creating a new cosmopolitical pedagogy”?

Chalos V. Estêvão, in his chapter *Cosmopoliticity and the adult education in the era of globalization* argues that there are two sides of contemporary cosmopolitanism. One, which he sees as “the neo-liberal version”, which doesn’t bother with issues like income redistribution, inequality and social justice. Leave everything to the market and we will be fine and well. As Estêvão points out, and already Marx noted, capital has indeed had this “cosmopolitan” drive for quite a while. It is expansive by nature. In opposition to the mercantilised cosmopolitan world view Estêvão positions the “cosmopolitical democracy”. Following close behind the globalization process are, according to Estêvão, the political and cultural tendencies towards “cosmocitizenship”. And the political aims here are universal: [as] “the current trend of cosmopolitan democracy seeks to extend democratic ideals to all states.” (p. 47). Politics is seen to evolve towards “a community without frontiers” were the loyalties no longer lie within any territorial frame but at multiple levels and with “complex” layers. Estêvão concludes that it is high time to create a *cosmopolitical education* that corresponds to these tendencies and “takes a global perspective of the future humanity, since all individuals have an equal moral value and must be part of our community of dialogue and attention” (p. 53).

The next chapter by Manuel Barosa goes very well with the chapter by Estêvão, as he too argues for a “post-national” or “multilevel citizenship”. They both seem to be in quest for some sort of un-attached and de-nationalized notion of citizenship. Barbosa even writes that: “National citizenship is an unjustifiable privilege in the age of frantic globalization and great migration. In fact, it is citizenship that works, as an exclusion mechanism that opposes the logical extension of rights, particularly to emigrants” (p. 61). Even the first chapter of the book *Civil society and the State: Some implications for adult education* which I read with great pleasure, written by Jim Crowther and Ian Martin, ends up singing almost the exact same cosmopolitical song in the end. The task of building a “new cosmopolitan pedagogy” they contend to be “the real challenge” for an adult educational movement today (p. 42). Their definition of cosmopolitanism as the “sensibility predicted on a willingness to step outside oneself in order to engage the other in a substantive and meaningful way” (After Bronner, 2004 in Crowther and Martin) is however so close to good old fashioned solidarity, they leave me thinking that the words of 1970´s maybe weren’t so awful after all.

So, what is the problem with all of this? Is not “cosmopolitical education” precisely what we need in this era of globalization? And is not a “community without frontiers” the most viable dream that we can come up with in these days of ever more increasing racism, organised right wing populism in our parlaments, and utterly inhumane border controls? Well, the first problem I have with these admittedly very visionary and seductive cosmopolitan ideas are that they seem a bit too unrealistic. It is, to start with, unlikely that any community will appear which constitutes itself without any outside reference. Other planets simply don’t seem to do the trick, UN will not be a vital organization for long the NGO´s are not by definition (more) democratic and so on. What is left in this ”post-national” universe?

Taking emigration as a starting point it puzzles me a bit that if there were anything that rightfully should deserve to be called “cosmopolitical” would it not be the activities of migrants or say the double consciousness streaming from the mass-scale diasporas hitherto undertaken in history? This is however not the kind of phenomena that the

theorists of cosmopolitanism seem to be referring to. In Estêvãos conclusion, for instance, it is rather as if someone else is invited into "our community of dialogue and attention" where we are embracing "the global perspective of the future humanity" in which we hopefully/gracefully can include others. And when we take our "democratic ideals" and seek to establish them around the globe, what room is there really for variations and elaborations outside the realms of what "we" (now as Europeans) have hitherto recognized as "democratic" or the right ways to govern a country? Can it even be so distressing that behind these cosmopolitan dreams is lurking something of an old colonial desire to establish a worldwide empire? Are we merely poring old imperial wine into new cosmopolitical bottles?

The remaining two parts of the book are not as consistent thematically as the first part. In the last section of the book it occurs to me that "the-text-that-did-not-fit-anywhere" came. Even though the last piece of paper by Rob Evans on the transition and system change among university professionals in East Germany after the fall of the wall is inspiring in itself, it doesn't feel as if it is a suitable ending. The interlude (Chapters 5-9) holds together reasonable though, since methodologically there is a concentration on policy analysis. Here I especially enjoyed Judith Walkers chapter on *The need and competent citizen in OECD educational policy documents*. There is, in Sweden at least, a lot of talk about neo-liberal policymaking and the damage OECD does within the realm of education. More seldom you see someone carefully doing empirical investigations on these matters. How do these policies end up being so influential? And what do they really say? Walkers' text is a cautious and critical reading of four OECD texts produced between 2001 and 2005 on lifelong learning and adult education. The citizen that emerges when looking more closely at these documents are, according to Walker, both connected to protestant Christianity in certain respects (e.g. the Calvinistic ethos) and the more recent ideology of "inclusive liberalism". The OECD seems very keen on providing explanations for non-participation, educational failure and inequalities in personal characteristics and distinct individual behavior. At the same time the most central theme in the OECD discourse are the "tactics of activation" and an apparent will to include all (on this point Walker analysis somewhat coincide with Andreas Fejes in the chapter before her). A lot of energy should consequently be spent in order for "the dedicated and committed institutions" to reach the dangerous uneducated people. Walker shows, without taking any overtones though, that this talk of inclusion is really an integral part of the "political rationale of neo-liberalism" (p. 108). While looking even closer at what the OECD are saying shows that they are prioritizing the material effects of inclusion, such as rendering greater productivity or to cut public spending.

All in all, the edited collection *The State, Civil Society and the Citizen: Exploring relationships in the Field of Adult Education in Europe* might not be solid as a rock. As is probably well known from other edited collections based on conferences ending up in your bookshelf, it is hard to create consistency in quality and a firm thematic structure from the material at hand. One of the most crucial reasons why it is nevertheless enjoyable to read and important to print this kind of book is that it help us to see international differences both in how the conditions for adult education are shaped and how we as researchers do things differently depending on where we are situated.

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Aims & Scope

The European journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA) is a refereed academic journal creating a forum for the publication of critical research on adult education and learning. It has a particular focus on issues at stake for adult education and learning in Europe, as these emerge in connection with wider international and transnational dynamics and trends. Such a forum is important at a time when local and regional explorations of issues are often difficult to foreground across language barriers. As academic and policy debate is increasingly carried out in the English language, this masks the richness of research knowledge, responses and trends from diverse traditions and foci. The journal thus attempts to be linguistically 'open access'. Whilst creating a forum for international and transnational debate, contributions are particularly welcome from authors in Europe and other locations where English is not the first language.

RELA invites original, scholarly articles that discuss the education and learning of adults from different academic disciplines, perspectives and traditions. It encourages diversity in theoretical and methodological approach and submissions from non-English speakers. Contributions will be subject to a rigorous peer review process. Clarity and conciseness of thought are crucial requirements for publication.

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