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Leading intergenerational learning in organizations: An example from Turkey

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Abstract

Within the fact that there are members of different generations in organizations nowadays, intergenerational learning in organizations has become more and more important. Some managers are observed to confuse about how to lead intergenerational learning environments in their organizations which makes important to conduct a research on this problem. Thus, this study was conducted and it aimed to understand the intergenerational learning process and how to lead it in a production facility in Turkey. The study group includes 61 people who are employees, team leaders, department directors, field directors and instructors. The study was carried out in the phenomenological research design. The data were gathered through interviews and analysed with content analysis. The results brought out six main themes, which are which are creating zone, acting according to generational differences, increasing motivation, supporting personal development, recording and managing "know-how", and creating intergenerational respect and understanding.

Keywords: Adult's learning, intergenerational leadership, Intergenerational learning, learning in organizations

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Introduction

One of the biggest problems of developing countries is the imbalance which is caused by changes in demographic factors on employment. This imbalance creates a pressure on members of societies who tend to choose luxurious consumption, comfort of life and expensive technology. Together with these, the changing demographic factors bring out a serious danger related to development of human resource, which is an important trump for organizations in global market.

The fertility rate is decreasing in Turkey, and predictions about the fertility rate made by international organizations show that this rate will get lower (The World Bank, 2019). Together with other factors, such as improvements in healthcare industry (Omachonu & Einspruch, 2010) and pharmaceutical technology (Grootendorst, Piérard & Shim, 2009), the life expectancy is increasing as a result of the decrease in the fertility rate. All of these highlight that life expectancy of society and the number of elder people would continue to increase. This situation will certainly affect all parts of society, including all types of organizations. In organizations, the changes in demographic factors can provide benefits if elder generations transfer their knowledge to younger ones, and if younger generations teach technological improvements and other developments to elder ones. With the help of this, the differences among generations would become benefits, prejudices against generations would decrease and organizational climate would occur in a way that it increases productivity.

Generations are groups of individuals who have shared social experiences and witnessed common historical events (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). The process of learning among different generations "Intergenerational Learning (IGL)", as mentioned above. The IGL can be defined as the process during which people from different generations get together for meaningful activities and interactions, the level of understanding between people from different generations increases and conflicts among generations decreases by breaking down the negative stereotypes (Schuller, 2010). The IGL has previously been understood as a "unidirectional" process, as in families, and this means that the IGL is the process where knowledge is transferred from elder generation to younger ones (Gerpott, Lehmann-Willenbrock & Voelpel, 2017). However, the conditions have changed and this unidirectional process cannot be said fully helpful in terms of the IGL in organizations. In terms of learning methods, the IGL is seen as both an informal process in which (Bottery, 2016) elder members in families teach the younger generations many facts, skills, attitudes, and values, and a formal process in which an activity is planned before implementation and a formal teaching environment is formed (Report on Intergenerational Learning and Volunteering, 2013). Throughout the years, the view that elder generations teach younger ones has changed and some studies put forward that younger generations can teach new trends, technological skills and knowledge to their elder colleagues, as well (Baily, 2009; Chen, 2013). This process of the IGL is related to adult education. During adult education process, it is important to foster the IGL activities which would lead to new chances for cooperation, sharing knowledge, views and perspectives between different generations by creating various opportunities for learning for elder adults before and after their retirement (Schmidt-Hertha, Krasovec & Formosa, 2014). Due to this fact, the IGL has become an important concept for adult learning in both formal and informal environment. Even though there are many studies related to the IGL and generational differences depending on ages in the literature as discussed above, there are some studies that put forward the fact that there are differences even within the same age groups, same generations depending on socio-economic differences, education level differences and so on (Schröder, 2018). However,

in literature, commonly accepted view is there are differences depending on generations. All of these fact makes the IGL important for organizations all employees of which are young and old adults. In order to manage the process of the IGL effectively in organizations, knowing the characteristics of generations is an important issue.

In the relevant literature, it can be found that different generational classifications are done depending on common characteristics of members of the specific generation. In this study, the classification by Hammill (2005) was taken into consideration. Hammill (2005) divides generations into five groups depending on characteristics of generations and important events of the history of world society. It should be highlighted that there may be some differences between the members of the same generations who live in different countries or who have different socio-economic background, since the effect of important events that shape characteristics of a generation, according to Hammill (2005), may change from country to country or among members of different socio-economic background. The generations according to Hammill's (2005) classification are traditional, baby boomer, X, Y and Z generations. Members of 'traditional generation', which is also known as 'silent generation', were born between 1925-1945. This generation can be characterized by being easy-going, mature, work-oriented, thrifty and having loyal attributes. The second generation is 'Baby Boomer'. The members of this generation were born between 1946-1964. The important events this generation experienced were told to be the Kennedy and M.L. King assassinations, Vietnam War, the first step on the Moon and the unstable years during which 1960 socialist revolution took place (Ropes & Ypsilanti, 2012). The members of this generation are believed to be collectivist, hard-working and loyal. It is thought that the member of this generation value job security, teamwork, participative leadership and personal growth mostly, although it may change depending on other factors (Guerin-Marion, Manion & Parsons, 2018).

The third generation is 'X generation'. They were born between 1965-1980. They witnessed the AIDS epidemic, oil shock, cold war, foundation of communication channels such as CNN and MTV (Ropes & Ypsilanti, 2012). Since the members of this generation lived in an environment in which there are economic and financial uncertainties, they are classified as a generation that grows in an environment without a tradition (Daloğlu, 2013). Even though they would show some differences depending on members of this generation's living conditions, their key characteristics are usually individualism, independence and being adaptable. They are told to value self-reliance, opportunities to feel empowered, and work-life balance (Guerin-Marion et al., 2018).

Other generation in laboured workforce is 'Y generation'. This generation includes the individuals born between 1981-2000. The important events for this generation are occurrence of internet, fall of the Iron Curtain and 9/11 Attacks (Ropes & Ypsilanti 2012). This generation is generally individualistic, free, moving towards globalization, and comfortable with technology (Senbir, 2004). Their key characteristics are believed to be forward-looking, creative and technologically competent. They could value career mobility, professional growth, guidance and feedback and learning opportunities (Guerin-Marion et al., 2018). One should keep in mind that, as for X generation, the characteristics of Y generation may change.

The last generation is 'Z generation'. Members of this generation were born after 2001. Z generation is also called as 'crystal generation, internet generation, e-generation, new silent generation, Google generation, .com generation' and born into a digital world. They have started to participate in labour force in Turkey, as in other countries of Western countries (Olkinuora, Rinne, Mäkinen, Järvinen & Jauhiainen, 2008). They are being raised by families whose educational level and social awareness are higher than other

generations. Also, they have grown up in an environment where individuals are supported in every field by social state and non-governmental organizations.

It is a known fact that characteristics of generations may change from country to country. However, there are some studies that show generations in Turkey have similar characteristics as classified by American researchers. The events and milestones that shaped generations in the world formed generations in Turkey, as well. Despite the fact that similarities for characteristics of generations from different countries are many, there are some minor differences regarding age factor for generations in Turkey. For instance, Yüksekbilgili (2015) conducted a study regarding range of age for generation Y, and found out that it started in 1983 rather that early 1980s and occurrence of some technological development in mid-1980s were the reason for this. Also, Yüksekbilgili (2015) put forward that generation Y does not end in 2000, but in 1995 in Turkey, and the reason for this was again one of the biggest technological development, the beginning of the active use of internet in 1994. Another study was conducted by Bayhan (2014) that aims to understand the generation Y in Turkey, and it was found out that the characteristics of generation Y are similar to the characteristics of generation Y in the world. In addition to these, Şalap (2016) found out that the business values of generations in Turkey were found to be similar mostly with the employees in Europe and North America even though there were sociologically similar political events that occurred at different times in Turkey when compared to generations in Europe and North America.

Today, all five generations work together, and they bring their differences to organizations with them, which may cause intergenerational gap. Watt (2009) examined the intergenerational gaps in terms of coherence, teamwork, balance and loyalty. Watt (2009) found out that each generation perceives other generations differently in terms of rapport, manageability, teamwork, balance and loyalty. When members of different generations with different values, attributes and expectations work together in the same organization, disagreements and conflicts might arise sometimes (Toruntay, 2011; Becerikli, 2013). Hence, differences are important not only for managing the conflicts related to intergenerational gap effectively, but also for taking advantage of these types of conflicts.

Related to the nature of the IGL, studies show that learning styles and methods of different generation individuals are different from each other (Corrigan, Mcnamara and O'hara, 2013; Polat & Kazak, 2015). For example, in a study conducted by Polat and Kazak (2015) on teachers, it was seen that elder generation teachers preferred the method of learning by asking more, and then they preferred the method of learning through observation, learning by listening to other people's conversations and imitating others' practices and methods respectively; the situation is the opposite for the younger generation participants and they prefer the method of learning through observation more than by asking. In addition, the generations' learning topics vary according to their needs. The study indicated that the learning styles of employees of different generations also differed.

Even though there are the above-mentioned handicaps, the researches show that the IGL has important benefits. Bontekoning (2007) found out that the IGL stimulates socialization of younger generations, results in decrease in negative stereotypes among different generations, and increases the level of social capital. In addition to these, Spannring (2008) put forward that the IGL enables critical knowledge transfer, improves ability for innovation and social capital. Despite the fact that the IGL has such kind of benefits, there are some barriers to it. One of them is stereotypes. These stereotypes occur between elder and younger generations. Younger generations may feel shy about teaching something to elder colleagues, since their knowledge may be valued as worthless. Also,

elder generations may feel shy about learning something new from younger colleagues, since they may be criticized as not being capable of participating in learning environments (Lamont, Swift & Abrams, 2015). Another barrier to the IGL is psychosocial barriers which are ageist attitudes (Murphy, 2018). The elder generations may believe that younger generations might not teach them something. These negative attitudes may result in some deficiencies in organizations, since it is important for organizations to take advantage of diversities in organizations and age is one of them. Thus, leading the IGL is another important issue to be taken into consideration in organizations in order to manage human resources efficiently.

Thomas and Cheese (2005) say that leadership is having an ability to change or influence the behaviour of the followers. A leader is a person who primarily can mobilize other people, communicate with them reciprocally and make them believe that s/he always supports them (Thomas & Cheese, 2005). Cook, Philip, Hunsaker, Robert and Coffey (1997) describe the leadership as a process of guiding the followers, giving them energy, and attaching them willingly to the vision of the leader. Guerin-Marion et al. (2018) suggested an integrative conceptual framework for intergenerational leadership. This model includes individual and organizational needs, communication process and leadership strategies. Within individual needs, there are gender roles, skills and abilities, and generational characteristics are included. Within organizational needs, there are culture of organizations, resources, and leadership styles together with all generations' characteristics who participate in organizations. Thirdly, Guerin-Marion et al. (2018) emphasizes the importance of communication. For communication process to be effective, it should appeal to all generations' preferences. This framework suggests three methods for this. The first one is sending e-mails about both external and internal news to all staff. The second one is a monthly newsletter which includes news about projects, individual accomplishments and personal news. The third method is a regular face-to-face meeting with all staff.

The last component of Guerin-Marion et al.'s (2018) framework is leadership strategies. These strategies include two dimensions, which are talent management and decision making. The talent management consists of recruitment according to staff's skills and orientation process, supporting professional development, and providing mentorship. On the other hand, decision making process includes building policies and procedures, and preparing the strategic plan by receiving opinions from staff, encouraging staff to form staff committees and receive their feedback. Guerin-Marion et al. (2018) emphasizes that a collaborative decision-making process will be more beneficial and the decisions will be followed more loyally.

Since different generations are included in today's organizations and managing or leading them is a complicated process, it is highly important to examine the IGL process in organizations in a detailed way. As for many other countries all over the world, understanding of the IGL is a problematic situation for Turkey, as well. Thus, this research aims to understand the IGL process and how to lead it in a production facility in Turkey.

Methodology

Research design

The research design of the study is phenomenology, which is one of the qualitative research methods. The phenomenological study describes ways how a phenomenon is

perceived by people in detail (Dey, 1993). Within this study, leading intergenerational learning in an organization in Turkey is examined in detail through perceptions and points of views of employees, team leaders, field directors, department directors and instructors. The researchers tried to understand what the managers and employees knew about the IGL, how they felt about being included in an intergenerational learning process and being led through this process, and what should be done to lead the IGL effectively.

Study group

The study was carried out in a large-scale production facility that works on automotive sector in the Central District of Kocaeli, Turkey. The reasons for choosing this company: a) The firm is active in Kocaeli, which is the Turkey's production base, for more than 40 years, b) the inclusion of several new technology production facilities inside and c) includes employees from different ages. While observing the learning process in this facility, the researchers witnessed that the IGL occurred among generations. The managers of the organization were aware of this fact. They believed that the IGL would continue in the facility since there were different generations working together. They also stated that the effectiveness of the IGL should be increased, however they did not know exactly what to do and how to do to increase the effectiveness of this learning process. Hence, the managers supported this study to comprehend how to lead the IGL efficiently and sufficiently.

The company has seven separate production facilities and one training department responsible for training the employees working on those facilities. The company is organized in a hierarchical format; at the top, General Manager, under him/her the Coordinator and seven different Department Managers under the Coordinator, one Department Director under each Department Manager, Field Directors under the Department Director, Team Leader under the Field Director and employees at the bottom. The number of employees is approximately 3000. When it comes to the generations actively working in the company, there are baby boomers, generation X and generation Y. There is not any member from generation Z.

Maximum diversity sample selection technique, from purposive sampling method, was used in the study. The idea here is to create a relatively small sample in order to reflect the diversity of the employees that might affect the results (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In order to ensure maximum diversity, the study was carried out with 61 people with at least 1 person from each department, 12 X and 12 Y generation employees, 4 Baby Boomer, 4 X and 4Y generation field directors, 5 Baby Boomer and 5 X generation department directors, 2 X and 1 Y generation instructors, 6 X and 6 Y team leaders. Their ages range between 24 and 67. In addition to these, their tenure changes between 2 years and 45 years. All of the participants were male.

Data collection tool

The study data was collected via face-to-face interviews. The interviews were conducted in Turkish, and afterwards they were translated into English by the researchers. Interviewing is the most commonly used data collection method in phenomenology studies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

During data collection, semi-structured interview form was used. It has two sections. In the first section, questions related to demographic information were collected. These questions were about their status, their years of birth and their seniority. In the

second section, ‘What should be done to lead intergenerational learning in organizations?’ was the main question. During interviews, the research team tried to clarify the important concepts such as the IGL and leadership before starting interviews. By doing this, the participants had clear understanding of what they were doing. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes.

Data collection and analysis

During data collection, the participants were informed about the study and the participants gave consent that the interview can be recorded in written form. In addition, it was told that the codes would be used instead of the participant's name (“E” for employees, “TL” for team leaders, “FD” for field directors, “DD” for department directors and “IN” for instructors).

For data analysis, the content analysis technique was used. In content analysis process, the data which are found to be similar regarding some codes and categories are organized under certain themes and then interpreted (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The process of content analysis includes four levels which are 1) labeling data, 2) finding themes, 3) organizing labels and themes and 4) identification and interpretation of the findings.

Within this research, the researchers conducted content analysis to the data on their own firstly. They labelled the names of codes, categories and themes. After that, they came together to negotiate about the codes, categories and themes. The similar codes, categories and themes were taken as they are, and the different ones were discussed. Also, the researchers asked the views of another expert on codes, categories and themes. After the negotiation with the expert, the main themes were determined.

Findings

After the content analysis process, eight themes and related sub-themes were determined. The themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Main themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Generations			
		BB	X	Y	Total
Creating zone	Formal and informal social activities	3	11	10	24
	Team works including different generations	2	5	5	12
	Operations including different generations	2	3	3	8
	Matching experienced employees with novices	2	2	1	5
	Social platform and social portals		2	1	3
	Generations that are divided equally in operations		1		1
Acting according to generational differences	Speaking generations' language	2	1	1	4
	Emphasizing the importance of experience to younger generations.		1	1	2
	Making evaluations by taking generational differences into consideration	1		1	2
	Developing communication models which are suitable for generations			1	1
	Determining behavioural models depending on new generational tendencies			1	1
Increasing motivation	Giving responsibilities	5	5	5	15
	Making elder generations feel valuable	1		1	2
	Dividing workload suitable for generations			1	1
	Making assignments and giving guidance based on technology and experience to elder generations.		1		1
	Encouraging employee's ideas.		1		1
	Designing new generations' jobs with the systems they are predisposed to (computer, etc.)	1			1
Supporting personal development	Encouraging elder generations to be innovative and technology-lover	1	2	3	6
	Supporting guidance and counselling		2		2
	Analysing the needs by evaluating employees' level of knowledge			1	1

	Managers' supporting all generations' personal development through trainings out of the organization, etc.		1		1
	Sharing the importance of knowledge in order to make elder generations willing to learn			1	1
	Explaining the importance of learning to elder generations			1	1
Recording and managing "know-how"	Standardizing all generations' "know-how"s	4	5	5	14
	Giving lectures to elder generations about the importance of knowledge	1	2		3
	Providing managerial support for the sharing of elder generation employees' experiences.		1	1	2
	Creating an organizational culture that supports knowledge transfer to future generations	2			2
Creating intergenerational respect and understanding	Avoiding behaviours and use of language that causes generational conflict	4	6	1	11
	Improving empathy skills	1	2	1	4
	Colleague approach in intergenerational relations	1	1		2
	Considering the ideas of new generations	1	1		2
	Preserving social values in the workplace.		1		1

BB: Baby boomers

The first theme is "creating zone". The participants highlighted the importance of formal and informal social activities, team works and operations including different generations, matching experienced and elder employees with novices, creating social platforms to get acquainted and dividing generations equally in operations.

Formal and informal social activities. Participants emphasized that formal and informal social activities would enhance interaction among generations. For example, one of the participants stated that "For the adoption of intergenerational differences, multi-generational formal-informal social activities should be carried out. The activities such as meals, trips, water skiing, solution-oriented group activities that will enable interaction within the factory, trips to innovation fairs etc. can be done" (X27-E19).

Team works including different generations. Participants highlight the importance of inclusion of different generations into team works. One of the participants, who was a Baby Boomer, said that "Multi-generational teamwork will increase solidarity and

communication among generations. This will allow the flow of information to be more natural and easier among generations" (BB6-DD3).

Operations including different generations. One of the key points that should be taken into consideration by leaders to lead the IGL was designing operations which included different generations, according to participants. A participant mentioned that "Work designs in the working areas should be multi-generational and the leaders of these employees should direct them to activities such as breakfast, food, new year event" (BB8-DD2).

Matching experienced employees with novices. Participants highlight the importance of grouping experienced and novices in the same teams. One of the participants said that "Experienced employees and novices can be paired and collaborated. In this way, people who interact with each other can start speaking a common language" (Y13-E11).

Social platform and social portals. The effective use of social media to get generations accustomed to each other was mentioned by participants. A participant mentioned that "As it is unlikely that the elder generation and younger generation will share socially the same areas, we can use social media platforms and we can try to understand each other" (X5-IN1).

Generations that are divided equally in operations. Dividing generations equally in operational groups while leading the IGL was another point mentioned by participants. A participant who was Y generation said that "If the different generations are distributed in a balanced way in the operations we work with, it will be much easier for us to come together and the flow of information between generations will naturally happen" (Y22-TL12).

The second theme is "acting according to generational differences". The examples of participants' utterances for each sub-theme presented in Table 1 are below.

Speaking generations' language. Participants underlined the importance of understanding other generations' language. One of the participants said that "If we try to understand the new generation, if we can speak their language, they will learn our language as well and as we speak each other's language, we can easily transfer our knowledge" (BB7, DD9).

Emphasizing the importance of experience to younger generations. Participants believed the importance of making new generations understand the importance of experience and respect elder ones. A participant said that "Employees from new generation begin to understand the importance of knowledge if they respect the experience of employees from elder generations. The prejudices that will be eliminated with this effect will allow the transfer of information comfortably" (X23, TL8).

Making evaluations by taking generational differences into consideration. For a leader to evaluate the performance effectively, participants underlined taking generational differences into consideration. One participant mentioned that "Considering the age difference, the authorities should act depending on the levels of the related groups and the decisions to be made should be evaluated accordingly" (Y2, FD9).

Developing communication models which are suitable for generations. Since communication is an important part of leading intergenerational leadership, participants emphasized developing communication models suitable for generations. One of the participants said "If you want to teach your partner something, you need to find the best way of communication that s/he understands. If elder generations understand young generations, and young generations understand the way the elder generations communicate, the information flow will become more easily" (X12, E12).

Determining behavioural models depending on new generational tendencies. As for communication, behavioural models are one of the important aspects to be taken into consideration by leaders, according to participants. A participant mentioned "New generations can be profiled and their tendencies can be identified. After that, road map for elder generations can be determined" (Y3, E2).

For the third theme, "increasing motivation", the analysis of participants' answers revealed that the participants highlighted the importance of giving responsibilities, making elders feel valuable, dividing workload suitably for generations, giving support to elder generations about technology, encouraging all employees' ideas, and designing new generations jobs according to the systems they are familiar with.

Giving responsibilities. A leader in an intergenerational organization should give responsibilities to all generations. A participant underlined that "Experienced generations need to be assigned responsibilities. In this way, the elder generations can get rid of the feeling of being thrown away and dedicate themselves to working, learning and teaching more and they can feel motivated" (X13, TL6).

Making elder generations feel valuable. The elder generations are valuable for organizations and they should be felt valuable. A participant from Y generation said that "It can be benefited from the knowledge of the elder generations by increasing their work motivation and making them feel valuable. A person who feels valued will share his / her knowledge as a teacher" (Y14, TL7).

Dividing workload suitable for generations. In order to increase motivation, participants underlined the importance of dividing workload suitably. An employee from Y generation said that "Work and responsibility should be given to generations which are suitable for them. The heavy workload makes people feel burnout and reduces their work motivation. A person who loses motivation also doesn't care about learning" (Y3, E2).

Making assignments and giving guidance based on technology and experience to elder generations. Participants highlighted that making elder generation feel valuable by giving assignments based on technology and experience will increase their motivation. A team leader mentioned that "If elder generations are given assignments which will be done with technological devices, they would be motivated since they can feel effective. Similarly, they would feel in the same way if they are given assignments depending on their experience. These would certainly increase their motivation (Y14, TL7)."

Encouraging employee's ideas. Encouragement for speaking of ideas is an important factor for increasing motivation. An employee from X generation said that "Young generations should be heard and their discussions and suggestions should be allowed. People who are constantly silenced, whose speech is prevented and whose ideas are

ignored are taken out of the system feeling unworthy and do not care about losing any information and taking any information" (X18, E4).

Designing new generations' jobs with the systems they are predisposed to (computer, etc.). Using technology while designing jobs for younger generation should be taken into consideration by managers. A participant emphasized that "The jobs for young people should be designed appropriate for their skills to make them love their job. This will increase their performance and motivation that is caused by feeling successful, and all of these will increase their motivation to learn new things" (BB3, FD12).

The fourth theme is "supporting personal development". The sub-themes for this theme given in Table 1 are exemplified and explained below with the help of participants' utterances.

Encouraging elder generations to be innovative and technology-lover. The first mostly emphasized aspect of supporting personal development is to encourage elder generations for innovation and technology. A field director explained this "Elder generations should be encouraged to be innovative and learn something from young generations. They should be constantly informed about efficiency of the technology in business life, the opportunities created by new ideas and they should be given responsibilities in the projects if necessary. I was always sceptical to take control of electronic systems, but now I cannot finish counting the benefits of these systems in terms of quality, efficiency and safety" (X21, FD7).

Supporting guidance and counselling. Guidance is an important fact for personal development. An employee said "It should be ensured that experienced people give advice to new generations by highlighting their leading qualifications. In this way, while the ties between them become stronger, career development of young generations is ensured" (X1, E1).

Analysing the needs by evaluating employees' level of knowledge. The needs analysis for employees' personal development is emphasized by participants. An employee mentioned that "In order to transfer the information, it is necessary to determine whether the person needs this training. In general, training needs are based on lack of experience for young generations, and lack of system and technology-based information for elder generations. In this case, the competence levels of people should be measured continuously and their needs should be determined. According to these needs, career development of the person should be followed by the company and necessary training should be given" (Y18, E18).

Managers' supporting all generations' personal development through trainings out of the organization, etc. Manager support is a desired aspect for personal development of employees. An employee from Y generation said "The personal development of all generations should be supported by management. Personal development trainings should be provided by companies' managers. For example, after the excel training of the company, I started to do a lot of work on my own. There were even a few things I taught to a few young generations" (X27, E19).

Sharing the importance of knowledge in order to make elder generations willing to learn. If an organization would like elder employees to be willing to learn, it should share the importance of knowledge according to participants. "Due to their commitment to

traditions, elder generations care about the experience but this prevents them from acquiring new knowledge" (X12, E12).

Explaining the importance of learning to elder generations. Similarly, the importance of learning should be explained to elder generations, as an employee said "It's hard to teach the elder generation something new. For this reason, they must first understand what learning how to use computer or a program will facilitate to improve themselves" (Y13, E11).

The next theme is "recording and managing 'know-how's". The participants talked about standardization, talking about the importance of knowledge in the organization, supporting elder generations' share of knowledge and creating a culture that supports knowledge transfer to next generations.

Standardizing all generations' "know-how"s. For recording and managing know-how's in an organization, it is important to standardize them. An employee from X generation said that "In order to spread intergenerational learning within the organization correctly, it is necessary to reveal the non-standard information (know-how) in younger generation who are experienced or have a high level of knowledge on the subject. These know-how's should be recorded in such a way that everyone can understand them" (X12, E12).

Giving lectures to elder generations about the importance of knowledge. A baby boomer field director highlighted the importance of giving lectures to elder generations about the importance of knowledge by saying "Elder generations should be educated about the importance of knowledge. Many people retire without sharing the information they have. While the information in the enterprise is as valuable as gold, the information taken in retirement is not different from a non-recycled waste" (BB5, FD6).

Providing managerial support for the sharing of elder generation employees' experiences. A department director counted the managerial support for sharing experiences of elder generations as another important issue. "Support should be provided by management for issues such as time, needs and cost which are necessary for elder generations to share their experiences" (X20, DD8).

Creating an organizational culture that supports knowledge transfer to future generations. In connection with the previous code, another department director mentioned a supportive organizational culture for transferring knowledge by saying "An organizational culture should be created in which the transfer of knowledge to future generations is supported. People should think that sharing information is a natural and positive thing. If someone thinks he has lost his power when he shares his knowledge, they do not share the knowledge and experience through the younger generations" (BB7, DD9).

The last theme is "creating intergenerational respect and understanding". The participants emphasized the importance of use of language, empathy skills, approaches among generations, valuing the ideas of young generation and social values.

Avoiding behaviours and use of language that causes generational conflict. The first important aspect of creating intergenerational respect is to be careful with the language used and behaviours. "Elder generations should avoid words that would cause intergenerational conflict such as 'When I was young,…' and new generations should avoid words like 'It was in the past'. If there is a conflict, respect doesn't exist,

relationships are degraded, experiences cannot be transferred either from bottom to top or from top to bottom" (X18, E4).

Improving empathy skills. Empathy would certainly be beneficial for intergenerational relationship respect. A field director from Y generation mentioned "People's empathy skills need to be improved. Nobody can teach anything or learn anything if s/he doesn't understand the other. This would be felt more if there is a factor like generational difference" (Y10, FD3).

Colleague approach in intergenerational relations. Maintaining balance between generations is another point of consideration, as a field director said "The elder and younger generations need to be approached like colleague, not like brother-sister. The brother-sister relationship can be intimate, but when the line is crossed, no one shows the tolerance that anyone will show to his brother. Therefore, formal relations prevent problems that may occur between the elder and the younger generations, so that information can be conveyed more easily by the environment of respect" (BB1, FD1).

Considering the ideas of new generations. Another way of creating intergenerational respect is to consider the ideas of new generations. A department director from baby boomer generation said that "It is necessary to create the perception that elder generations can learn from the new generation. For this, new generation employees can be honoured and respected by elder generations. In this case, experience and exchange of ideas will increase between the two generations" (BB6, DD3).

Preserving social values in the workplace. A team leader from X generation underlined that social values should be preserved for creating intergenerational respect. "As social values decrease, respect decreases, as well. Protecting our social values in the workplace increases respect and trust, and experiences between generations begin to be transferred" (X8, TL3).

Discussion

The research aimed to have a deep understanding about how to lead the IGL in organizations according to the perceptions of both employees and managers. As a result of the research, it is found that there is a need for some changes to be done at the organizational level, and for the individuals who are the representatives of the generations in order for the managers to lead the intergenerational learning. Leading intergenerational learning needs to be done at organizational level by creating intergenerational learning environment, acting by taking generational differences into consideration, increasing motivation, supporting personal development of all employees from different generations, recording and managing the know-how based on experience, and creating intergenerational respect and understanding.

What managers need to do to lead intergenerational learning can be listed as to treat employees of different generations free of prejudices, to create environment suitable for communication based on generation characteristics, and to take learning styles and motivation tools into consideration. On the other hand, managers can lead the employees of each generation by supporting their personal development.

It is stated that the first thing to be done to lead intergenerational learning is to create zone for intergenerational space. The intergenerational space includes individuals

who are members of different generations; especially designed to facilitate and improve the interaction between young and old (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2014). However, creating dynamic intergenerational spaces is more than creating a physical place (Brown & Henkin, 2012). The purpose of creating an intergenerational space is to create an environment that addresses different age groups, to allow interaction of these age groups and to encourage meaningful time (Kaplan, Thang, Sanchez & Hoffman, 2016), which also helps improve the adult learning (Schmidt-Hertha et al., 2014). These areas can occur naturally in daily life or can be designed for a purpose. All kinds of outdoor areas such as parks, open-air cinemas, open-air theatres, picnic areas, camping areas can be used to create intergenerational space with indoor spaces such as conference halls, meeting rooms, training classes, dance halls (Brown & Henkin, 2012). Therefore, in order to lead intergenerational learning, it would be appropriate for managers to create intergenerational spaces through formal and informal social activities, multi-generation teamwork, multi-generation operations, matching of experienced and novices, social platform and social portals.

Intergenerational learning within the organizational structure is a planned or unplanned, social-cooperative learning path that can develop in different ways provided that the work-related tasks are centralized (Ropes & Ypsilanti, 2012). Intergenerational learning also encourages the development of intergenerational solidarity (Corrigan et al., 2013). The intergenerational learning is based on interrelation and cooperation. And it can develop cooperation between different generations in organizations and strong ties can be formed between generations (Krašovec & Kump, 2010). Thus, managers should give the deserved value to the IGL if they want to improve the fertility of organizations by making each and every employee from all generations feel motivated.

According to Woolsey (2016), constructive interactions among the employees of the organization should be encouraged and strategies that support the sharing and transformation of knowledge should be developed for the continuity of growth. To ensure the protection of intellectual capital, the baby boomers at a workplace must be prepared to seize its implicit information before they retire (Booker, 2015, p. 2). As information is spread to the whole organization and shared by the employees through an open organizational climate, it will further increase the organizational learning capacity (Pınar, 1999). As emphasized by the research participants, the intergenerational leadership roles of mangers are of great importance for an organization in transforming the generation information, which is developed based on the experiences of different generations, and which is often implicit in the organization, into open information and transferred to the organization. Thus, managers of all types of organization should try to fulfil the expectations, some of which are the findings of this study, if they would like to administrate the IGL effectively.

Another point to discuss as a result of this study is that managers need to know how to treat employees from different generations and with different skills and qualities, to understand and respect their sensitivity to lead employees of different generations. Since each generation has its own characteristics (Mannheim, 1952), the participants of this study frequently emphasized that managers should prepare operations suitable for each generations' competencies and needs, evaluate employees by taking generational differences into consideration, develop a language which is suitable and respectful for each generation. Thus, managers should be aware of these generational differences, intergenerational interactions and manage them effectively if they would like to be a good leader who works hard for their organizations' getting stronger and more successful.

One of the important points that should be addressed in this study is that all participants were male. It is possible to say that the results may show difference if female

participants were included. Thus, for further research, it can be suggested to conduct a broader study which include participant from both sexes to understand whether or not any differences related to perception of the IGL exist.

When the overall findings are discussed in detail, it is possible to see that the IGL is an important concept for any type of organizations all over the world. Since this study is conducted in Turkey and there are some other studies about the IGL from different countries (e.g.: Corrigan, Mcnamara & O'hara, 2013; Dorczak & Portela Pruaño, 2020; Hiçyılmaz & Polat, 2020; Krašovec & Kump, 2010; Schmidt-Hertha et al., 2014; Vanderbeck & Worth, 2014), understanding how to lead the IGL and different generations in organizations would seem to stay as an important subject for the leaders.

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Paraplegic women's emancipation along their vocational pathways: the potential contributions of Freirean, structural and post-structural feminist pedagogies

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Abstract

We have recently completed doctoral research on the reconstruction of paraplegic men's and women's vocational trajectories in French-speaking Switzerland. Based on three female informants' life narratives, we analyse issues of gendered vocational guidance, pathways and identities in paraplegic people's life courses. We shape some emancipating experience models and discourses about action, which empower the female informants on their vocational pathways. Our objective is here to point to the potential support that an emancipatory, feminist pedagogical approach could offer paraplegic women in the further development of personal models, and discourses of self in the conduct of their educational and vocational life.

Keywords: Experience models, Freirean and feminist pedagogies, Gendered and disablist representations, Paraplegic women, Vocational pathways

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Research background: the socio-politic components of paraplegic people's vocational rehabilitation in Switzerland, and the relevance of feminist pedagogies in that context

In this paper, we analyse the vocational life narratives of three among the five paraplegic female informants who participated to our qualitative research on the reconstruction of paraplegic people's educational and vocational pathways. We adopted a double disability- and gender-related perspective. We tried to understand our male and female informants' communal experience of gendered and disablist power relations in their educational and vocational environments. After Goodley (2014), we define disablism as structural relations of power, which activate stereotyped attributions of incapacities to people with disabilities, resulting in their exclusion from social contexts and mainstream activities. The adjective 'disabling' is used to signify non-systematically incapacitating situations,when people with disabilities are punctually deprived from means of action. More specifically, we focused on our female informants' relatively difficult construction of their educational or vocational pathways, in social contexts of:

Gendered representations devaluing women's competences and performances, originating in the sexual division of labour as a mechanism segregating women's work both horizontally – i.e., in a narrow range of job categories, mostly administrative support, social work and education – and vertically, limiting women's career advancement (Maruani, 2017);

Depreciative representations of disabled workers, stereotypically perceived as less efficient or productive than able-bodied workers, and who are offered restricted vocational choices (Pont, 2018).

Some of our informants (men and women) engaged in the construction of a vocational project as early as their rehabilitation in a medical centre, thereby complying to the injunction to return to paid work issued by the Swiss Disability Insurance (DI). The DI is the sector of the Swiss welfare state responsible for the distribution of various types of benefits to disabled people (The portal of the Swiss government, 2019). It conducts a policy under the rule of 'rehabilitation taking precedence over pension' (Information Centre OASI/DI, 2018). The DI nonetheless reproduces unquestioned assignments of disabled people to what it evaluates as 'possible' vocational roles (Pont, 2018). The vocational rehabilitation of paraplegic people contradictorily proves ableist and disablist concomitantly, and also gendered. Indeed, both paraplegic women's and men's working trajectories are projected in administrative support, a traditionally feminine career, thereby implementing a 'neutrally feminine' model of vocational guidance (Pont, 2018), which potentially conflicts with their own gendered (self-)representations of professional roles. A 'neutrally feminine' model of vocational guidance overgeneralizes feminine characteristics to both women's and men's self-projections, action, and experience in their educational and vocational trajectories (Pont, 2018).

Our research had as a main goal to show whether – or not – paraplegic women and men resort to their experiential knowledge to emancipate themselves from socio-structural and biographical limitations while attempting to reconstruct their educational or vocational trajectories. We found that our informants are engaged in communal, gendered and capacitating strategies grounded in their experience. These successful strategies were elaborated in shared, empowering experience models.

We pursue two main objectives in this paper. Firstly, we show the structural and biographical limitations that our female informants encounter while constructing their educational and vocational pathways. Secondly, we propose that an analysis of our women informants' gendered experience of relative (dis)empowerment be done in the

light of the praxes of Freirean, structural, and post-structural feminist pedagogies. The goals of this proposal are: on one hand, to provide other disabled women with a wider range of conceptual and experiential tools to interpret the limitations encountered along their careers; and, on the other hand, to possibly strengthen their models of self to reduce the impact of disability and gender on the pursuit of their educational and vocational trajectories.

Accordingly, we first situate our findings and proposal within the frameworks of feminist and Freirean pedagogies, and of the feminist critique of the effects of disability and gender in women's experience of learning and training. Secondly, we provide information about the collection of our informants' life narratives. Then, our method of analysis was deemed to facilitate the elaboration of the biographical portraits and the experience models of our informants. We present these portraits, which show the influence of both the DI's policy, and of the circumstances of their personal biographies on their trajectories. The portraits serve to shape our informants' experience models, and their idiosyncratic discourse about their educational and vocational life. In the conclusion, we highlight the structural and biographical limitations, and the capacitating aspects of our informants' educational and vocational courses. We suggest that their experience models and discourses can be enlightened by the praxes of feminist pedagogies, and thereby become empowering models addressed to other disabled women.

Theoretical framework

Pointing to their potential relevance in the vocational rehabilitation of women with disabilities, we first present structural and post-structural feminist pedagogies, and Freirean pedagogy. We then rely on the feminist critique of disability and gender, and of the non-consideration of disabled women's experiences.

The principles of structural and post-structural feminist pedagogies, and of Freirean pedagogy

Feminist pedagogy is noticeably about promoting women's empowerment in contexts of gendered power relations in education, vocational guidance, and work. Structural pedagogy seeks to change the patriarchal structures that underlie the intertwined systems of gender, class, race, heteronormativity (Crenshaw, 1991; Manicom, 1992) – and, we argue, disability – which inferiorise women in education and in work. In post-structural feminist pedagogy, women's voices are seen as conveying the dominant cultural narratives, which subject their agency to hegemonic discourses about the world and themselves (Barrett, 2005; Tisdell, 1998). Episodically adopting conforming, or subversive discourses, women negotiate their position within the hierarchies of power relations, possibly in work (Najarian Souza, 2010; Kray & Kennedy, 2017). Endorsing 'risky identities' (Barrett, 2005, p. 87) entails the possible loss of power granted by one's subjection to gendered and disablist standards of social adequacy (Kafer, 2013). As for Freire's (1996) pedagogy of liberation, it poses as prior the learners', trainees' or workers' objectification, and then subjective criticism of their experience through self-narration and dialogue. The latter practices are means of conscientisation of social relations such as disability and gender; they possibly support the integration of their own experience into an empowering conduct of their lives. In this process, voicing particularly helps

women modulate their social identity and gain knowledge and power in varied contexts (Hayes, 2002).

The feminist critique of disability and gender

The feminist critique of disability and ableism insists on the significance of disabled women's experience in the development of their self-awareness and self-definitions (Hall, 2011). The latter statement is in line with the principles of both the structural and the post-structural strands of feminist pedagogy. Both strands advocate for the recognition of gendered and disablist obstacles to participation. This form of conscientisation may be undertaken by the means of: the voicing and valuing of disabled women's self-knowledge and approaches to the world (Sumskiene et al., 2016); the resolution of tension resulting from women's contradictory positioning in a variety of cultural discourses (hegemonic discourses, or discourses promoting difference) (Arenas Conejo, 2011; Shildrick, 2009); and their emancipation from gendered and disablist power relations through the development of empowering models of self (Garland-Thomson, 2011).

We derive some empowering models of self from our female informants' communal vocational experiences. We then attempt to render them adoptable by other women with disabilities in the light of Freirean, structural, and post-structural feminist pedagogies.

Conditions of data collection, methodology of life narratives, and method of analysis

In our qualitative research project, the informants were recruited in French-speaking Switzerland through a contractual collaboration with a rehabilitation centre established in that part of the country. Before data collection, our project was submitted to two institutional committees, which validated the ethical conditions under which our research was to be conducted. We carried out one educational and/or vocational life narrative of about 90 minutes with each informant. We thus gathered their own subjectivation of their educational and professional trajectories.

Narrative rationality organises the meanings of one's life by configuring statements in a temporal plot structure (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 35). Life events are integrated into each subject's narrative in order to create a coherent whole. Their life story aggregates their rational explanations, feelings and reactions about their experience, thereby shaping their self-representations and role identities (Van Dijk, 2010, p. 69-70). In self-narration, subjects structure similar, repeated meanings of experience and build them into systems – so-called 'models of experience' (Van Dijk, 2010), which are resources for further action courses (Pont, 2018).

The introductory question to each life narrative was: 'Could you please tell me about your vocational life?' Further complementary questions were asked about each informant's initial vocational choice; the circumstances of the vocational counselling which they received during rehabilitation; any decisive and/or motivated reorganisations of their vocational pathway; any types of resources, whether material, psychological, or social which capacitated them in decision-making processes along their educational and vocational trajectories; the expectations of gender-conforming vocational choices emitted by their social environment, and the impact of these opinions on their career.

The analysis aimed to show the parts of life narratives which revealed our informants' empowerment. In order to pinpoint these emancipatory courses of action, we analysed each of the narratives on the basis of a grid drawing on 'biographical models' (De Coninck & Godard, 1990). These models typify three core constituents of the

dynamics of biographical pathways. One of the models facilitates the analysis of both the causal and temporal relations between a subject's life events, their individual decisions, and the outcomes of their action along their biographical pathway. Another model shows the impact of socio-structural scansions on the degree of intentionality wielded by individuals in the conduct of their life path.

A significant dimension of our analytical grid concerned the gendered biases that had marked our informants' educational and/or vocational pathways. In particular, we asked our informants about their own gendered self-definitions, and about their appraisal of the possibly gendered contexts and situations in which they trained or worked.

The analysis of our informants' vocational/educational life narratives in the light of the biographical models and of gendered (self-)attributions enabled us to grasp the logics of action which supported their emancipation from what they relatively consciously perceived as their dominated position in working or educational contexts. We demonstrated that their empowering strategies are gendered. Below, we shape some communal, experience models based on the (self-)attributions of gender and disability which underpin the narratives of our three female informants.

Results: modelling some of the shared (dis)ablist and gendered vocational experiences of paraplegic female informants

In this part, we briefly present the vocational pathway of each of our female informants, and give an analysis of the gendered and disabling, or ableist aspects playing out both in the treatment of their rehabilitation by the Disability Insurance (DI), and in their careers. Then we shape some models drawing on their communal experience of gender and disability in their trajectories.

Our informants' educational and vocational portraits: the DI's interventions, and the personal components of their trajectories

Our informants are Tam, Patricia, and Theresa, whose various identities and life choices are influenced by the effects of the 'conditional' policy of the DI, and the biographical circumstances of their life histories – whether they activate gendered, ableist or disabling treatments and behaviours.

Now aged 43, Tam is a social assistant. She fled her native country at war and emigrated with her mother and sister to a small town in French-speaking Switzerland around 1980. She integrated quite easily. After a few years, she was adopted by her mother's Swiss husband, an electrician. Her mother worked as a restaurant manager and cook. In her life narrative, Tam never hints at any derogatory, disempowering remarks on her ethnical origins.

She had just obtained her commercial diploma before the onset of paraplegia when aged 19. While in rehabilitation, Tam received disabling injunctions from the DI. The Insurance enjoined her to start work after her stay in hospital. Indeed, the DI considered that she had already successfully completed initial training – which is usually the only type of training supported by the DI. Nevertheless, Tam intended to acquire a qualification in social work, which meant that she first had to pass a more prestigious high school degree. She passed it without support from the DI. However, the DI partly paid for her education and training as a social assistant, although it was not expected to support Tam's further vocational training. In fact, in an ableist fashion, the DI supported

the latter curriculum on condition that Tam 'proved' – not so much by her individual qualities as by her economic resources – that she was worth supporting and that she engages in a long-term vocational project. In Tam's case, the DI applied more of a 'moral norm' than an unconditional policy towards paid work (Probst et al., 2016). After experiencing discrimination in hiring, Tam now works part-time as a social assistant for a foundation supporting the autonomy and social participation of people with disabilities. She consciously enjoys the vantage point of a disabled worker sharing some parts of experiential knowledge with her clients. She feels comfortable with her self-attributions in a traditionally feminine occupation, which grants her authority and legitimacy at her workplace. She benefits from a pension, based on the DI's assessment of her working capacity.

Patricia, aged 50, was a student at high school at the onset of impairment when she was 16. She grew up in a family of French origin in a village in French-speaking Switzerland, her father being a craftsman, and her mother a housewife. Despite spending more than one school semester in a rehabilitation centre, she completed the most prestigious high school degree within the regular timeframe of the curriculum. She then obtained a qualification in architectural design, followed by a diploma in architectural engineering delivered by one of the Universities of Applied Sciences and Art of French-speaking Switzerland. She is now an engineer in architecture who has never practised in the field of her certification, but who has been placed by the state's unemployment insurance in various positions in social work. Patricia's educational trajectory highlights deep and alienating ableist self-attributions, which nonetheless proved empowering along her pathway, considering that she obtained a prestigious diploma. She now benefits – as a part-time worker – from the same type of pension as Tam.

Theresa is about 55. She works as a salesperson and accountant in the family business. She is married and has two grown-up children. She stems from a large farming family living in a rural area of French-speaking Switzerland. At the onset of impairment around the age of 16, she had just begun an apprenticeship as a pharmacy assistant, a profession that both she and the DI assessed as impracticable by a paraplegic person. In the mid-1970's, the DI intended to institutionalize her during her apprenticeship, possibly as a salesperson, in a sheltered social day structure dedicated to the professional training of young people with disabilities. Despite the DI's incentive, and with the support of the rehabilitation centre's social assistant, Theresa rejected what she evaluated as a disabling, stigmatizing option. She wanted to resume her studies as a means of emancipation from the DI's injunction. After completing a commercial degree, she began a curriculum to become an occupational therapist. However, feeling not mature enough and disempowered, she dropped out. She mentions support (such as information about the curriculum, or assistance before starting school) neither from her family or friends, nor from the DI. She received no vocational counselling or financial support for initial training. Both socio-structural, and family treatments appear to be ableist. As a certified salesperson, she then had to cope with disruptions in her professional pathway, due to discrimination in hiring and family life. She exercised a few jobs which required no qualifications from her according to her employers, although these employments correspond to segmented work sectors requiring certification. She was employed as a social animator, or as a knitter in a clothes shop. Along the years spent on family care, she became the part-time salesperson and accountant of her husband's company, occupying a traditionally feminine function at the border between the family business and her private sphere (Cappuyns, 2007). Theresa does not make any mention of the DI's participation in her schooling costs, or of a pension granted to her as a part-time disabled worker.

The last two informants see neither the conditional interventions (or lack of intervention) by the DI, nor the relational or identity-related ingredients of their own trajectories, as determinants of their vocational pathways. In our informants' life narratives, representations of an ableist, individualising and self-controlled conduct of their life course dominate. From their twenties on, they readily took full responsibility for progression on their educational and vocational pathways. They may have been unaware of their right to demand the DI's support, or to disclose their limitations during their vocational guidance, so as to obtain support. Their self-expectations of normalcy, combined with a feeling of disempowerment caused an unexpressed, variable tension between self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), contradictory self-attributions of incapacities, and a relative deprivation of social resources. These self-attributions either resulted in their academic achievements (for Tam especially), or disrupted the construction of their identities and the pursuit of self-determined careers (in the case of Theresa particularly). Gendered (self-)definitions also played a part in their educational and vocational choices. While our informants and/or their social environments valued long educational training, they did not envisage the possibility of a prestigious vocational trajectory for themselves and/or for their paraplegic daughter, grand-daughter, etc. They also possibly projected untold classist expectations on our informants' careers. Note that their families remained uninformed of the quality of support that they could muster for our informants, who never report any conscious, developed discourse of accompaniment provided by carers. Our informants were expected to occupy typically female jobs, which they all did, or still do. The conditional or infrequent interventions by the DI, the degree of support offered by their social environments, and gendered, (dis)ableist (self-)definitions contributed to the formation of representations of the ineluctability of their vocational choices.

Some vocational experience models drawing on our informants' (self-)attributions of gender and (dis)ability

Our informants demonstrate self-legitimising strategies at the workplace or in training. Some of them are ableist, and certainly all of them are gendered and support attempts at personal empowerment in contexts where the either disablist, or ableist scansions of the welfare institutions and of their social environments prevail. Our informants pursue a quest of 'normalcy' to gain control over their own educational or vocational progression. They resort to discourses and actions promoted from the point of view of the able-bodied, which proves empowering for some of them, but also liable to prevent them from building idiosyncratic, self-valorised models of self.

Relying on this assessment, we shape two gendered and (dis)ableist experience models based on our informants' vocational experience: first, the model of unsupported self-determination; second, the model of educational/vocational compensation, which overarches the sub-models of differential competence, and of the double epistemic advantage (Pont, 2018).

The model of unsupported self-determination

This model refers to the uneven support brought by their social environments to our informants' educational or vocational projects. We constructed this model on the basis of Patricia's and Theresa's narratives.

Theresa's and Patricia's parents address expectations of educational achievement to their daughters. Patricia recalls: *'It was always something like: "Do the things that you*

choose, we'll help. Do what you feel like doing as long as you pass your high school exams!" (...) But no pressure, luckily enough (towards a specific vocational education)' (Pont, 2018, p. 367). Patricia's parents had strong expectations of her normalisation through education, as compensation from 'able-bodiedness' to 'able-mindedness'. However, Patricia renounces the prestigious education in architecture at one of the federal polytechnic schools: *'I was afraid and not ready to leave home. (...). I still had that big thing to take in'* (Pont, 2018, p. 368). Instead, Patricia completed an apprenticeship before becoming a certified engineer in the same stream. Patricia reports that her parents, although supportive, did not value a prestigious educational and vocational life courses, possibly as a result of the traditional gendered segregation of women in the labour market and their working-class background. Patricia enacts the gendered role of the 'good student' (*'I was a hard worker'*, she says) who pursues a renarcissization process while seeking social recognition of her individual qualities. However, lacking support, she confronts the sexual division of labour combined with the classist self-definitions which seem to remain unquestioned in her social environment. She moreover encounters and integrates disablist representational and structural obstacles preventing her from making socio-professional progress.

Theresa was enthusiastic about her vocational future: *'At the beginning my intention was to pass my high school degree and then enter a school for occupational therapists. I had lots of ambition and projects'* (Pont, 2018, p. 247). She attended an information session about the occupational therapy stream offered in the nearby institute for social studies. But she soon became discouraged because of the other students' personal trajectories, and because of self-attributions of inexperience: *'I was 18 at that time, (...) when I saw all the people there who were over 30, who were nurses, educators… well, it just discouraged me a bit'* (Pont, 2018, p. 247). The process of knowledge construction seemed impossible, probably due to an unspoken lack of self-esteem and a feeling of illegitimacy and incompetence. The (self-imposed) injunctions of normalisation, contradicting Theresa's disabling self-attributions, combined with unsupported self-direction and possibly implicit, gendered lower expectations of school performance addressed to (disabled) girls (BFEH, 2013), to doom her vocational project.

Reflecting the turmoil of identity reconstruction in contexts saturated with representations of appropriate roles assignable to disabled women, Patricia's and Theresa's conduct of their vocational trajectories reflect their internalisation of imbricated gender- and disability-related oppression. Their trajectories reproduce the usual characteristics of women's careers: discontinuity, instability, and inferiorising, gendered job-categorisation. Patricia has occupied various jobs as a social carer, but has never formally worked as an engineer in architecture: *'I feel… like I'm quite good at that but at the same time I never really felt like working as an architect. (...) I'm interested… but a bit like an observer'* (Pont, 2018, p. 365). Theresa is now a salesperson in the family business, a position that numerous working women enter because of their commitment to their family (Cappuyns, 2007).

Our informants do not speak about the lack of support, apart from Patricia. She does it obliquely: *'Well, then I did this school in architecture, and it was again just normal in my environment'* (Pont, 2018, p. 366). She realises that her family were not made sensitive to their ableist expectations addressed to Patricia. She was herself engaged in a normalising process demanding physical and intellectual efforts. As a result of ableism and over-responsibility for the conduct of their trajectories, our informants attempted to make vocational choices with no consideration of the effects that structural obstacles – especially gendered and disablist –, and personal biographical circumstances (including

lack of support) would have on their career paths. In fact, they did not envisage the very possibility of support.

The two-fold model of educational and vocational compensation: the sub-model of differential competence, and the sub-model of the double epistemic advantage

Since our informants' singularity and motivation were opposed to a latent, limiting lack of recognition, they scaffolded compensating, normalizing strategies to regulate their performance, and to counter any disabling attribution in education and in work. They thus built an experience model of compensation. We divide the model of educational and vocational compensation into two sub-models. First, the sub-model of differential competence refers to the additional effort that two of our informants, Tam and Patricia, make to have their competence recognised as learners and as workers. Second, the sub-model of the double epistemic advantage encompasses categorising representations about female disabled workers on account of their being both women and disabled. Their competences and knowledge are naturalised in rigid job assignment – specifically, social work. The latter sub-model draws on Tam's narrative.

The sub-model of differential competence

Our informants undertook longer studies which guided them towards non-physical jobs. Tam says: *'A good diploma means more vocational choices'* (Pont, 2018, p. 313). Similarly to able-bodied women, Tam and Patricia have a strong belief that school performance is a guarantee of vocational achievement and/or social recognition. Tam's aspirations also originate in a semi-conscious notion that disabled people emancipate themselves from dependence by raising their educational qualifications, so as to gain a position in a valued job category: *'For me, it was essential to be financially autonomous and not dependent in any way, and to achieve this, I had to study at a higher level that was better than a mere commercial diploma*' (Pont, 2018, p. 313).

Throughout her educational trajectory, Patricia self-imposed the model of the extra-competent learner: she completed an apprenticeship, and then a degree as an engineer in architecture. She secured progressive successes in her trajectory, probably attempting to empower devalued self-representations. Patricia had to prove her competence as a learner, even though this did not lead to the start of a vocational trajectory: *'I did these studies to prove to myself that I was able to do them, and they were quite difficult to me, but I'm glad I did them because I'm interested in this'* (Pont, 2018, p. 365). Patricia's challenge seems to be making sense of polarised self-representations: on one hand, the ableist, academically successful individual asserting her competence in learning situations, and on the other hand, the disabled young woman enduring an absence of expectations of performance, whether in work or in other social spaces. These lower expectations are usually addressed to both women and disabled people, and collide with the reconstruction of a normalised personal identity.

On the contrary, Tam suggests that on account of her individual qualities, she has managed to 'conquer' her vocational position: *'I've seen institutions that never employed any disabled workers. (...) I was lucky enough. But I think I have a little something to do with it (...). My colleagues (...) say I never complain'* (Pont, 2018, pp. 316-317). Tam satisfies the standard of the normalised, undisruptive disabled colleague. Her competence is indeed at risk of being degraded by attributions of physical and psychological weakness ('complaining'), which are usually attributed to disabled people, and also seen as

feminine. Tam denies the significance of her embodied experience of impairment and disability, and thus tends to virilise her vocational and social identities and action, according to a masculine model of self-promotion through socialisations outside the private sphere (Connell, 2005). She reports her employer's appraisal of her activity: *'He told me: "Despite your illnesses, you're the one who tries the hardest… you're committed to your job, you're a model"'* (Pont, 2018, p. 317). Extra-competence must compensate for her illnesses in a singular 'economy of retrievals': her employer secures her position on condition that she enacts the figure of the ableist role model. Tam is expected to conform to a continuing process of normalisation, which is subject to interpersonal negotiations around her legitimacy. She has to manage high expectations of commitment to work – this being a traditionally valorised, masculine attribution in work.

Patricia and Tam both display the sub-model of differential competence, which supports their ableist and virilising demeanours, and hereby preserves their vocational identity from disabling representations. However, this sub-model covers devaluing, disabling self-representations: while differential competence exhausts Patricia's self-projections in a career in architectural engineering, Tam must continuously regulate her professional environment's perceptions of her competence and performance.

The sub-model of the double epistemic advantage

Traditionally located in the position of inefficient workers, disabled people may find a position of power if engaged as professionals in social work with other disabled people. This is Tam's case; she says she has an 'epistemic advantage' (Wendell, 1996): *'They want to keep me because I bring something more to the institution'* (Pont, 2018, p. 317). Being concomitantly an expert in and a beneficiary of social welfare, Tam embodies the model of the double epistemic advantage legitimating her position of power at the workplace. Although she scarcely refers to it, she has an embodied experience of impairment and disability, and the experience of the DI's treatment. Moreover, as a woman, she is in the allegedly 'privileged' position of the care-provider and educator. Tam reveals her positionality when she relates parts of her interviews with her clients. She has an empowering position as a caregiver and as a role model: *'Sometimes (…) they are surprised when I introduce myself as a social assistant (…). I have the feeling that regarding my situation, some of them complain less often (…). I have the sense there is some respect from them when they consider what I have, they see I can still work, I can still help'* (Pont, 2018, p. 316). Tam's vocational identity must be preserved from the traditional representations of the disabled worker: *'Sometimes you need to keep a distance… and the person mustn't mix up our role with our situation as a disabled person'* (Pont, 2018, p. 315). Tam's position is located at the intersection of gender and disability; in her work context, her position in these imbricated social systems prove to be privileged. However, while granting her an epistemic advantage, the institution that employs Tam also barters her embodied knowledge for the upgrading of her vocational identity.

The model of differential competence is enacted by Tam and Patricia, who respond to latent attributions of lesser efficiency with self-attributions of additional knowledge and performance. To gain power, our informants produce a differential effort to be recognised as competent learners and workers. In Tam's case, the competences acquired in formal vocational education are disparaged, potentially in favour of the promotion of internalised, naturalised capacities: her experiential knowledge of the effects of impairment and disability. Although the model of differential competence roots in disablism, it is enacted in a compensatory, ableist fashion. As for the model of the double epistemic advantage, it activates intricate gender- and disability-related representations,

isolating Tam in a relatively privileged, context-dependent position of power at the workplace. Her singular situation may result in a form of disablist segregation, on account of an embodied knowledge which grants her a supposed epistemic advantage in her professional action, and which may isolate her from collaborations in her working environment. Tam's situation allegedly gives her more authority than that provided by the professional qualifications that reunite her with her able-bodied colleagues. The model of the double epistemic advantage has another disabling dimension: it confines Tam in an assigned and hierarchically dominated, fixed role on account of her naturalised qualities.

Conclusion: suggesting the empowering potentialities of Freirean, structural, and post-structural analyses of our informants' experience models

The empowering qualities of the experience models in our informants' pathways

The models that we derive from our informants' experience reveal the structural and biographical, gender- and disability-related limitations as well as the facilitators in the reconstruction of their educational and vocational pathways.

Significant structural limitations are imposed on our informants' trajectories by the DI's alternately ableist or disablist policy. Disabled people's treatments are subsumed to an evaluation of their individual, ableist 'merit' to be supported, as Tam's guidance demonstrates. In Tam's and Theresa's cases, for example, the application of the DI's policy is in line with the 'neutrally feminine' guidance (or attempts at such guidance) of paraplegic people towards administrative occupations. Having completed a prestigious curriculum in an ableist demeanour, Patricia seems to gain self-determination in her educational choices, independently from a decision by the DI. However, the state's unemployment insurance assigns jobs in social work to her, which fall under the sexual division of labour. Concomitantly, these assignments are distributed under disability-related guidance towards jobs in which she has no qualification, as is the case with Theresa grappling with discrimination in hiring, and engaging in any 'suitable' employment. Just like Tam, Patricia and Theresa are also attributed a double epistemic advantage in social work – although the two latter informants engage on imposed trajectories. Even in periods of emancipation from the DI's incentives, all three informants engage in, or are assigned usually feminine jobs – social work for Tam and Patricia, office work for Theresa –, which shows the stronger prevalence of the sexual division of labour over disablist guidance. Structural and representational limitations combine with biographical limitations in our informants' trajectories. Both Theresa and Patricia entered their educational and vocational courses with isolating self-representations of deficiency requiring ableist compensation.

Even if self-compromising, these self-definitions can nonetheless prove empowering. Significantly, Tam draws on them to assert her authority while she compensates possible disabling representations by demonstrations of competence, and self-justifications of her legitimacy in work. Patricia also reports having resorted to ableist, successful strategies in her education. The three informants transform the situations in which they are at risk of losing power into relatively empowering ones (for instance, Theresa's emancipation from the DI, and securing of her position in the family business).

Our informants embody the sub-model of differential competence with a self-deprecating approach to (self-)knowledge. Tam and Patricia embarked on compensatory educational programmes, so as to purportedly struggle against discrimination or exclusion. Tam and Patricia silence their achievements and submit their action to a gendered and ableist hidden agenda imposed on women and on disabled people along with a correlate: the requirement of extra-performance. They self-imposed challenges to receive recognition, in accordance with a traditionally masculine approach of skill and action. Our informants subject their action and voice to purportedly more legitimate, virilising models.

Making the empowerment experience models transferable in the light of Freirean pedagogy, and structural and post-structural feminist pedagogies

We suggest that the experience models become educational, conscientizing instruments in the vocational rehabilitation of paraplegic people (and especially women). These tools can be elucidated with the praxes of Freirean pedagogy, and of structural and post-structural feminist pedagogies applied in the rehabilitative context. A reading of the models through the lens of these pedagogies can re-signify the obstacles and facilitators of our informants' educational and vocational courses, and highlight the bolstering and legitimising potentialities of their feminine (self-)definitions in the conduct of their pathways – and possibly other disabled women's.

The praxis of Freirean pedagogy can enable paraplegic women to objectify the limitations and facilitators they encountered, and to dialogically criticise the structural, representational and biographical determinants of their educational and vocational trajectories. Ultimately, they can grow aware of, and powerfully re-instrument their experience models of compensation and double epistemic advantage with personal traits, behaviours, beliefs and values grown in their socialisations.

Structural feminist pedagogy can turn paraplegic women's compensatory models of self into valued, idiosyncratic but shareable experience. In the practice of self-narration, paraplegic women can bring to light unquestioned stereotyped attitudes, their semi-conscious models of self, and their limiting or empowering gendered behaviours in education or work. Cooperation with conscientised instructors or peers can facilitate their 'self-actualisation' (hooks, 1994, p. 15) – that is, their emancipation from internalised systems of oppression –, and their re-appropriation of critical sense and voice to realistically assess their performance and legitimacy. They can thus construct their self-determination as disabled and capable women.

A post-structuralist approach to (self-)knowledge can encourage paraplegic women to embody non-conformist discourses, instead of gendered and disablist ones about some naturalised epistemic advantage. The latter discourses actually result in job-categorisation and idealized and alienating attributions of 'truer' knowledge addressed to disabled people in work. Disabled people do not gain any more (self-)knowledge or autonomy while wielding this alleged advantage. Paraplegic or other women with disabilities can, on the contrary, gain power by enacting dominant or virilising discourses but also, in some chosen contexts, by embodying subversive discourses as qualified professionals and as female agents showing their personal understanding of their mission nuanced with their own biographical experience.

We argue that conscientisation and voicing are at the root of paraplegic women's empowerment in the conduct of their educational and vocational trajectories. Empowerment is a crucial, identity-related 'work in progress' (Hayes, 2002, p. 99) – that is, a developmental process towards self-expression and recognition, countering the effects of sexism, disability and ableism – even if it may be contradicted by some

resistant, structural or biographical obstacles. We suggest that our informants' shared experience models, or discourses about their self – informed variously by Freirean, structural or post-structural feminist pedagogies – can become potentially empowering learning instruments for all actors, of both genders, involved in the reconstruction of paraplegic and other disabled women's educational and vocational pathways.

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Experiences of intrinsic values in education for older adults: insights from a Swedish senior university

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Abstract

This study aims to acquire more knowledge about the meaning of intrinsic values in organised post-work non-formal educational activities for older adults. Observations and focus group interviews were conducted at a senior university in Sweden. John Dewey's concept of experience and theory of value are used to facilitate a deeper understanding of the intrinsic values that were identified. The results of the study demonstrate what intrinsic values in education for older adults can be, as well as how they are experienced. Several intrinsic values were identified: (i) new insights and widened perspectives, (ii) the reflective process, (iii) enrichment, (iv) meaningfulness, (v) enjoyment, (vi) peacefulness, (vii) existential awareness, (viii) relational support and (ix) sense of community. The results further reveal how the values of education are experienced in the interactions and relations between older individuals and the social environment in the ongoing education and that the activities themselves are valued by the participants.

Keywords: Dewey, education, experience, intrinsic values, older adults

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Introduction

As the world population ages, non-formal education for older adults in post-work life is becoming a growing activity (Formosa, 2019a). In contrast to the regular school system and formal education, where a tendency to focus on the instrumental values of education exists, many older adults do not participate in non-formal education to achieve professional credentials or skills (Findsen & Formosa, 2011). Thus, other values seem to be central in post-work non-formal education. From a pedagogical perspective, understanding how older adults experience and value their participation in post-work non-formal education and what the consequences are for educational practice is essential. A recently published research review exploring post-work education reveals that *intrinsic values* of education are emphasised as crucial for older adults' participation in education (Schoultz et al., 2020). The results of the review indicate that a majority of studies highlight intrinsic values of learning, such as the joy of learning and learning for its own sake, as important (see also McWilliams & Barrett, 2018; Sloane-Seale & Kops, 2010).

However, research on post-work education for older adults seldom considers intrinsic values of education as a point of departure, and few studies have been conducted on how these values are experienced by older adult learners in educational practice (Schoultz et al., 2020). Intrinsic qualities of education for older adults are thus at a risk of being overlooked if the research exclusively foregrounds instrumental justifications, like for example improved memory or mental alertness (Manheimer, 2008). In this manner, the tendency is to focus exclusively on the individual.

In this study, we instead want to shift the focus from reasons and causes to the *experience of intrinsic values* in the educational activities and the ongoing pedagogical interactions and relations between the individual and the social environment. Therefore, this study aims to acquire additional knowledge about intrinsic values experienced by older adults in organised non-formal education activities, giving meaning to their participation. The research questions explored in this study of post work non-formal education in Sweden are:

- Which intrinsic values of education are central in post work non-formal education?
- How are intrinsic values of education experienced in post work non-formal educational practice?

To facilitate an in-depth understanding of the intrinsic values, we use John Dewey's philosophy and his concept of *experience* and *theory of value.* This combination makes it possible to understand older adults' participation in educational activities regarding the relation between the individual and their social environment. By connecting Dewey's theory of experience to his theory of values, we can shift our attention from exclusively focusing on individual values and instead consider the continuous process between the individual, the environment and the interplay between them. Consequently, values cannot be separated from action and the context in which the action takes place. This manner of exploring education for older adults can facilitate an understanding of how different values become essential parts of education and, subsequently, make meaning of post-work education.

The setting for the study is a senior university in a medium-sized Swedish city. Older adults in Sweden constitute a large part of the participants in the setting of Swedish *Folkbildning* activities (Bjursell, 2019a). Learning in study associations and folk high schools can be referred to as *Folkbildning,* where free and voluntary participation are

important cornerstones and *Bildung* is a core value (Bjursell, 2019a). In Sweden, senior universities are formally linked to *Folkuniversitetet* which is one of the ten study associations in Sweden. The senior universities in Sweden consist of 34 non-profit and voluntary associations and can be seen as part of the global University of the Third Age (U3A) movement (see e.g. Formosa, 2019b). They offer various non-formal education (Findsen & Formosa, 2011) courses for people aged 55 and above (Bjursell, 2019a). The research presented in the study focused on courses on 'music and poetry', 'religions in the world', 'third ageing' and 'literature and religion'. To enable participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives of participating in these courses, we have used focus group interviews as a data production method (Barbour, 2018).

Research on intrinsic values in education for older adults

In research on education for older adults, the concept of values is not used considerably. Instead concepts such as motivation and needs are used to discuss why older adults participate. In general, two main motivations are suggested in the research on lifelong learning: expressive motivation and instrumental motivation (Tam & Chui, 2016). Narushima and colleagues (2013) state that: 'Older adults' motivations are an intricate blend of both intrinsic=expressive and extrinsic=instrumental aspects' (p. 582). However, in a research review on the relationship between learning and health for older adults, Schoultz et al. (2020) argue that several aspects of older adults' education, including motivation, can be categorised as intrinsic values of education (e.g., Leung et al., 2006; Tam & Chui, 2016). The review further demonstrates that the intrinsic values of education are crucial for understanding older adults' learning. In this vein, Leung and colleagues (2006) argue that:

> Obviously, "learning something new" and "develop personal interests/hobbies" are broad terms and do not specify the types of skills to be learned. These terms, however, do refer to "general interest in subject matter" and do not refer to skills leading to career advancement. Thus, all top 5 reasons can be considered to be representative of 'expressive motivation.' (p. 11)

Intrinsic values, such as learning for its own sake and the joy of learning, have been highlighted as important aspects of older adults' learning (McWilliams & Barett, 2018; Perkins & Williamon, 2014; Richeson et al., 2007). In their research, McWilliams and Barett (2018) show that taking part in education is important for the participants' age-related identity, and aspects, such as the love of learning, are emphasised. Older participants also highlight that they defined themselves as more committed than younger students and more appreciative of the intrinsic aspects of education. Social aspects, such as fellowship, are further stressed (Åberg, 2016). Boulton-Lewis and Buys (2015) include interactions in the groups and communication with other participants as crucial elements. Finding and developing new interests are also regarded by older adults as essential parts of the value of education (Hachem & Vuopala, 2016; Mackowicz & Wnek-Gozdek, 2016; Sloane-Seale & Kops, 2010). Sloane-Seale and Kops (2010) outline the importance of participating in education to pursue an interest or hobby.

Accordingly, several values of education can be considered as intrinsic (Schoultz et al., 2020); however, studies seldom take the intrinsic values of education as their starting points. The few articles that explicitly pinpoint the intrinsic aspects of learning and education have often used concepts such as motivation or needs. According to Findsen and Formosa (2011) this indicates a psychological and individual understanding

of the learning process. However, participating in educational settings involves both knowledge and values, since the participants also experience the content of the education and its context. The complexities of learning processes are thus often overlooked (Schoultz et al., 2020), which indicates a need to further explore the meaning and importance of the intrinsic values of older adults' education. Dewey's theory of experience and his theory of values are here helpful as these theories shift our understanding of values from something psychological and individual to something relational, created in the continuous interplay between the individual and the environment.

Theoretical framework

This study builds on the work of John Dewey and his theory of *value* and how different values can be understood as essential parts of education. To connect his understanding of value with educational practice, we turn to his conceptualisation of *experience* and further the work of the Studies of Meaning-making in Educational Discourses (SMED) research group (e.g., Larsson & Öhman, 2018; Maivorsdotter & Quennerstedt, 2012; Quennerstedt et al., 2011).

Pragmatic philosophy underlines the essential role that values play for human beings and their activities. Dewey has extensively developed the importance of values in education in *Democracy and Education* ([1916] 2004); he argues that:

> To value means primarily to prize, to esteem; but secondarily it means to apprise, to estimate. It means, that is, the act of cherishing something, holding it dear, and also the act of passing judgment upon the nature and amount of its value as compared with something else. (p. 228)

Dewey distinguishes two forms of values: intrinsic and instrumental. He further discusses the distinctions between them and states that we must sometimes make a choice that 'establishes an order of preferences, a greater and less, better and worse' (p. 229). Things that are evaluated about a third thing and that are judged can be seen as means and thus understood as instrumental values-- in that they are valued to a further end. Objects or things that cannot be judged or compared can be understood as intrinsic values. Dewey states that:

> Intrinsic values are not objects of judgment, they cannot (as intrinsic) be compared, or regarded as greater and less, better or worse. They are invaluable; and if a thing is invaluable, it is neither more nor less so than any other invaluable. ([1916] 2004, p. 229)

Dewey ([1916] 2004) argues that the intrinsic values of education play a vital role in the quality of education and that '[c]ontribution to immediate intrinsic values in all their variety in experience is the only criterion for determining the worth of instrumental and derived values in studies' (p. 258). Thus, intrinsic values can be understood as a good in themselves and cannot be judged or compared in relation to anything else from the viewpoint of the respective learner. However, to understand Dewey's concept of value, we need to 'grasp rather fully the meaning that he attaches to the term experience' (Smith, 1922, p. 339).

During an ordinary day, we can experience a multitude of things, since interaction is a natural part of the living process. Dewey ([1934] 2005) argues that an experience must be understood in a holistic way that has a unity and that '[t]his unity is neither emotional, practical, nor intellectual, for these terms name distinctions that reflection can

make within it' (p. 38). Only afterwards, on reflection, can an experience be characterised by one of the dominant dimensions of that experience:

> In discourse *about* an experience, we must make use of these adjectives of interpretation. In going over an experience in mind *after* its occurrence, we may find that one property rather than another was sufficiently dominant so that it characterizes the experience as a whole. ([1934] 2005, p. 37, emphasis in original)

Dewey further elaborates that different modes of experiences exist. This attribute implies that several dimensions of human life are vital and real. However, human knowledge has often been regarded as the norm for how we experience the world and has therefore overshadowed other dimensions. It is therefore important to pay attention also to emotional and practical aspects of experience in order to mirror what it is to be and become a human being.

Two principles are vital in Dewey's philosophy of experience: interaction and continuity (Bassey, 2010). Both are fruitful in an understanding of the interactions and encounters in educational situations and help us see how experiences in and of education can influence further experiences, thus relating past, present and future experiences together (Dewey, [1938] 1997). The principle of interaction illustrates that learning and education can be viewed as ongoing processes, where both knowledge and values are constructed in the interactions between human beings and the environment. Hence, we acquire knowledge about the world and create meaning through our actions (Dewey, [1938] 1997). In interaction, we turn to our earlier experiences for support as to how we could or should act. We can then meet resistance in various ways, where we need to reflect on our actions and where continuity concerns how earlier experiences affect future experiences.

> Experience does not go on simply inside a person. It does go on there, for it influences the formations of attitudes of desire and purpose. But this is not the whole of the story. Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had. (Dewey, ([1938] 1997, p. 39)

The principle of continuity further entails that participation in education not only changes the participants but also their environments. This principle implies that with new experiences, the learners approach future learning situations in new ways, and the very meaning of education may also change. The intrinsic values focused in this article are something that are continuously created and re-created through experience in the encounters and actions that take place in older participants' different learning environments and activities. These experiences then potentially influence further experience. Thus, intrinsic values of education are already present in the learning processes in the ongoing educational practices and not exclusively in the aims and goals of learning (see also Sandell & Öhman, 2013).

In conclusion, the experience of values cannot be separated from action and the context in which the action takes place. This manner of exploring education for older adults can facilitate an understanding of how different values are made as essential parts of education and what meanings the participants subsequently attach to education.

Methods

The study was conducted at a senior university in a medium-sized Swedish city, as such senior universities provide rich information that follows the purpose of the study. A purposeful sampling strategy and a snowball strategy were used (Patton, 2015). Accordingly, we communicated with a teacher in the senior university who offered the contacts of teachers who could be interested in participating. The collection of data for the study occurred during the autumn of 2019.

As methods of data collection, observations and focus group interviews were chosen since they allow exploring the participants' experiences and provide clarification through group interactions (Barbour, 2018). The following five courses were the object of investigation: one course each on 'music and poetry', 'religions in the world' and 'third ageing' and two courses on 'literature and religion'. The number of participants in each course varied between six and twelve.

To gain an initial insight into the educational practice, we initiated the study with observations of the courses. A methodological approach based on the pragmatic philosophy (see Quennerstedt et al., 2014) enabled us to pose follow-up questions about some of the aspects observed during the courses, such as the teachers playing the piano or topics discussed, for example, religion. A total of 16 occasions in five courses were observed and documented in field notes. When possible, hand-outs from the teachers were collected to acquire a deeper understanding of the context of the courses. These handouts tackled various topics, such as musicians, poets and different religions. The observations were followed by semi-structured focus group interviews. In total, five focus groups were conducted with broad questions about the participants' experiences of the courses and their participation in non-formal education (Östlund-Lagerström et al., 2015). The focus groups lasted between 36 and 54 minutes.

Focus group interviews are recommended as a suitable way of exploring participants' experiences, opinions and concerns (see Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999). Participants can endorse their experiences in a focus group interview so that they can support and encourage each other to both speak and share (Barbour, 2018). A central element in our pragmatic understanding of learning and education is that participants create and make new meanings in present situations by recalling their previous experiences (e.g. Quennerstedt et al., 2011). Capturing the context and creating an appropriate conversation climate are crucial to explore the participants' experiences in education. In view of this, we argue that a focus group interview can be understood as a situation in which the participants can re-actualise their earlier experiences, especially if it relates to one of the course occasions. Thus, participation in a focus group can be understood as an experience of values, since it allows the participants to relate to their previous experiences and thereby give meaning and value to their participation in education.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The numbers of participants in each focus group interview varied between two and eight (see Table 1). The interviews were held on the same day as the last observed course occasion and in the same room in which the course took place. The participants who volunteered for the study remained in the room after the course occassion.

Table 1. Number of focus groups and members.

Focus Group	Course	Members
FG1	Music and Poetry	5 (4 women, 1 man)
FG2	Literature and Religion	5 women
FG3	Literature and Religion	8 women
FG4	Third ageing	3 (2 women, 1 man)
FG5	Religions in the world	2 (1women, 1 man)[1]

The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained from all willing participants. Ethical approval was given by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. All empirical materials were anonymised to meet the confidentiality criteria (Patton, 2015).

Analytical procedure

The analysis followed the pragmatic methodological approach created by the research group SMED (e.g. Larsson & Öhman, 2018; Lidar et al., 2006; Maivorsdotter & Quennerstedt, 2012; Quennerstedt et al., 2014). The analysis was a purpose-driven content analysis, which searched for overarching themes (Patton, 2015) and was conducted in three steps.

First, the field notes from the observations and the transcripts from the interviews were analysed, and the first author documented the initial impressions from the courses. To obtain a comprehensive picture of the participants' experiences, all the authors then coded the interview data by focusing on instances in which various aspects of the participants' experiences of the education were expressed.

The second step responds to the first research question and contains two parts. We focused on *which* experiences and values the participants conveyed when making statements about the content, describing their learning or expressing the motives for their participation. The experiences were first categorised as modes of experience, and different *themes of experiences* were generated. John Dewey's theory of experience guided our analyses and understanding. The themes were revised and adjusted several times by all the authors independently. Second, the values inherent in these experiences were collectively classified as either *instrumental* or *intrinsic* in accordance with Dewey's definition. We used a so-called *deliberative strategy* (Goodyear et al., 2017), where each researchers' classifications were compared and deliberately discussed to reach a collective agreement before the study's final categorisations were decided. Values separated from the learning activity itself, and judged in relation to a further end, were classified as instrumental. The values bound with the learning activity and the education, and esteemed as good in themselves, were classified as intrinsic. The expressed intrinsic values were then specifically focused on, categorised and named to capture each of their core content.

In the third step, we explored the second research question about *how* the participants attached intrinsic values to their experiences of education and gave meaning to their participation. The analysis in this step focused on the encounters, interactions and processes that the participants related to when expressing the different intrinsic values of the education in which they were involved.

Findings

In this section, we present the results of the analysis of how older adults experienced the intrinsic values of education in the studied settings (see Table 2). The following themes of the value experiences of education are presented and outlined as follows: *intellectual value experiences, emotional value experiences, existential value experiences* and *social value experiences.* We acknowledge that these categories are analytical distinctions of experiences that are intertwined and formed together in practice. In relation to each theme, we present the different intrinsic values attributed to the specific experience by the learners and how they were expressed by them. The results are supported by illustrative examples. The quotes are translated from Swedish to English by the authors and proofread by a professional translator.

Table 2. The distribution of intrinsic values in the themes of value experiences.

Value experiences in education	Intrinsic values
Intellectual	New insights and widened perspectives, The reflective process
Emotional	Enrichment, Meaningfulness, Enjoyment, Peacefulness
Existential	Existential awareness
Social	Relational support, Sense of community

Source: The authors

Intellectual value experiences

Intellectual value experiences are related to the knowledge and insights the participants acquired when taking part in the various courses, and the consequences of these insights and knowledge. Two intrinsic values were identified in relation to their intellectual experiences of education: (i) *new insights and widened perspectives*, and (ii) *the reflective process*.

The participants in the study highlighted the value of *new insights and widened perspectives*, which involved learning new things and at the same time enjoying themselves. As no goal was set, the value of the education was in the learning activity itself, where the intrinsic value occurred, for example, in the discussions about literature and religion. One focus group discussed the excitement of seeing the connection between literature and religion, as well as the value of reading new books.

> Patricia: It was exciting with religion as I hadn't seen it in that way before… [she continues by clarifying that the teacher is important and that she would never have read these books otherwise, and outlines further] The books should be a bit complicated, I think. Books that give tips about things you haven't seen. This makes such a course really very valuable.

The quotation illustrates that Patricia appreciated that the course offered an encounter with new perspectives. She further stated that it was of value that the books were complicated, which helped her see and understand new things.

In the 'music and poetry' course, one musician and one poet were covered in each course occasion. The course teachers often gave the participants background information about the poets and the musicians. They also played songs and read poems, and the background stories gave the participants a context to interact with, which then supported

their learning. However, the participants also took their own experiences from the learning activity 'home'. In the focus group, they discussed what they had learned from the teachers about the poets and the musicians. One member of the group outlined that her experiences during the course also affected and contributed to her experiences outside it:

> Linda: I usually do this when I get home. I check to see whether these songs are on YouTube and then I do the same with the poets. I read more about those I'm unfamiliar with on Wikipedia. There have been Polish musicians and I had no idea about them. There's a lot to learn and get acquainted with.

After a brief discussion between three of the focus group members about their encounters with the content in the classical music course, she continued:

> Linda: But then sometimes I think that I get stuck in a music genre and play the same songs over and over again, like a teenager. Then it can be nice to add a playlist from Spotify with these songs if you're cooking or doing something else. And there are so many that I like that I've not heard before.

Linda's experiences in the course changed her taste in music and broadened her repertoire of music styles. Hence, a continuity had provided her with new and extended experiences. In this example, the intrinsic value was identified in the encounter with new music genres and the interactions with the course content when the teachers played music and read poetry, thereby demonstrating the significance that values play in non-formal education.

The *reflective process* in the educational practice had a recurring intrinsic value. Here, reflection was highlighted as an important value in itself. One focus group from the 'literature and religion' course discussed the opportunity to listen to others' views and impressions of a particular book. One member highlighted that it was not only the interaction with others that was valuable but also the reflections that these discussions gave rise to:

> Selma: But also, to find out what I really think. Because if I'd read such a book on my own it would have left me feeling pretty empty. But now I have to reflect: What do I really think? What was it that made me carry on reading?

The participants further explained that discussing and reflecting on the content using religion as a lens were valuable. In the above quotation, the intrinsic value of the reflective process was related to the resistance encountered during the reading and the succeeding discussions. The observations highlighted how the participants were presented with new ideas to reflect on. When they read a book in the 'literature and religion' course, they reflected on the content and the characters they encountered and discussed the various situations in the literature. The participants also turned to earlier experiences to understand and describe situations that were similar to those mentioned in the book.

The focus group from one of the 'literatures and religion' courses also discussed the meaning of participating in the course and highlighted different ways of reflecting on the books:

> Jeanette: If you've read the book you have to come here to talk about it and listen to what others think about it.
>
> Hilda: It feels like self-development. You broaden your perspectives.
>
> Wilma: You're forced to reflect when you are reading.

> Hilda: Yes, why did I think it [the book] was bad and then you came and said it was good. It's that kind of thing that makes you reflect.

This dialogue illustrates how the participants started to reflect when interacting with the content of the book and with other participants' views and how it broadened and transformed their view of the world, thus making the reflective process an intrinsic value.

Emotional value experiences

This theme involves the participants' emotional reactions to the learning environment or content. In the interviews, the participants often related to the feelings they had when listening to music or reading a book. These emotional reactions made the participants reflect on their actions or situation. Feelings of (i) *enrichment*, (ii) *meaningfulness*, (iii) *enjoyment* and (iv) *peacefulness* were intrinsic values that were identified in relation to emotional experiences of education.

The intrinsic value of *enrichment* was emphasised in several of the interviews. In one focus group, a participant suggested that the reason for his participation was that it was interesting:

> George: The answer is simple, it's interesting, it's educational. Basically, there is an interest, we read books and do a lot of other things as well. Now I also think it sounds like fulfilling a duty, but it's not that. We're now starting to get lots of people from other countries due to all the recent immigration. Then you should possibly try to understand them a little better. But that's not been the main motivation. But I think it's good if you can get a bit more insight than you had before. We haven't been very quick, but I think it's good to know a little more. But in general it's an interest in education. It's exciting to know all about this.

George stressed that learning was interest-driven and thus enriching. The participants also highlighted that emotions were connected to enrichment in their encounters with other participants in the course. In a focus group with members of the 'literature and religion' course, the importance of hearing other people's thoughts was discussed, as Jeanette stated: 'It's always exciting to hear other people's impressions of the book that I would never have thought about reading on my own. Yes, it's very enriching'. Thus, in the interactions with the learning environment, the book or the other participants in the course created feelings of enrichment and as a consequence, generated a desire to learn more.

Meaningfulness was also highlighted as an essential part of the educational experience. The participants discussed that their participation in education gave meaning and structure to their lives. In one focus group, this theme was discussed as follows:

> Irma: One thing that I've often thought about is that you can sit at home and think that the weather is awful and…nah I don't want to go out today, but that thought never enters your head when going to a presentation or a course. That would be very strange.
>
> Selma: But it's also something that you've committed yourself to and plan to do, so you do it.
>
> Irma: Yes, but it's not just a commitment.
>
> Selma: No, it's got to be both meaningful and fun.
>
> Irma: Yes, both meaningful and fun.

> Ethel: Because that's the difference between working or studying. Work was something you had to do, but here I can sit at home and do nothing. But the idea doesn't exist when it comes to these courses.

Here, education has a value by being meaningful. It is something important that is worth the struggle, regardless of the weather, and is therefore an intrinsic value.

The intrinsic value *enjoyment* occurred in the empirical material, for example in the 'literature and religion' course, where one participant explained:

> Doris: It's really nice to do a course, I didn't do anything like that when I was working. I'm an engineer. That was my profession. But now I can do something else and I like it. I dreamed that when I retired I'd be interested in things like this.

This response illustrates that the course content was completely different from her work as an engineer. To give meaning to their experiences in education, the participants often turned to their previous life experiences. Experiences from former occupations and formal education were sometimes recalled as an experience in contrast to their experiences of older adults' education. This response shows that recalling previous experiences in the continuum can develop the same experience but can also turn it into something completely different. These experiences also continued to contribute to the participants' environments outside the course. When they discussed why they participated, one person explained that it was to enjoy herself, as Irma said: 'It's fun to come here and you feel energised when you're here and you can take that back home' (Irma). Thus, the joy that was experienced in the course also continued at home. The participants expressed enjoyment in various ways in the observed lessons. For example, in the observations from 'music and poetry' course, they showed it when swaying their bodies and tapping their feet when a tune was played on the piano.

Some of the participants emphasised the intrinsic value of *peacefulness*. The focus group with members from the 'music and poetry' group discussed the peacefulness of participating in the course and said that this experience was in complete contrast to their earlier and more stressful working lives. The participants also discussed the healing and solace that music can provide. One member explained that she sometimes thought of her parents when the music that was played was something that her parents had liked and listened to:

> Edna: It has brought back so many memories and feelings of my parents. It's often been very poignant because you... time is running out now and I've been able to relive some of it. On many occasions when listening to the music I've had a lump in my throat.

This reaction was an example of the course producing an emotional experience that connected to previous meaningful personal experiences.

Existential value experiences

In many of the courses, questions of an existential nature occurred in terms of a good life, ageing and death. In the courses, the participants sometimes encountered ethical dilemmas that made them uncertain about how to proceed. For example, they expressed doubt about how to understand and judge different religions. *Existential awareness* was identified as an intrinsic value connected to existential experiences of education.

The intrinsic value *existential awareness* was related both to the content in the courses and the discussions about existential issues. Existential issues as content occurred when the participants analysed the books they were reading. In the 'literature and religion'

course, the participants sometimes commented on the destinies of the characters. The book entitled "The Underground Girls of Kabul" by Jenny Nordberg was about girls growing up as boys and hiding their gender identity until this was no longer possible. Discussing ethical dilemmas about religion also became an important way of encountering existential issues. In an interview from the 'literature and religion' course, the participants discussed how people were influenced by religion. One member (Wilma) explained: 'I think it's interesting to be aware of how much we are influenced by religion and ethics. You don't consciously think about it, but discover it when you analyse the books'. This reaction is an example of how participation in non-formal education provided existential experiences.

Participants in the 'literature and religion' course related their earlier experiences in life to their encounters with the content. This context was also discussed in the interview as shown by this sequence:

> Sandra: I think it's exciting because it [religion] affects our lives so much all the time. So, you have to keep yourself up to date with what people think and take a stand on... There are a lot of things in the religions that are the same, and some of the contradictions that have arisen are a little unnecessary, I would say. Because they... in reality we think the same in many respects, but this is not always obvious.

> Susan: I'm interested in how religion affects people's lives as well. Without thinking about it, it has always been there since childhood and relatives and so on and I've been influenced by it…

The participants turned to their previous experiences to give meaning to being on the course and explained their interest in religion. In this example, they related to the contradictions that existed between the different religions and also recalled experiences from their childhood that had been influenced by a religious environment.

Discussions about existential issues were vital for the participants' experiences in some of the courses. Topics discussed in the courses could be religion, gender, class or culture. In the focus group from the 'literature and religion' course, they talked about the importance of discussing deeper thoughts with the other participants.

> Ethel: I think it's interesting with the kinds of questions that go a little bit deeper than an ordinary dinner conversation with people who you don't really know. Even though we didn't know each other before, we can go a little bit deeper. There are some questions about life and some existential questions. And I think it's very exciting to discuss these things with other people.

In the 'third ageing' course, questions of an existential nature were discussed, such as how to deal with death and what happens when you lose someone close to you, as well as positive aspects of ageing. They discussed and tried to grasp how these existential moments in life could be met. When considering ageing in the focus group with members of the 'third ageing' course, they thought that it was interesting to hear other people's thoughts about getting older. In the interview, one participant said:

> Barbara: I feel that I am 79 years old and soon 80 and it was interesting to take part in and listen to how it works and what you should talk about. Because this thing with age is a bit exaggerated, I think. But I believe that this has been enormously fruitful. Because we've encountered different and much deeper ways of thinking than are usual in ordinary life.

In this example, the participant turned to experiences outside the course, highlighting the intrinsic value of existential awareness.

Social value experiences

This theme highlights the importance of social interactions between the participants in terms of the communication and the social context of the educational experience. This theme implies that people communicate with other human beings to give meaning to and understand the educational content they are working with. Here, (i) *relational support* and (ii) *sense of community* were identified as important intrinsic values.

Relational support was emphasised in the 'literature and religion' course focus group. They discussed that they developed an understanding of a book when listening to the other participants' ideas.

> Wilma: And I agree of course, what others think about a book is also very interesting.
>
> Gertrude: It's great fun and gives me another dimension too. Oh, how can you think like that, I wonder. What makes it so fun is that every time I've been on a course, whatever it happens to be, I've learned something new and that it's never too late. Even if I didn't like the book, there have been really interesting discussions and the topics of literature and religion are really exciting.
>
> Pauline: It becomes a whole new book after discussing it. I hadn't thought of it like that… so it's very rewarding.

The participants highlighted that the discussions about a book were interesting as social interaction. The discussion itself was the value, and liking the book they were reading in the course was not even necessary. In the 'literature and religion' course, the participants not only discussed religion and the structure of society but also the characters and the content of the literature they read. The point of the communication between the participants in the courses was to understand the content of the books they were reading. Members of the literature and religion focus group highlighted the value of hearing other participants' opinions. Gaining new insights from others was thus a vital intrinsic value.

The participants sometimes supported each other in their learning and understanding. One example of this is from the 'music and poetry' focus group. In the course, the teacher had read a poem by Tomas Tranströmer, a famous Swedish poet who had worked at a detention centre in his youth. One of his poems is about a fugitive (a character in the poem) who was captured with his pockets full of mushrooms. One of the participants expressed that it was hard to understand why the fugitive had his pockets full of mushrooms:

> Linda: …when we read those Haiku poems and the thing about the chanterelles. And now you say this so that it seems quite natural to put them in the pocket.
>
> Betty: Those boys didn't have anywhere to go, so they hid in the forest.
>
> Linda: It was so funny to hear that.

This participant shared her experiences of working at the same detention centre as Tranströmer. She explained that the boys often ran away and hid in the forest because they did not have anywhere else to go. When doing this she also supported the participants' understanding of the poem and created continuity between earlier experiences and the experience from the course.

Social experience, as in a *sense of community*, was further identified as an intrinsic value. Meeting other people was of great importance for the participants, and in the

interview with members of the 'third ageing' course, the participants discussed how rewarding this experience was. One member declared:

> Barbara: I think that being on a course when you are older is a bit different. We don't read a course, or don't go on a course about language or whatever to be able to go to university. But much of our learning is about meeting new people and at the same time becoming more knowledgeable. We are not result-oriented in the same way as your generation is. I think that this is very important when choosing a course.

In this quotation, the participant related to society outside the course to give meaning to her experiences in the course. In the 'literature and religion' focus group, they discussed the importance of social interaction. To explain the social value of participating and the companionship they created in the courses, the participants also related to the world outside. One member (Patricia) of the focus group explained: 'Then you become one of … by just taking a course like this or what you do, you become part of society'. The importance of community was also discussed in the 'music and poetry' focus group, where the participants underlined that life as a pensioner could be quite lonely.

In some cases, the social experiences in the course also contributed to their experiences outside it. In the interview with a 'literature and religion' focus group, some of the participants emphasised that the social aspect was important and that they now knew more people to say hello to in the town. Although they might not know each other well, they now had some things in common. One member (Gertrude) of that focus group explained that 'this is also a kind of loose tie as well. I haven't seen some of you before, but I will probably nod and say hello'. After a brief sequence, during which one participant mentioned that she enjoyed talking to people more now, Gertrude elaborated further and said, 'and when I meet you then I'll know that we have the same interest, and can talk a little about which book we are reading'. The social connections they made during the course extended their experiences, which also meant that participation in the course transformed their social world outside the course and increased their sense of community.

Discussion

The results of the study offer an understanding of what intrinsic values of education for older adults can be and how these values are related to the educational process. The findings show that the participants experience a number of different intrinsic values in non-formal education: (i) *new insights and widened perspectives,* (ii) *the reflective process,* (iii) *enrichment,* (iv) *meaningfulness,* (v) *enjoyment,* (vi) *peacefulness,* (vii) *existential awareness,* (viii) *relational suppor,t* and (ix) *sense of community.*

Several of these values have been identified in previous research. For example, Park et al. (2016) have found that emotional satisfaction is important and Åberg (2016) has underlined social aspects, such as fellowship. Feelings, like joy and interest, have also been outlined as crucial by McWilliams and Barett (2018). However, in our study, a more comprehensive picture of the range of potential intrinsic values in post-work education has been identified. These values should not be viewed hierarchically, but instead as vital parts of the total learning experience. Our study further indicates that these values co-exist, deepen the educational experience and occur differently depending on the learning activities undertaken. The value experiences thus help us to understand the meaning older adults make in participating in post work-education.

Furthermore, our results indicate that values, which from a third-person perspective may be viewed as instrumental, may appear as intrinsic from the participants' perspective. Some interesting aspects noted in the results are, thus, that meaningfulness in education does not necessarily have to be connected to the usefulness of the content (see Sloane-Seale & Kops, 2010). For example, discussing and reflecting on the content of a book are emphasised by the participants' as a value in itself rather than as a way of keeping the brain alert (Hardy et al., 2017).

Schuller (2004) suggests three capitals – human capital, social capital and identity capital – as a framework for understanding the benefits of learning. Other research focusing on non-formal education implies that older adults can perceive higher gains in social capital compared with younger adults (Hachem & Manninen, 2020). The intrinsic values *social support* and *sense of community* confirm that social aspects are crucial for older adults' education. Being in a period of post-work, educational participation is one way to become or remain a part of society. However, older adults' education may contribute to other dimensions, and our results demonstrate that it is not just a question of feeling enjoyment all the time (see McWilliams & Barett, 2018), as other emotions, such as the intrinsic value of *peacefulness,* can be a vital part. Experiences of learning about existential aspects have been explored, and research outlines that learning can contribute to compensatory changes in life (Narushima et al., 2018). The findings on intrinsic values in our study indicate that the content and the discussions about existential issues, rather than objectives such as daily coping, are valuable. This finding is in line with that of Mackowicz and Wnek-Gozdek (2019), who argue that including topics and subjects that can be considered challenging to discuss is important for senior universities. An example from our study is the discussions about the sensitive issue 'how to deal with death and what happens when you lose someone close to you', which the participants considered as an *existential* value.

Regarding the question of *how* the values of education are experienced, complex pedagogical interactions must be considered. The relations between the individual and social environment in ongoing education are crucial. Previous research highlights the needs and motives of older adults' participation, indicating an understanding of older adults' participation where the individual is passive and is coming into action (like participation in education) when a need must be met (Findsen & Formosa, 2011). The participants in our study instead highlight that the value of the interactions and relations is in the activity itself. Reading a book, learning about music, a sense of community or joint reflections on different religions are considered and esteemed as valuable. The participants seldom value their participation in relation to anything outside the learning activity. Therefore, the activities and actions that occur in the educational situation can largely be said to be about intrinsic values.

Acknowledging that instrumental values also play an important role in older adults' post-work education and learning is important. In this study, some of the participants highlighted that participation in education is important as it worked as a means to stay active and get structure in life. This issue responds to previous research discussing that 'staying active' can be a strong motive for older adult learners (Bjursell, 2019b). Previous research outlines that older adults' motivation is a mixture of intrinsic/expressive and instrumental/extrinsic aspects (Narushima et al., 2013). However, in this study, the experiences of the intrinsic values of education are regarded as special occurrences that give the experiences in education a certain quality. Dewey ([1916] 2004) reminds us that the instrumental values of education, such as mastering a certain skill, are vital. However, a risk has also been observed, wherein education will merely become an instrumental rehearsal if the focus is exclusively on the justifications and goals of learning in later life.

This attribute is noteworthy, as learning later in life is included in policies as a way of solving social problems (Formosa, 2012; Tøsse, 2014). This finding resonates with Formosa's (2012) critique that late life learning must not be based on the ideology of the market or the economic needs of society.

An important consequence of our study is related to the teaching of older adults and how to plan non-formal education for them. Duay and Bryan (2008) argue that teachers play a vital role in older adults' education regarding the creation of interesting and meaningful learning experiences. Our study points in the same direction and highlights that the experiences of intrinsic value are vital for the quality of older adults' participation in education and must be taken seriously when planning and organising. In the educational interactions, the participants experience intrinsic values and then turn back to earlier experiences to make sense of their learning situations. Learning experiences should therefore be organised in ways that create continuity between past, present and future experiences. The experience of intrinsic values can contribute to this continuity and make participation and retention in the courses more intelligible and provide meaning to their participation.

The sampling of the study can, of course, have influenced the findings. Courses, such as 'music and poetry' and 'literature and religion', have another character than courses with more instrumental aims, where, for example, technical skills are focused. Thus, the courses in our study probably have a high proportion of intrinsic values. However, the sampling was related to the purpose of the study: to gain a deeper knowledge of the intrinsic values of older adult education. The way in which participants experience the values of education depends on their cultural and intellectual capital. In our case, those studying in senior universities (U3A) are often from the educated middle-class. Middle-class older adults in post-working life may have positive experiences of and feelings about post-secondary education and have the confidence and commitment needed to appreciate education as something valuable in itself (Formosa, 2014). In further explorations of the importance of intrinsic values in post-work education, study groups with different social and educational backgrounds must be investigated. Acknowledging that other older adults who are willing to participate in a course but do not have the possibility and the necessary resources due to time, fees and transportation is important. This factor could have excluded people who have other kinds of value experiences regarding education.

National differences in how the senior universities (U3A) are organised are also observed, and these differences must also be considered in further research. Organisations following the French U3A model have a top-down approach, where experts determine the programmes for older adults (Vellas, 2019). By contrast, in Sweden, senior universities are often organised by the members themselves and resemble the study circle courses of the popular/liberal adult education movement (Bjursell, 2019a). This procedure is similar to the British U3A model's bottom-up approach, where the education programmes follow the needs and interests of the members (Vellas, 2019). However, even if equality between participants is emphasised as vital, a paid teacher or study circle leader is often present (Larsson & Nordvall, 2010). The senior university featured in this study is no exception. As emphasised above, the teacher plays a crucial role in the creation of a fruitful learning environment, as they are responsible for the course layout and the content. Therefore, we regard this factor as important in further investigating the role of the teacher in different educational settings.

Educational activities involve complex pedagogical relations, and predicting whether a certain situation will lead to a certain outcome or value is difficult, if not impossible. The focus of this study has not been on correlations and causality. Instead, we have focused

on the participants' experiences of intrinsic values and the results outlined here must be seen as potential intrinsic values of education and how they can be experienced. Additional research is necessary to determine the role of teachers and older adults' experiences in ongoing educational activities and how different contents contribute to people's experiences of intrinsic values in education.

Notes

[1] This group can be considered as a very small focus group (VSFGs) (Toner, 2009). More participants were invited but only two attended.

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Rebellion as a learning experience in the light of narrations of adults participating in protests. Selected issues

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to show the learning potential of participation in protests in the narratives of several adults. Participation in rebellions is seen as a specific learning experience here. What is the relationship between experience and learning on the example of participation in rebellions? The author analyses this relationship, inter alia, on the example of critical practices described by Usher. This article is a part of a broader research project on learning mechanisms of adults participating in various forms of rebellion. The study is concerned with answering the questions: what and how do protesters learn? what are the social and cultural mechanisms of their learning? In this research project a biographical perspective was used. Within it, the biography is understood in a processual way. The biographical method focuses on the subjective level of experience in the socio-cultural and institutional context. The empirical material was analysed by searching for similarities and differences in rebels' narratives. The results of the study are above all the identification of learning outcomes and identity-building processes.

Keywords: Biography, identity, learning experience, rebellion

Introduction

Rebellion is an interesting and complex phenomenon. In this paper, I understand it as a specific way of being human in the world that can be an opportunity for learning. Rebellion has many dimensions – psychological, sociological, cultural and political. I see

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rebellion as an example of participatory democracy, which means engaged forms of citizens' 'active' political participation, and goes beyond the 'passive', representative model typical of liberal democracy (e.g, Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2017). My research project focuses on political rebellion, and especially protesting in public spaces. It should be added that the terms 'participation in rebellion' and 'activism' (social, political, feminist, LGBT+ etc.) are understood almost synonymously here. I see activism as a positive aspect of rebellion. Thus, rebellion would mean negating the *status quo* but also creating alternatives to the existing reality. This phenomenon can be described at many levels: biographical (as a personal experience), local (in the context of specific social groups and local communities) as well as global, especially in the form of social movements (e.g. Castells, 2012, 2017; Jezierska & Polanska, 2017; Touraine, 1985). Perfect examples of such collective rebellions are Occupy in the USA, the *Indignados* Movement in Spain, the Arab Spring in north of Africa, the Black Protests and the Women's Strike in Poland, protests against Lukashenko's regime in Belarus, Extinction Rebellion, and many others.

Rebellions, in addition to their socio-cultural and political significance, have an educational dimension. It is important to mention here that historically, adult education has its origins in social movements (Field, 2005; Grayson, 2014). The literature analysing the phenomenon of learning in social movements is rich (e.g. Dekeyser, 2001; Foley, 1999; Grayson, 2014; Hall, Clover, Crowther & Scandrett, 2012; Kim, 2016; Pilch Ortega, 2016; Tett, 2016; Zielińska, Kowzan & Prusinowska, 2011). The thread linking individual and collective rebellion and learning is particularly important in adult education research (e.g. Jurgiel-Aleksander, 2013; Kurantowicz, 2007; Malewski, 2006).

The socio-cultural dimension of rebellion has been researched in various contexts. However, what is of particular interest to me is people's personal experiences. After all, it is individuals who decide to engage in rebellious practices. For this reason, I decided to use a biographical perspective in my study. It allows me to look at the experiences of political rebellion from the point of view of politically engaged people, to observe and analyse how people change through rebellion and how they respond to these transformations. Biographical perspectives also enable us to engage with the question of what people participating in rebellions learn. In this paper, I would like to focus on learning as a key aspect of rebellion.

Theoretical framework

In my study I treat rebellion as a *learning experience*. It means that the experience of participating in rebellions can be an opportunity for learning. What does it mean? What is the relationship between protesting and learning?

Robin Usher (2009) is one of the researchers who has analysed the relationship between experience and learning. According to Usher (2009) the meaning of experience and the learning derived from experience depends on different discursive practices. Experiential learning is defined in terms of socio-cultural and institutional contexts in which it is embedded. The meanings of experiential learning shifts between and across emancipatory *vs* oppressive and domesticating *vs* transformative polarities.

Emphasising the ambiguity of learning experiences in postmodern culture Usher (2009) distinguishes between so-called lifestyle practices, vocational practices, confessional practices and critical practices. Each of these forms of practice infuse experiences with different meanings and draw on different ideological justifications. I will present two of the Usher's learning experiences which are extremely different and can be related to rebellion.

Lifestyle practices are connected with the achieving of autonomy through self-expression and individuality, particularly in a sense of personal lifestyle and taste. These practices are located within the play of difference, typical for the consumer culture. Consumption is based on choice as difference and difference as choice. Our dreams, fantasies and desires, which are part of our life projects, mediate in the process of constructing identity and gaining autonomy (Giddens, 1991). The link between lifestyle practices and education is revealed in the context of production of knowledge (and taste). Education becomes a part of the 'culture' industry in educational hypermarket (Usher, 2009). Learning becomes 'the experience gained through consumption and novelty, which then produces new experience' (Usher, 2009, p. 171). The 'culture' industry produces the consumers and make consumption compulsive and necessary. We are obliged to shape our lives through choices in the world of images, products and other objects. And 'every choice we make is an emblem of our identity, a mark of our individuality' (Usher, 2009, p. 172). Within this view, experience:

> is something to get immersed in, valued as a means of defining a lifestyle rather than something whose value lies in its potential for knowledge. It is consumed because it signifies in relation to a lifestyle. Knowledge is multiple, based on multiple realities and the multiplicity of experience. It is neither canonical nor hierarchical. There is no notion of intrinsically 'worthwhile' knowledge other than in terms of taste and style (Usher, 2009, p. 173).

Participation in rebellions can also be a form of lifestyle practice. Within consumer culture it is manifested by e.g. buying products typical of the rebels and rebels' subcultures (T-shirts with images of Che Guevara, 'rebellious' gadgets, CDs of our favourite artists described as rebels etc.). However, this kind of rebellion and rebelliousness is functionalist. It seems to be caught up in a consumer and neoliberal culture (Potulicka & Rutkowiak, 2010). Such a 'rebellion' does not change the existing conditions. Rebelliousness is almost reduced to the goods and products we buy. I argue that it maintains the *status quo* and power relations.

Critical practices, another type of learning experience, are more valuable in the context of political rebellion. These practices are oriented towards another type of autonomy and application of learning in the service of social transformation (Usher, 2009). Critical practices refer to the changing of particular context of social life. The experience is understood as neither 'innocent', nor taken for granted. It is rather a form of struggle to exercise power, control, and to find a 'voice' of subjects (rebels). The issues of power are key in critical practices. Power is permanently embedded in discourses, interests of particular social groups, and educational relations (Usher, 2009). In this sense pedagogy becomes a political practice. It is interpreted in terms of politics of representation in the cultural processes of shaping understandings and meanings of experiences and also the construction of social actors' identities. This 'political' pedagogy is a mediator in gaining critical awareness about our everyday experiences and power relations.

Critical practices have transformative potential and operates through specific knowledge. Usher claims that experiential learning 'becomes a strategy designed to privilege 'voice' in the service of self and social empowerment and transformation' (Usher, 2009, p. 180). Emancipation, empowerment and socio-political transformation are typical of rebels, revolutionaries and—at the collective level—social movements in which they are engaged. These entities embody critical practices related to resisting the power. Participation in rebellions is an excellent example of it. This practice becomes a specific kind of critical education and source of critical (resistant) learning.

According to Elisabeth Steinklammer (2012) 'resistant learning' includes two basic aspects. On the one hand, it is possibility for subjects to distance themselves from practice, contextualise it, and make connection with analysis of socio-political conditions. This aspect of resistant learning refers to consciousness-raising processes and people's reflection. The mentioned processes can be seen as task of critical education. In turn, consciousness-raising and reflection are basis for developing alternative options for social actors' actions (Steinklammer, 2012). On the other hand, critical education is not possible without practice: 'practical experiences and action learning are necessary for a new practice to be developed and for the practical sense to be worked in interaction with the social world' (Steinklammer, 2012, p. 31). Participation in emancipatory social movements 'generate new knowledge, new theories, and new questions' (Choudry, 2012, p. 149). We are dealing with the same 'situation' in participation in political rebellions like street protests. It alters people's awareness, frees them, shapes the emancipatory orientation of action and—in turn—affects human performance[1].

Political rebellion is a form of socio-cultural learning[2] located in the realm of people's everyday life experiences (Malewski, 2006). Hence, as I mentioned in the introduction, investigating these learning processes from a biographical perspective can be illuminating. Inequality, discrimination, and injustice are experienced by people in diverse ways. Each person can react in her/his own way to the conditions in which she/he lives. Reflecting individually on such living conditions is crucial for current and future action towards change. However, changes are important not only from an individual point of view. Experiences of inequality are shared with other people. Generally, participation in protests as a 'biographical' reaction to unfair life conditions is *situated* in social interactions and has a public significance. An important part of protest are practices which allow for the joint negotiation and re-negotiation of the social and political reality.

Participation in rebellions in terms of a combination of joint action and reflection on it can therefore be seen as an opportunity to learn. I argue that this is primarily a type of informal learning (Malewski, 2006). Engaged people acquire specific knowledge and skills 'on the occasion' of their numerous rebellious actions. These 'learning outcomes' are the results of people's actions and their individual critical reflection on these actions. It needs mentioning that I am aware that the term 'learning outcomes' may evoke associations with classical didactics, describing learning from the perspective of formal institutions. It can also evoke associations with neoliberalism. In education under neoliberalism, the emphasis tends to be on producing / designing outcomes that can be measured, and on the assessment of learning processes according to their efficiency (Biesta, 2010). In this paper, I focus on learning outcomes in the context of critical and ethical participation within informal learning spaces (Malewski, 2006). Street protests are an excellent example, literally and figuratively. Learning outcomes are an unplanned result of action and hold a potential for contributing to individual emancipation, transformation, and the public good.

Processes of rebellious action and learning contribute to the formation of the engaged subject's identity. Rebellious identity is a hybrid, changeable, and multidimensional construction entangled in the discourses that constitute it. On the one hand, it is a biographical self-creation of a person engaged in various types of rebellious actions. On the other hand, it is a result of social and cultural relations. Learning as a social and cultural practice mediating in the creation of this type of identity, is a mechanism in which social interactions with the reality and other people takes place (Malewski, 2006).

In the social event of taking action against various forms of injustice, fellow rebels become 'significant others'. According to George Herbert Mead (1962), the term 'significant others' refers to individuals and groups who are important in the development

of our identity (the Self). We learn from them specific norms, values, behavioural patterns and attitudes with regard to a given topic. In other words, the process of identity construction involves presence and interaction with other people and so-called 'reference groups'. These are the groups that matter when it comes to our self-definition. They can be positive ('positive reference group'—persons and groups that provide us with a guide to action, e.g. co-participants of protests) or negative ('negative reference group'—groups and persons we do not want to be identified with, e.g. political opponents) for us. It can be said that fellow rebels are our reference group for rebellious action, learning, and identity-building. They are the people we practice rebellion and learn with. From this perspective of learning we can assume that:

> learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind, it means that what is learnt is mediated by the differences of perspective among the co-participants. It is the community, or at least those participating in the learning context, that 'learn' under this definition. Learning is distributed among co-participants, not a one-person act. All learning 'takes place in a social world, dialectically constituted in social practices that are in the process of reproduction, transformation and change' (Tett, 2016, p. 161).

Participation in rebellions as a significant learning experience will be analysed and elaborated in empirical part of this article with the example of several adults who were / are engaged in protests and other socio-political actions which they define as rebellious. It turned out that the biographical perspective (analysis of individual life stories) reveals a great learning potential of rebellion. I will focus only on selected aspects here—learning outcomes mentioned by the people and identity-building processes in the context of their participation in rebellions. Now, I will describe the methodological assumptions of my research project.

Methodological approach

I decided to describe and understand the phenomenon of rebellion as a learning experience. In this article I am particularly interested in answering the crucial research question: *What do rebels learn?*

The subject of my research project was the learning potential of rebellion. In this study I used a biographical perspective being inspired by Danuta Urbaniak-Zając (2005, 2011). According to her, biography presents many challenges from methodological perspective. In my study I understand it as processes of building social actors' identity, based on a socio-cultural context and learning. I also understand biography as a 'tool' which helps me to identify and describe rebels' learning.

Biographical approach in my research enabled me 'to understand the orientation of the individual and his experiences related to learning throughout life' (Merrill, 2011, p. 15). The individuals' lives are created in a specific context (e.g. social and political conditions). It means that individuals do not have complete freedom in constructing their life paths:

> Life planning is done in the field of tension between social expectations, individual attitudes and aspirations as well as specific living conditions and interventional influence of institutions (Urbaniak-Zając, 2005, pp. 117-118).

The biographical method allows to study these tensions. Generally speaking, it focuses on the analysis of the subjective (individual) level of the experience in the social, cultural,

institutional and political context (Alheit, 2009, 2018; Merrill, 2011). It also analyses the problem of individual autonomy and social determination in general. As I mentioned before this is particularly evident in the case of rebellion. Institutional politics, the operation of power, discourses on power, visions of politics and social order and many other are part of a significant context. The rebels are 'co-created' by this context, and the context is changed by rebels.

I conducted my biographical research in a discursive way. Alicja Jurgiel (2011; 2013) points out that this kind of research 'discusses with itself'. It is also believed that the story (text) 'occurs' in the intertwining of social practices and written discourses. The narratives of the respondents, as well as the product of researcher's work are treated as a kind of discourse. Tomasz Szkudlarek (1997) notes that texts are 'essentially open, multi-discursive, i.e. they can be read and interpreted from many discursive positions and at the same time many subjective positions simultaneously' (p. 183). Thus, the same statements of the respondents, depending on the researcher's knowledge and position, can be interpreted in different ways. The generated knowledge is not closed or ever finished, it has a local character.

I collected the research material using a biographical interview, beginning with the question *How did it happen that you participated in demonstrations/ protests?*. That interview was semi-structured because it contained specific dispositions about learning, for example I asked: *What is the significance of participating in demonstrations for you? What did you learn during the demonstrations?* etc. The interview material was transcribed, coded thematically, and analysed by comparing different and common threads in the biographies. I focused on themes concerning learning, identity perceptions (and identity-formation) and relations with other rebels.

In the course of my research project I conducted 22 interviews with people from Poland (15), Belarus (1), Spain (5) and Mexico (1). The final analysis allowed me to identify common issues in the empirical material as learning outcomes and identity-building processes in rebels' biographies (it is worth noting that these common threads appeared in the entire research material—22 interviews). For the purposes of this article, I will briefly present and discuss portions of five biographical accounts in which the indicated thematic threads appeared. The criterion for choosing these five biographies was the variety of ways of experiencing rebellions by the people selected. In each of the selected interviews, the interlocutors understood rebellion in different ways, participated in diverse political actions and acted different roles (participant and / or organiser of rebellion).

The interviewees in this text come from various contexts. Despite the differences these five people have many things in common. Interlocutors define themselves as rebels. Each of them participated in street protests many times. They share the experience of oppression and dissatisfaction with many situations and various arbitrary, negative political decisions in their societies. They also share the desire to overcome the experience of oppression. Besides that, these rebels even want to create a new social and political order of things. They are engaged, socially sensitive and recognise the subtleties of power relations.

The first biography (interview 4)[3] belongs to a Polish woman. She is an activist, a member of a political party. She went to her first protest at the age of 12. She has organised Mayday parades and taken part in anti-militarist and pacifist demonstrations as well many others. The woman participated in 'rebellious' events both in Poland and abroad (Greece, Finland, etc.). For this person, in Polish political context the most unfavourable and motivating factors were the state's bad economic situation (high level of unemployment and poor wage conditions) as well as attacks on the state's ideological

neutrality and the influence of the Catholic Church. These are the issues that she rebels against.

The second biography (interview 18) is story of a Polish social and feminist activist, and coordinator of many educational and cultural projects. This person is particularly concerned about the bad situation of women and LGBT+ community in Poland. She wants to struggle for human rights and to build a community on the basis of alliances between people or groups that can provide power to express disagreement and make changes. The most important rebellions for her were Manifas[4] (and participation in their organisation), and a number of events supporting LGBT+ people.

The third biography (interview 12) belongs to a Catalan male whose activism began with university protests in 1997. His significant rebellions were the protests against the war in Iraq, Mayday marches, parades during the National Day of Catalonia (September 11th). He supported Spanish *Indignados* Movement and protested against injustice – rising costs of education and the situation of working-class people in Spain (Catalonia).

The fourth narration (interview 2) belongs to a Mexican woman who had been involved in rebellions since the first socialisation experiences with her parents who struggled against the unfair system in the country. Then, she participated in university protests, in events supporting the leftist presidential candidate in Mexico as well as protests against the privatisation of the state. The bad situation in Mexico—corruption, privatisation, and violence—is important for this person.

The last biography (interview 10) analysed in this text is a story of a Catalan male whose rebellions started with the general strike in 2010 in Barcelona. This interviewee was worried about police violence, the impact of a reform of labour law and political corruption. The most significant rebellions for him (besides the general strike) were numerous pickets in the district, meetings and other activities in local collectives. The experience of self-organisation of people is crucial for him.

As we see, the respondents were engaged both in single actions and in recurring events. It can be said that some of the events were even continuous. The respondents express themselves as participants and / or organisers of the rebellions. What do the rebels learn in the context of participation in all of these protests? What are the effects of their action and learning at the level of rebels' identity?

Learning outcomes as the effects of rebellion

The interviewees talked about their participation in rebellions in the language of learning. They repeatedly spoke about the issues they learnt during their participation. In other words, learning outcomes appeared in their narratives very often. I will present some of them in this section.

The first person mentioned such issues as learning to be humble. She met many people and groups during the protests. For her, rebellions are opportunity to learn the opinions and ideologies of other people. It is also important to her to learn about her own ideology:

> (…) if these are demonstrations organised by different organisations, many different political entities appear; then I get to know some other aspects of my own ideology, for example some issues – not only economic, but also feminist, LGBT and environmental; there is simply a whole spectrum of such organisations, a lot of legal aspects. (interview 4)

Participation in rebellions, which has a strong social character, for her is based on 'self-knowledge, self-education'. For example, she acquired the ability to organise political demonstrations:

> It is not like you just go out on the street at any time for protesting. You have to fill in a certain form [document], you have to follow certain rules; if you want to have demonstration well organised, you must have some slogans, a short art performance and other forms like a happening, performances (…). (interview 4)

What is more, rebellion is perceived by this person as exerting influence on society and politics, and as a tool for confrontation with 'political opponents'. This clear perspective of an organiser and politician shows that learning takes the form of strategic thinking. It is both learning derived from rebellion and learning how to organise and use the rebellion for some social and political purposes.

The second respondent talked about learning as an experience in which 'together you can make a good noise'. She learnt about many social and political problems (homophobia, non-respect of women's rights) and the potential of other people which reveals itself when they participate in 'rebellious' events. As an activist this woman reflected on how to motivate people to act: 'You need to identify some sources of tension somewhere in society and work on these sources'. She defined 'sources of tension' as social and political problems that others experience. According to the activist, if people become aware of these problems and the scale of their impact, they will act together to change the situation. As we can see, there is an interesting thread of learning to participate in rebellion and involving other people in it.

She was also concerned about whether the opposition groups understand the messages sent to them in general and claimed how difficult the dialogue was:

> I can see that sometimes it is difficult for me to argue something and after leaving such demonstration where I am among people who understand it all… we are just like that, we are on the same level of understanding facts and similar values… and then, when I leave the demonstration I meet people who do not perceive something as a problem or see it completely differently. (interview 18)

She noticed that the dialogue with other people—especially those with different worldviews—is a real problem in a diverse society. She sees society as a conflictive entity. In her opinion people are different, they have different interests and perceive social problems differently, which can cause the conflicts. The critical awareness of the conflicts in society—obtained through participation in rebellions and reflection on rebellions—do not discourage this respondent from trying to build alliances and community of rebels.

The third interviewee admitted that he learnt that not everyone thinks and feel in the same way. He sees this issue differently than the previous respondent. According to him everyone is different and this is an opportunity to learn about the ideas of different people. The discussion—as one of the forms of social interaction mentioned by this respondent—is enriching because, in his opinion, it requires to distance oneself from one's point of view:

> We can go to the demonstration with two hundred or maybe four hundred people with whom we agree, but also there are the people with whom we disagree… Actually it enriches us. This is good, it shapes us and allows us to be critical. Not everything is black and white, there are different shades. (interview 12)

This quote is an excellent example of rebellion as a critical practice (Usher, 2009) and resistance learning (Steinklammer, 2012). In this case the personal experience (beliefs,

attitudes and knowledge) is point of departure in consciousness-raising. In this manner, rebels while discussing gain theoretical distance from their personal experience to emancipate and empower themselves.

The same person notes another important issue in this context. He claimed that because of capitalism as a global condition it is difficult for rebels to remain consistent. He said that on the one side he buys and consumes, and then he protests against big corporations… Despite the difficulties he tries to participate in his everyday struggle. That is why the experience of rebellion for various reasons gives this person 'a sense of being part of something important, something that you believe it can change something' and says it builds self-esteem.

The fourth respondent also mentioned many learning outcomes of participation in rebellion. She learnt to interact with others, listen to others, discuss, understand ideologies and theories (e.g. economic theories). She also claimed that she had acquired belief that 'you can do a lot of good things with other people'. The respondent acquired the ability to distinguish different discourses and different people from the point of view of their needs and worldviews. She learnt to appreciate the knowledge of 'ordinary' people (*el pueblo*). In this context she mentioned that during a protest she learns more about social and economic inequalities from co-protesters (experiencing these everyday), than from someone who has formal economic education and knows 'theories and mathematical concepts'. For this respondent protesting is connected with everyday experience. It is 'the only way to be heard', 'an attempt to put pressure on politicians' and 'opposition to something'. It is also 'support for a particular political candidate' and 'waking up from a lethargy' which is a real powerful and consciousness-raising process that gives 'voice' for protesting people.

The fifth interviewee talked about learning that social assemblies he participated in

> (…) have a power structure... but it is a small power. There is no... there are not so many activists in Barcelona, right? Well, there are many different cases. Activism [means that] three people start screaming, a hundred of people hear it, and you have already done something, right? (interview 10)

The power mentioned by the respondent can be interpreted as a kind of 'small' counter-power created in rebellion practices in relation to an unfair world (the meetings of the collective in which the respondent participated concerned, inter alia, problems in a district, and the creation of social-change projects). We can call them 'micro acts' of resistance described as actions in *relation to power* (Szkudlarek, 2009). This perspective describes the power inherent in joint actions of people: making a joint reflection on the 'harmful' power and social relations, putting themselves in opposition to this power, joint conversations on what is unjust, debating possible changes in a district, discussing possible action plans, and finally, the introduction of these 'powerful' changes.

From the point of view of emancipation such learning outcomes as knowledge about functioning of the city and society, general methods of social and political action, listening and public speaking gain in importance here. The interviewee also pays attention to the knowledge about generational differences and teamwork which shows the challenges for collective action and learning:

> For example, in my neighbourhood there are people who were educated in the Franco's era, right? There are more and more people aged sixty years old who are good at using e-mails… on the communicative level. Then the question of software, posters creation. It already is complicated. Well, the topic of teamwork is noticeable. Because… my generation studied using different pedagogical methods, in my opinion not very good, but better than those in Franco's times. (interview 10)

The differences between the people of different generations (with different educational and political backgrounds) can be problematic but also become the 'engine' to overcome problems and to act together in local community. Such an individual and collective learning outcome enables rebels to create bonds and relationships with others, and finally the influence on someone's own life and surroundings. Participation in rebellions becomes a source of learning of how to be with others in a cooperative way. The critical and emancipatory potential of rebellion is clear here.

Summarising this part of the paper, I argue that participation in rebellion result in a number of learning outcomes. These outcomes have both individual and social (public) significance. On the one hand, rebels talked about individual 'benefits' and acquired competences like knowledge of various ideologies, organisational skills etc. On the other hand, they mentioned 'social' things like dialogue, understanding other people, building relationships and teamwork skills. Teamwork can be seen as a complex competence when it comes to participation in rebellions. The potential of teamwork is important especially when people with different (cultural) capitals work together and want to achieve common goals (as in the aforementioned collective in the district of Barcelona). Significantly, individual and social perspectives of learning are blended here.

Rebels' identities

The learning experiences of the rebels were strongly related to the identity-building of social actors. In case of my study identity is, above all, the result of learning in the context of participation in rebellions. The threads related to identity and identity-building were present in the analysed biographies, too. I will present and develop some of them in this section.

The first biography (interview 4) I will discuss is of a person who defined herself as activist, engaged in actions of a leftist political party. It is important for her to 'present your own point of view to a wider range of people, simply to influence politics, and what is happening in Poland'. This statement shows a strongly instrumental nature of her actions and the respondent's desire to increase a political capital of her and her group. The woman emphasised her participation in rebellion from the point of view of similarities in terms of commonality and familiarity with other leftists:

> There are the same environments in which you move around, the same leftist sauce [*laugh*]. (…) For many, many years. (interview 4)

> So, if you already are active in the political party, or in a few such friendly organisations, then you are already known and we are friends there somehow, there is no competition there. (interview 4)

Participation in rebellion built her identity as a rebel, well-known in a local community and among groups or like-minded people. Friendly relationships could have played a powerful role in identity-building processes here. The feeling of being in a community of people who sympathise with each other, build social bonds and work for a common goal were strongly emphasised in the literature (cf. Kurantowicz, 2007).

The second respondent (interview 18) defined herself as an activist and feminist[5]. From the point of view of identity formation, participation in a Gender Studies students' group was important for this interviewee. She met girls with feminist views there. They read feminist text together, discussed, and organised Manifa unofficially: 'I found myself in it, well, then I also started to participate in the organisation' (interview 18).

Protesting was a 'natural consequence' of working in a group, this person told me. The woman emphasised community 'nature' of her identity as rebel. The interesting thing is that she also gave an example of negative reference groups. The identity-building in opposition to the hostile groups during the protests and other actions was evident. Protesting in this context is 'such a safe space... it becomes a space for all participants *inside*, because we see that there are some hostile people or groups *outside*' (interview 18). Moreover, protesting in public spaces is an opportunity to 'show that we exist'. The experience of rebellion becomes a 'visibility policy' (Szkudlarek, 2009).

The third interviewee (interview 12) pointed out that when he is in a protest, he feels important. He participates because he wants to help others and engage himself for others. The same person emphasised the need to be coherent in everyday life and during socio-political struggles. He is aware of his roots in the culture of consumption and capitalism. For him, protesting is a critical practice (Usher, 2009) which requires awareness of his socio-cultural entanglements. Protesting is his way of being 'critical' in the world. As a rebel, this respondent demands from himself to be aware of the pitfalls of living under capitalism.

The fourth respondent (interview 2) is an example of a person concerned about unjust and corrupt state (Mexico). It is significant for her to 'rush into the struggle for the good, which is to save the state'. She defines herself as a person from 'the people' (*el pueblo*) who wants to have an influence on immoral politicians—the political context of this person's narrative testifies to genuine care for the state and fellow citizens.

The same person is disappointed with the dogmatism of her former fellow rebels. She accuses them of rigidity of thinking and lack of dialogue which leads to disaster:

> I had my friends with whom I went to demonstrate, and so on. And now they are very (…) dogmatic. (…) Now everything is Marx, Marx is right, and only Marx will save us. And they became like in religious fanaticism, they believe that only they are right. If a person wants to protest in a different way, they accuse him of being stupid (…) so I do not like going out with them anymore or engaging in discussion with them (…).

This critical appraisal of one's own positive reference group shows power of reflection and learning of this person. This reflection on rebel fellows becomes meaningful, in so that it allows the woman to go beyond (to free oneself from) the strong social mechanisms of the identification with a group. This 'old' positive group of protesters has become a negative reference group for the respondent.

The fifth interviewee (interview 10) believed that rebellion in the form of participation in activism 'gives him life'. A specific place could have played an important role in this identity-building process. According to this person it is impossible to 'gain a foothold' in a given place, if we have no influence on this place. The Catalan, involved in the life of Barcelona, emphasised the importance of other people and relationships for identity-building in a given place:

> they love you… there are interpersonal relations… for me it is already participation. I also do not want to idealise this word in a political sense. Well, let it be people who are in some place, integrating and getting to know each other. I refer to 'getting to know' about making friends, mutual help. This is participation for me. (interview 10)

In the presented threads concerning identity and identity-building several regularities were found. The rebels' identities appeared in interesting dimensions: individual versus social and consciousness versus action. The individual (personal) dimension in articulated by speaking in the first person. 'I am feminist', one of the interviewees declared. While the social (collective) dimension means speaking in plural, as a group, collective,

community of rebels. 'We are the same leftist sauce', another person (interviewee 4) joked. Rebels identify with a group, a community. At the same time, they distance themselves from others (political opponents, hostile groups, and even the people who were their friends in the past). It shows the importance of relational (interactive) aspect of identity-building. The consciousness aspect relates to the reflection undertaken by the persons and building a story about participation in rebellions. The action dimension refers to concrete activities, actions taken by rebels in the private-public sphere—participation in street protests, debating in collectives, organisation of rebellious events, and others.

This is clear that the political context of participation was also important in identity-building of rebels interviewed. The Mexican presidential election and the 'rebellious' events around it, the violence of the police in Spain, corruption, failure to respect minority rights, and rebels' reaction on that. It occurred to me that the relationship between individuals and the world they live in is important from the point of view of action, learning and identity-building of rebels. According to Steinklammer (2012) individuals are shaped by their experiences with the surrounding world and their acquired knowledge about this world. The social and political world:

> constitutes a reference point for our actions, a socially and culturally pre-structured framework we adopt by participating in it and by interacting with others and to which we attribute meaning (Steinklammer, 2012, p. 28).

What is more, the participation in the social and political world becomes:

> the basis for the production of meaning for the structuring of our actions. In not only shapes how we appropriate the world, how we understand, attribute meaning to and act within it, but also how we see ourselves, our taste, our relationships to our own bodies and how we interpret our own actions (…) (Steinklammer, 2012, p. 28).

Identity is therefore a dynamic and processual phenomenon as Malewski (2006) argues. It is in a constant process of change under the influence of critical reflection, learning and rebellious actions.

What seems valuable to me in the analysis of these rebels' narratives is that participation in rebellions and learning derived from this experience make people distance themselves from external determinations of the social and political order, and from discourses on power, etc. Subjective agency emerging from the rebels' participation and learning shows the power of constructing both a new context as well as their own biographies. In this sense, the appreciation of these individual learning experiences seems to be inspiring from the point of view of emancipation, empowerment and socio-political change and helps us to understand rebelling people's experience better.

Conclusions

This paper focused on the learning potential of participation in rebellions through an exploration of the account of some Polish, Catalan and Mexican rebels. The concept of learning experiences in the context of postmodernity proposed by Usher (2009) was the starting point for the analysis of rebels' actions and learning. Participation in rebellions was treated as a specific learning experience, critical practices, shared with other people very often. The findings presented in this paper offer some contribution to research on individual (biographical) learning processes in a broader social and political context. The use of the biographical perspective was of great importance in this study. This allows us to examine the problem from the point of view of individual experiences of people. In a

sense it underlines the value of individual experiences of each rebel. Participation in rebellions was seen here not only as a socio-political activity, but also educational (learning) experience showing the relationship between action, learning and social actor's identity-building. It can be said that learning takes / took place through rebel's social and political mobilisations. They learnt what the world and people are like, what does cooperation look like and what problems does it involve, how to build relationships and how to act (this thread was present especially in organisers' stories).

Rebels' learning was a part of their everyday life (everyday struggles as one of the interviewees put it), in practical actions and social interactions with other engaged people and groups. They seem to have learnt who they are and how to be rebels. I argue that this informal learning is part of broader citizens' culture, beyond the biographies studied. The phenomenon of participation in rebellions opens new spaces for thinking about lifelong learning: the potential for emancipation, critical reflection and effecting changes in existing conditions which shape human biographies. These conclusions are important from the point of view of learning democracy, causative power of engaged people and active re-construction of the world by social actors. I think it gives hope in a divided and conflicted world dominated by dangerous discourses, practices and consequences of them.

Notes

[1] The interesting topic on resistance to power in the context of rebellion was described by scholars like Gramsci (1971), Szkudlarek (2009), Choudry (2012), Steinklammer (2012) and others.
[2] The social dimension of learning experiences has been analysed by researchers like Lave & Wenger (1991), Illeris (2004) Kurantowicz (2012), Jurgiel-Aleksander (2013) Evans, Kurantowicz & Lucio-Villegas (2016).
[3] Selected biographies are numbered in accordance with the order of the conversations conducted during my study.
[4] It is the name for the annual demonstrations organised on the occasion of Women's Day.
[5] I write more about feminist identity-formation in another publication (Szczygieł, 2019).

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Political posters, the Soviet Enlightenment and the construction of a learning society, 1917-1928

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Abstract

This paper explores the construction of a Soviet learning society represented in Soviet political posters during the first decade after the 1917 Socialist Revolution. The theoretical framework is based on studies of learning societies, lifelong education and learning, Soviet education, and the theory of multiple modernities. We employed a post-structuralist discourse analysis that allowed us to explore verbal and non-verbal poster elements to identify key domains in the construction of the Soviet learning society. Our study identified six main discursive visual and textual messages in political posters as educational devices in the development of the Socialist learning society. Findings show that learning was embedded in broader social, political, economic and cultural practices and took multiple forms. Political posters were motivators for learning, learning devices, means to communicate the Soviet party-state agenda, and part of the social-political and cultural curriculum of the learning society to come. Our study makes a contribution to scholarship on learning societies as these are constructed in socialist as well as capitalist societies.

Keywords: Adult learning and education, new Soviet Enlightenment, political posters, Soviet learning society

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Introduction

Despite numerous studies in the field of learning/ educative/ knowledge societies, there is little knowledge about the practices of developing a learning society in the Soviet Union, which in fact began to develop such a society after the October Socialist Revolution of 1917. The Soviet period from 1917 to 1928 (1930) is recognised as the Cultural Revolution in the state and 'romanticism and experimentalism' in education (Brickman & Zepper, 1992, p. 30), and can be seen as one of the most exciting pages in the history of European adult education. In a surprisingly short period, the Soviet Union managed to construct a new socio-economic and political space that had never been put into practice before and which fostered a new type of egalitarian society. The building of a new socialistic reality required from all Soviet citizens a new way of thinking that could only be achieved by mobilising mass education and learning by both children and adults in formal and informal settings.

A vast body of literature has looked into the Soviet formal education of children, adult literacy education, films, visual art, book and newspaper publishing, and the formal education of adults (e.g., Eklof, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 1970, 1979; Kenez, 1985). However, no research has been done on how the Soviet state constructed a Soviet learning society during the early years of the Soviet Revolution and the formation, defence, and consideration of the new socialist state in first decade, 1917-1928. This was still a time of relative pluralism for the Bolshevik party-state when it was searching for new forms of adult education for the Soviet people. It was a transition period from the past into the future, involving many critical historical events: the October (Bolshevik) Revolution (1917), the Civil War and defense of the Bolshevik state (1918-20), state capitalism under Lenin and the New Economic Plan (1921-1928), and the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (1922). These were all before the advent of a more centralised, rigid party-state under Stalin, and the first Five-Year Plan (1928) regulating, systematising, and accelerating collectivisation and industrialisation.

Several types of Soviet 1917-1920s era posters have been studied to date, but none focus on posters for adult education. Oushakine (2016), for example, examines how the ideas of Communism were represented in children's books and posters; Dobrenko (2009) looks at how 'the enemy' as 'Other' was constructed in Bolshevik political posters; Williams (2012) analyses health posters designed to mobilise the masses against chronic alcoholism; Starks (2017) examines how Soviet health authorities used posters to promote health care innovations and 'sanitary enlightenment' to the public; still other researchers have studied the broad historical sweep of posters as public education in the Soviet Union (Bonnell, 1999; White, 1988). This paper explores the role of posters related to adult learning or education during the establishment of a Soviet educative state during the first decade following the October Revolution. In the sections which follow, we provide a theoretical framework, study methodology, an analysis of key posters (findings), a discussion which includes the development of a conceptual model, and a conclusion.

Theoretical framework

Our research is grounded in four theoretical and research traditions: (a) theories, policies and practices related to lifelong learning and learning societies; (b) the theory of multiple modernities, which argues that learning societies can be constructed in socialist as well as capitalist societies; (c) the historical context and theories of education in the Soviet

Union 1917-1920s; and (d) theory related to how political posters communicate and educate in the public sphere (Ginsberg, 2013; Roselle, 2017).

Learning societies

Our study is informed by broad scholarship on the theories, policies and practices of learning societies/ educative societies/ knowledge societies and states (cf. Coffield, 2000; Jarvis, 2007; Schugurensky, 2007). These concepts emerged in the 1940s to reflect the state's role (mainly in liberal Western democracies) in promoting systems of nonformal adult education and self-directed, informal and lifelong learning to address the growing incapability of formal education systems to meet the demands made upon them, and in envisioning learning societies as alternative futures. Notably, we acknowledge critiques of the concept of learning societies as utopian and normative, as assuming a totalising, common humanity across difference, having multiple definitions and lacking clear criteria in its application (English & Mayo, 2021; Schugurensky, 2007). Further, in our study, we recognise (but do not engage) contemporary debates about the 'knowledge society' as this concept relates to the knowledge economy, learning societies and lifelong learning (Livingstone & Guile, 2012; Schugurensky, 2007). That is, we do not apply prevailing theoretical concepts of learning societies nor knowledge societies to our data, but instead derive a particularistic historical understanding of this concept as it was developed in Russian society in the 1920s. Moreover, although we appreciate the characterisation of the Soviet public sphere of the 1917-1920s as a 'proletarian public sphere' with 'revolutionary' public spaces (Hake, Glastra, & Schedler, 2004), in this paper, we do not take this concept as central to our analysis of the educative role of Soviet posters in constructing learning society (but do see it as a valuable frame for future research on the topic). Finally, although we do not directly engage debates about adult learning in the public sphere; mainly as related to Habermas's (1962/1991) definition of the public sphere as a 'society engaged in critical public debate' (p.52), we implicitly take informal learning and nonformal education as occurring in a revolutionary and democratic public sphere, albeit shaped by the Soviet state, not by a Western liberal democratic state.

We use the terms 'learning society', 'knowledge society' and 'educative state' to characterise an historical, revolutionary Soviet state and society which put immense importance on lifelong, lifewide learning and adult education. This was a state which aimed to construct an entirely new society from the old Russian society; that is, it was a revolutionary 'educative state' furthering a utopian, egalitarian, lifewide and lifelong learning society.

Multiple modernities

We employ the theory of multiple modernities (cf. Arnason, 2010; Eisenstadt, 2000) which allows us to argue that a learning society might be constructed not only within a capitalist economy but also in socialist settings, in which the social and economic, individual, and collective, are constructed as a unity. Based on studies of modernising societies, this theory questions the very definition and characteristics of a modern society and provides evidence that a homogenising and hegemonic cultural-political program of social development does not exist. Thus, our study, in many respects, aims to challenge the notion of both capitalist societies and their 'learning societies' as totalising concepts.

Instead, as noted above, we provide a particularistic, historical understanding of Soviet Russian from 1917 to the early 1920s.

Historical context

On the eve of the October Socialist Revolution-1917, the multinational, multilingual, and multireligious Russian Empire had a dominant Russian culture and Russian Orthodox Church (Harcave, 1970). Russia was an agrarian country with a developing segment of industrial production and a population of more than 125 million people (Waldron, 1997). Russian society was intensely patriarchal, with male husbands having almost unlimited power over women codified in law (Waldron, 1997, p. 69-70). The first and only census that was carried out in the Russian Empire in 1897 indicated that landed and landless peasants made up more than four-fifths of the population at 82%, upper classes (royalty, nobility, higher clergy) comprised 12.5%, working class (factory workers, artisans, soldiers, sailors), 4%, and middle class (merchants, bureaucrats, professionals), 1.5% (M. Lynch n.d., cited in Bashqawi, 2019). Urban residents increased from 11% in 1897 to 17% in 1913 (Mironov, 2010).

The two social classes that offered their vision of a new world and led its construction in 1917 were primarily working class and middle-class professionals who represented less than 10% of the population. The October Revolution of 1917 raised a question that had never been asked in the history of the humanity before: What does it mean to be a person of labour – a proletariat, labourer (*truzhenik*), worker – and to attempt to construct an egalitarian state of labourers, free of capitalism and fully managed by people of labour?

Among the first steps of the newly established state was increasing literacy levels among the population from 9 to 49 years old. In 1897, Russian literacy rates were only 29% among men and 13% among women (Kahan, 1989, p. 244). To address low literacy, in December 1917, the *Narkompros* (People's Commissariat for Education) established an Out-of-School Department, one of the main tasks of which was the elimination of illiteracy in the country. On December 26, 1919, the decree *On Liquidation of Illiteracy among the Population of RSFSR: Either Teach or Learn!* was promulgated. The first schools for adult literacy and general education were created, and by 1928, there were 1,400 such schools (Central Statistical Office, 1956, p. 222-223). During the same period, the number of technical colleges (*technicums*) increased from 295 to 1,037 and higher education institutions from 91 to 142 (Central Statistical Office, 1956, p. 227). Cultural enlightenment activities under the banner of the Out-of-School Department and the *Proletkult* (an organisation aimed at developing a new proletarian culture) operated widely in villages, and urban enterprises and workers' clubs promoted proletarian theatre, cinema, performative and visual arts, literature, and poetry (Fitzpatrick, 1970).

Educative value of Soviet political posters

Political posters are a type of communication and education (Roselle, 2017) which 'serve as vehicles of persuasion, instruction, damnation and social discourse in every communist nation' (Ginsberg, 2013, p. vii); as 'weapon(s) of mass indoctrination, a means of organising collective psychology' (Polonsky, 1925, p. 14). Since the early 1920s, political posters have often been seen as propaganda and have a negative connotation in the West (Ginsberg, 2013). However, in societies that face a radical change in the social-political order, propaganda is a crucial part of education and political life; it motivates, supports,

or reproves, reprograms attitudes and behaviour, and establishes social connections with the state or social class (Ginsberg, 2013). As Kenez (1985) argues, the Bolsheviks saw all propaganda, including books, films, and posters, as a part of education; as *politprosvetrabota* or political education work necessary to the formation of a new Soviet society.

From the start of the Soviet state in 1917, mass-produced posters played a vital role in the establishment of the new socio-economic, political, cultural order and the construction of a Soviet ideological discourse. They were cheap and quick to produce, expressive, concise, and straight-forward. Posters also continued the traditional design elements of Russian Orthodox religious icons commonly used in religious practice, thus allowing Russians a 'familiarity with a certain type of imagery and an assumption of its sacredness' (Bonnell, 1999, p. 4). Writing in the 1920s, Polonsky (1925), one of the first scholars studying Russian revolutionary posters, described a Soviet poster as follows (pp. 7-8):

> ... This is a poster. It screams from the fence, from the wall, from the window. It leaps brazenly into a passer-by's pupils. Whether the passer-by wants it or not, whether they are busy or not, whether they hurry or kill time – the poster draws attention to itself. With what? First of all, with the fire of coloured spots, a kind of flashy combination of colours. This feature defines the poster. Its task is to stand out of the series, to break forward from the mass of sheets, playbills, and ads, that plaster fences and walls. The poster must present at once what it wants, without extra explanation, without thinking. It is all in this blow – terse, yet witty, unadorned but impressive. Its text is as short as a scream.... All the features that the old poster lacked – the ideological vibrant, live connection with public interests, the inner significance that is able to excite the viewer – are the characteristics of the revolutionary poster... (It) focuses on the essential – it speaks about life and death, about struggle and victory, about violence and freedom, about bread and humanity, about the present and the future – about topics of broad, global significance.

The function of the posters was thus to catch the attention of passers-by, to reflect essential needs that matter here and now, to communicate a clear message from its first glimpse based on the simplicity of text and graphics. In a country with low literacy rates, posters were one way to communicate new ideology to those who could not read (Bonnell, 1999), and to offer them a new conceptual language – the language of revolution and drastic change.

Another important function of Soviet posters was to establish social and cultural normativity: to provide clear norms of behaviour, social values, and political beliefs to the population (Dosekin, 2015). This would then lead to the creation of a unified Soviet identity; of a Soviet person belonging to the working class, following Soviet life principles and patterns of behaviour and socialist morality (Danilova & Nurieva, 2015). The posters created images of model citizens for generations of Soviet people and allow us to consider posters as a representation of everyday norms that were shared by the vast majority of Soviet citizens in the construction of the learning society.

Methodology

Although the literature on Soviet political posters is vast, none is explicitly dedicated to posters and the construction of the Soviet educative state. We employ Foucauldian post-structuralist discourse analysis (Nicoll, 2006; Rose, 2016) to investigate the key themes that posters related to learning or education 1917-1928 reveal in their relations to the

historical context, and the political and social discourses of the time. Foucault's (1980) theory on discursive power construction through 'regimes of truth' significantly informed our study and provided a framework for analysing the selected posters. We consider each poster as a semiotic event comprising verbal and non-verbal texts (objects), constructing discourses, and engaging in them. In contrast to the structuralist view of discourse as a 'representation of reality' (Anderson & Holloway, 2018, p. 200), we view discourse as 'a set of social practices …that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1977, p. 49), ways of constructing reality(-ies), knowledge production through language and practices (Foucault, 1978), socially produced and accepted 'true' forms of knowledge (Salter, 2014), meaning, and culture (Stevick, 2010); and as (an implicit) worldview (Stevick, 2010; Stewart, 2012). Following Foucault (1977, 1980), we see discourse as powerful in constituting reality, (re)creating the world, constructing, justifying, and shaping meaning and ways of thinking and the engagement of social actors. This study implies the deconstruction of the examined social practices constructed via posters to identify learning-related elements: knowledge, actors, objects, and interrelations among them. As such, we identified the 'regimes of truth' channelling the construction of a new world, the key actors and subjects allowed, how these are constructed via posters; that is, which teaching, learning and knowledge is allowed for public dissemination as 'truth' by the Soviet state.

As noted above, we roughly follow Brickman & Zepper's (1992) periodisation of 1917-1930 as the period of 'Romanticism and experimentalism' in education. However, we have elected to end our analysis in 1928, before Stalin fully took over power in the USSR and before the first Five-Year Plan (1928) was instituted as a mechanism to systematically regulate collective efforts at constructing the new socialist state. The exact number of posters published in 1917-1928 is unknown. From spring 2017 to autumn 2020, Author 1 ran a series of queries in the Google.ru and Yandex.ru search engines resulting in numerous single postings of posters and their web collections located on both Russian and English segments of the Internet, e.g., *The Soviet poster* (https://tramvaiiskusstv. ru/plakat/o-kollektsii.html), *The collection of Sergo Grigoryan* (http://redavantgarde.com/), individual small collections on Pinterest and Etsy, as well as the Russian Posters Collection, 1919-1989, by Duke University (https://repository.duke.edu/dc/russianposters), to name a few. Queries were also run using text from the selected posters in Google.ru and Yandex.ru to find posters with similar themes. Our search resulted in over 150 adult education posters from 1917-1973, including 54 posters produced between 1919 and 1928.

Posters were selected based on the presence of non-verbal and/or verbal element(s) related to learning, education, enlightenment, schooling, knowledge, and books. In most cases, these elements were employed as institution-building devices related to education, book reading and adult learning. In our analysis, we selected 26 posters which refer to six general themes (Figure 1): The Enlightenment brought by the Revolution and its outcomes (4 posters), fighting illiteracy (reading) (2), reading as a social practice and motivation for reading (8), learning at any age (1), women liberated by literacy (8), and increasing cultural level (3). The posters also contain references to many other topics embedded in these larger discourses, including religion, science, new morality, socialist democracy, soviets (councils), and the army, to name a few.

1. Glan-Globus, V. (n.d.). *A woman-worker, be in the forefront of the builders of socialism*. http://redavantgarde.com/
2. Isnar N.S. (1920). *Woman, your literacy is the guarantee of your emancipation*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
3. Ivanov, S. (1920). *A book is nothing but a man speaking in public*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
4. Kogout, N. (1921). *From darkness to light. From battle to book. From grief to happiness*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
5. Kruglikova E. (1923). *Woman! Learn to read and write! 'Oh, mother! If you were literate – you would have helped me!'* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
6. Lavinskyi, (1927). *A soldier of the Red Army, a book is your friend*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
7. Lekht, F. (1921). *The emancipation of women workers is a duty of the women workers themselves.* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
8. Makarychev, I., Raev, S. (1925). *Every cook must learn to govern the state.* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
9. Mogilevskyi, A. (1925). *If books are not read, the letters soon forget*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
10. Moor, D. (1919). *Royal regiments and the Red Army*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
11. Not a single illiterate by the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. (n.d.). *All illiterates [go to] the schools of illiteracy elimination. All literate [join] the society "Down with illiteracy."* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
12. Organize reading houses (n.d.). Retrieved from Yandex.ru
13. Peasant woman be ready to leave the old life for the new one (n.d.). Retrieved from Yandex.ru
14. Pomanskyi, N. (1928). *Instead of scolding and beating children, it is better to buy them a book.* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
15. Radakov, A. (1920). *An illiterate is a blind man. Failures and misfortunes await him everywhere*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
16. Radakov, A. (1920). *Knowledge will break the chains of slavery*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
17. Simakov, I.V. (1921). *Long live the sun and may the darkness disappear*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
18. Unknown artist (n.d.). *The illiterate man stands outside of politics. First, he must be taught the alphabet*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
19. Unknown artist. (1920a). *It is never too late to learn. School is open for everyone now. Welcome!* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
20. Unknown artist. (1920b). *The Day of Soviet propaganda. Knowledge – to all!* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
21. Unknown artist. (1920c). *What has the October Revolution given to a female worker and a peasant woman?* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
22. Unknown artist. (1923). *By the tenth anniversary of the proletarian revolution, the worker and the peasant must master a book and a newspaper as a hammer and sickle*. Krasnaya Novy publishing House. Retrieved from Yandex.ru
23. Unknown artist. (1925). *Do you support the liquidation of illiteracy? Everyone into the society "Down with illiteracy". Lenin's covenants: No illiterate by the 10th anniversary of revolution."* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
24. Unknown artist. (1927). *Comrade! After a hard day, go to the club, where you will get rest, knowledge and entertainment.* Retrieved from Yandex.ru
25. Valerianov, N. (1925). *Female workers and peasants, all to the elections*. Retrieved from https://library.duke.edu
26. Zhelenskyi A. (1920). *To possess more, one needs to produce more. To produce more, one needs to know more*. Retrieved from Yandex.ru

Figure 1. Posters Analysed for the Study (cited in findings by author, date)

Since posters grab, fix, expose a specific social-political-cultural-economic historical moment (Ginsberg, 2013), we understand them as alternative visual 'texts' to the traditional analysis of written documents common in scholarly histories of the Soviet educative state. In the next section we present our findings, using a representative selection of 7 of the 26 posters in our analysis. All Russian poster texts were translated into English by Author 1. We understand, as a limitation of our study, that we are analysing posters as discursive texts widely promulgated ('supplied,' as it were) to the Soviet public at the time, and do not in fact know how the educational messages of posters were taken up, understood, or debated by the public as mass adult education. Instead, we focus on analysing the posters as a both a medium of Soviet mass education, and a 'curriculum' for the construction of the early Soviet learning state.

Findings

Our findings illustrate six main discursive visual and textual messages of political posters as educational devices in the construction of the Socialist learning state. We present posters below only from the early years of political ferment shortly after the October Revolution (1917), mostly during the Civil War (1918-1920), and prefacing state capitalism under the New Economic Plan (1921-1928). These early years were a time of creative, pluralistic revolutionary fervour and defence of the new revolutionary state against the Tsarist old guard trying to overthrow it. Posters from these early years capture the euphoric birth of the new Bolshevik socialist state under Lenin, its vision for the future of humanity, and the role of adult learning and education with it. We would also argue that the themes of these early posters carry through Soviet state political posters and other forms of education (e.g., literacy campaigns) up through and after 1928. However, under Stalin, the Bolshevik revolution and adult education begin to be centralised, institutionalised, and regulated by a less pluralistic state. Additional educational themes then appeared in posters promoting the rapid collectivisation of agriculture and industrialisation under a more rigid command-state economy.

Findings below present posters which first reflect back on the 'old world' of Tsarist Russia as a counterpoint to posters e*nvisioning a new socialist world. These two sets of posters portray the Bolshevik struggle against a Tsarist past* of oppression, slavery, imperialism, exploitation, and patriarchy, and imagine a new utopian Socialist worker's learning society for the future. In the next sets of posters, we then learn how such a new world of a **Soviet learning society** is to be constructed, the educative, social spaces where this learning occurs, who will construct and disseminate what knowledge, and who will educate others about this new knowledge in and of the Soviet learning society. Additional posters analysed but not pictured in Figures 2-6 below are cited using the author and dates from 1919-1928 for poster sources and listed in the references. More recent citation dates in the section below are to academic references.

Reflection on the old world

Part of the learning process in Bolshevik society was a reflection on the Tsarist past. The 'Old World' is presented on a number of posters whose main function is to show what societal elements get rejected and need reconstruction.

Political powers of the Empire. At the top of the left-hand poster (Figure 2), the Old World appears as the place where the tsar and tsarina, circled by their (all male) police forces, priests, generals, bankers, and Rasputin (a mystic and healer for Prince Alexei, Nicholas II's son). A priest shouts and raises his hands to God; a foolish general dances and joyfully shouts out orders. The rest of the circle idly regard the backs of exhausted, disheartened and poorly shod peasant soldiers fresh from the front, some barefoot or wearing bast shoes (traditional peasant *footwear)*. The tsar's rule is pictured as a time of death represented by the skull orb in the tsar's hands, gallows, and a dead soldier at the front of the poster. The poster identifies the powers that support and back up the unjust tsarist's rule: religion in the priest exalting in blessing and prayer, other lesser priests obsequiously regarding the reigning couple from the left. Another power (lined up to the right of the tsar) is the policing forces, presumably the Black Hundreds (monarchist, ultra-nationalists reactionaries), with whips and daggers in their hands. An overweight banker representing the capitalist forces of the Empire, is sitting at the foot of the tsarist throne lounging on sacks of money and smoking a cigar. To strengthen the message, the groups on the top are labelled with the following words: parasitism, hypocrisy, mockery, slavery,

imperialism, violence, and exploitation. In the second picture, the throne and its surrounding sycophants are removed, and the viewer can clearly see what the tsarist regime was blocking common people from – in the background, there are multiple-storey buildings with the titles *Arts, Freedom, Free from Exploitation Labour, Bread*, and *Science*.

Text on the poster: To the left: What you were fighting for before (parasitism, hypocrisy, mockery, slavery, imperialism, violence, exploitation); to the right: What you're fighting for now (art, freedom, free labor, bread, science)

Figure 2. Royal Regiments and the Red Army. (Moor, 1919).

The power of religion represented in Figure 2 above, is also captured in other posters. One, for example, contains pictures of two greedy priests – one holding a book with the text 'Come to me every burdened labourer, and I will avoid you,' and another with a child in a baptismal font signed 'I am baptising the servant of God to replenish my wallet.' Religion is presented as an enterprise; religiousness is interpreted as the combination of ignorance of the common people and manipulations of the clergy. Priests are equated to traditional healers who also keep common people from knowledge and exploit their ignorance. Another poster pictures a sorceress in the Old World who ignorantly treats illnesses with anti-scientific techniques (Peasant woman be ready...,' n/d). Both religion and healing are seen as means of exploitation, and therefore, 'wrong' sources of knowledge.

Family life. A further poster depicts the positioning of a woman in a family hierarchy with her kitchen slavery as the sign of the old life that one needs to overcome. Another poster quotes a tsarist law legalising traditional patriarchy and the subordination of women. Other posters contain pictures of male violence against wives and children, heavy female household duties, non-stop childbearing, with a house seen as a prison for women ('Peasant woman be ready...,' n/d; Arshinov, 1923)

The Old World is pictured as a place of darkness, struggle, and grief; the New World as an enlightened and liberated. 'Off the old life and the chains!' – shout posters proposing anti-war, -religion, -patriarchy, -exploitation, -capitalism, -violence, -oppression; a new version of the Soviet Enlightenment embraces all elements of life: family relations, household work, children upbringing, employment, and leisure (Kogout, 1921; Simakov, 1921).

Envisioning the new world

Although 79% of the Russian population on the eve of the 1917 Revolution lived in rural areas (Mironov, 2010), the posters present the New World as an industrial city with working factories, bridges, power lines, multiple-storey buildings, and palaces with names like: *Free from Exploitation Labour, Science, Art* (Kogout, 1921, Moor, 1919), *Bread* and *Freedom* (Moor, 1919). Science, Art and Labour appear as the main pillars of the new society, guaranteed to support the building of socialism. Posters picture the New World wholly owned and governed by people of physical labour (*truzhenik*), in which both men and women have equal rights to all resources and governing (Unknown artist, 1920c; Leht, 1921). The state is run by peasants' and workers' deputies (Unknown artist, 1920c), all decisions are openly made by gathering the majority of votes ('Peasant woman be ready...,' n/d), where Lenin proclaims 'every female cook' has learned 'how to govern the state' (Makarychev & Raev, 1925).

A common symbol of new life in the New World used in the posters is the shining sun (Figure 3). Contrasting with the darkness, the sun represents the idea of a clear vision, the ability to see and understand, to be conscious. An endless crowd of common people in peasant clothing – the men with distinctive peasant haircuts and beards, women with braids, coloured smocks, and babushka head scarves – is standing together on a wide road facing the sunrise with their eyes on the opened books and newspapers in their hands. The scene resembles a church service; however, instead of being orchestrated by lines from the scripture or other sacred text as at mass and prayer, people are reading newspapers and various books individually, yet are all together in the same space and time. The poster presents adult learning as a collective process leading to a new life, with an individual contribution, but done collectively, with collective goals and outcomes.

Figure 3. Long Live the Sun! May the Darkness Disappear! (Simakov, 1921).

The image of the sun is also a reference to the ideas of the 17-century enlightenment. The term enlightenment (*prosveschenie* in Russian) embraces a number of meanings. It is not only 'a European intellectual movement of the late 17th and 18th centuries emphasising reason and individualism rather than tradition' and 'the action of enlightening or the state of being enlightened' ('Enlightenment,' 2020), but also knowledge (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 1997) and 'the dissemination of knowledge, education, and culture' (The Great Academic Dictionary of the Russian Language, n/d, p. 1343), as well as the system of education in general (e.g. the ministry of education was titled the 'Ministry of Enlightenment'). The representation of the rising or shining sun in some of the posters thus indicates the role of education and learning in constructing a new society and state full of the 'light' of new knowledge.

In Figure 4 below, a blind man on the left-hand poster represents peasants who had no relevant access to education but were also not motivated to learn. Without education, they had no control over their lives and were thus guided by others. In particular, as portrayed in another poster, peasants were guided by the Russian Orthodox Church and capitalists of all sorts (The Illiterate Man..., n.d.). The same poster cites Lenin's dictum on the importance of education to the Revolution: 'The illiterate man stands outside of politics. First, he must be taught the alphabet' (Unknown artist, n.d.).

The poster on the right of Figure 4 is an idealised version of a Reading House in the New World (large top panel), replacing a decadent rural past of wild drinking and socialising in pubs (bottom panel). In the mid 1920s, to unite various actors, means, and funds in organising *vospitanie* (education), *prosveschenie* (enlightenment) and *obuchenie* (teaching/learning) of peasants in their villages, the Reading House *(izba-chital'nya*) was created, and pronounced the political-enlightenment centre of rural adult learning and education activities (Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party, 1923/1968). Reading Houses were expected to provide inquiry office services, *obuchenie* for illiterate people, short-term vocational courses, reading circles, and newspaper readings. Soviet rural intelligentsia such as schoolteachers, agronomists and land surveyors, Party and *komsomol* (Soviet Youth Organisation) members, rural soviets, *zhenotdels* (women's departments at the Secretariat of the Central Committee and local party committees) and

Trade Unions were expected to contribute to political-enlightenment activities at the Reading Houses. Despite many similarities with urban workers' clubs, reading houses were seen as centres of political *prosveschenie* and were warned off from turning into rural social or drinking clubs of the Old World, as pictured in the bottom poster panel.

Figure 4. *An Illiterate is a Blind Man: Failures and Misfortunes Await him Everywhere* (left) (Radakov, 1920). *Organise Reading Houses* (right) (unknown artist, n.d.)

Learning how to construct the new world

*Adult learners **as** critical to the creation of Socialist modernity.* In the centre of the posters above are the Builders of socialism: foot soldiers, sailors, men and women peasants and workers representing the common people. In the Old World, they were deprived of a decent education, fair labour conditions, access to arts, and governance. By contrast, New World learners include people of all backgrounds: multiple posters proclaim that all human beings have the capacity to learn, regardless of age, gender, social status, or cultural background. One of the posters, for example, states, 'It is never too late to learn. School is open for everyone now. Welcome!' (Unknown artist, 1920a). In this same vein, the two posters below celebrate heroic women adult learners as workers and peasants (Figure 5).

What has the October Revolution given to a female worker and a peasant woman? Unknown artist, 1920

The names of the buildings:
- House of mother and child
- Council of workers' and peasants' deputies
- Kindergarten
- School for adults
- Library
- Canteen
- Female worker's clubhouse

The sign under the woman's feet:
Land to the peasants, factory to the workers

Peasant woman, be ready to leave the old life to the new one. Unknown artist, n.d.

The old life: I am baptising the servant of God Ivan to replenish my pocket. The Healer's Holy water will destroy disease and evil eye. Come to me, you burdened labourers, and I will circumvent you. The wife is obliged to obey her husband as the head of the family, to love, respect and obey him without limit, to give him every possible favour and affection as the owner of the house (from the Law of the Russian Empire). A woman's way is from the stove to the doorstep. Beat your wife for lunch and beat her again for dinner. If you don't beat your wife, she won't love you. Punish children in their youth; they will comfort you in your old age.

The new life: FOLLOW ILYICH'S COVENANTS! Everything has gone a new way – sewing activities are taken together. And now – Don't miss it – learn, write, and read. Peasant women! To avoid children dying away or withering at home, build a nursery for the children! Keep up with the others, develop cooperation!
"Regarding laws that subjugate women, there is no stone left unturned in the Soviet Republic. The Soviet government was the first to give women full rights." (Lenin)

Figure 5. Posters Representing New Conditions of Life for Women Workers(left) and Women Peasants (right). (Unknown artists, 1920; n.d.)

In addition to foundational adult literacy associated with reading and writing skills, the new society demanded new types of life skills related to the construction of new norms and practices in the new Soviet learning society. Analysis of posters revealed several types of new socialist life skills: literacy for women's liberation, socio-political literacy, socio-economic literacy, and cultural literacy.

Literacy for women's liberation. The newly established Soviet state recognised women as having political power and being a very significant labour force. Various posters showed women being encouraged to emancipate themselves, to join the ranks of the working people and engage in the governing of the new society through their participation in the work of the soviets and in labour collectives (Lekht, 1921; Arshinov, 1923; 'Peasant woman…,' n/d). The construction of new social practices with women's active participation required teaching women labourers new life norms and behavioural patterns. One of the posters, for example, made the appeal to women: 'Enhance your literacy and culture, advance your qualifications, and change the practices of your everyday life' (Glan-Globus, n/d). Although addressed to women, literacy for women's liberation was equally about educating men, who were introduced to new attitudes, values

and power dynamics between genders, and new standards in the family as a union of two equal persons.

Women's emancipatory literacy included new *family, parenting and 'home-running' literacy, replacing old oppressive gender roles, relations, and practices with* new collective, liberating ways of organising women's lives. With nurseries, cooperation and new rights, women would free themselves from the burdens of patriarchy, drudgery of housework and sole responsibility of managing children; they could now work together collectively, and with more free time, participate in socio-political activities and in adult learning and education (Figure 5, above). To this end, the new state established a number of institutions to support women's emancipation from household duties and significantly reduce the burden of childcare and home choices, including Houses of Mother and Child, nurseries and kindergartens, laundry services, and canteens. As one poster proclaimed, 'Building nurseries, kindergartens and children's homes, women delegates remove the chains from the working mother. By building public canteens and fighting the devastation, working women will eventually win the liberation from domestic bondage' (Lecht, 1921). Parenting literacy included knowledge on the importance of educating children; for example, one poster advised, 'instead of scolding and beating children, it is better to buy them a book' (Pomanskyi, 1928). Women's health literacy was also addressed in part as freeing of women from burdens of pregnancy, motherhood, and childcare. These types of liberatory women's literacy education could hardly be delivered through formal schooling, and were instead studied in women's meetings, women's competitions, women's clubs and in their day-to-day work in labour collectives.

Socio-political literacy. With the change of social and political roles in the state, political knowledge became essential for both women and men. Being 'politically literate,' as portrayed in one poster (Lavinskyi, 1927), meant to be aware of the political programme of the state and to consciously participate in political life. This involved class-related literacy that implied knowledge about deprived classes in a capitalist society, the claims of the working class(es), and their political agenda. Class-related knowledge had a significant practical value as class determined the major political powers that had state and party support. Belonging to the proletarian class also meant more possibilities in the newly established society. In other posters, a second avenue of political literacy involved knowledge about the system of power allocation in the new society, the work of soviets, and the process of delegating authority to represent working collectives (Lekht, 1921). This knowledge included how to construct a fair state with the power of the working-class and how to govern the workplace and the state. In perspective, every person, including 'every female cook [was expected] to learn to manage the state' (quoting Lenin, on the poster by Makarychev & Raev, 1925).

Socio-economic literacy. The new society implied new socio-economic patterns and new employment relations that were impacted by several factors. First of all, the new society was a learning society of full-time employed labourers; working was an essential responsibility. This advanced the fact of individual employment from a personal matter to a socio-economic matter and enhanced the weight of individual contribution in collective outcomes. Second, with proletariat ownership of lands, institutions and infrastructure, management of workplaces implied worker's governance. The skills related to the collective management of factories and *kolkhozes* (collective farms) constituted part of socio-economic and political literacy. Third, under a system of collective responsibility for production, professional knowledge was considered to be an important input to collective management. As one poster noted, 'To possess more, one needs to produce more. To produce more, one needs to know more' (Zhelenskyi, 1920).

Therefore, advancing in a profession was considered an individual contribution to the common cause of building socialism.

Cultural literacy. Increasing the cultural level of the population was at the heart of the socialist project. Basic academic literacy and reading was part of it. Other avenues of cultural literacy involved healthy lifestyle knowledge, and learning arts, music, and drama. The poster below, for example, invites workers to attend a workers' club to 'get a rest, knowledge and entertainment' (Figure 6). The central pictures present the club's activities: socialising over a meal, dancing, doing sports (figure of a man throwing a discus, and another man skiing), listening to the radio, playing musical instruments, reading, and playing checkers.

Figure 6. *Comrade! After a Hard Day, Go to the Club, Where You Will Get Rest, Knowledge and Entertainment*.

The posters also give an idea of how socio-political and socio-economic education was organised, picturing women's engagement in learning practices such as: reading at home (Isnar, 1920) and in a cooperative library (Arshinov, 1923), studying to read and write in a group of other women (Peasant woman, 1919-21), participating in a collective meeting and voting (Peasant woman, 1919-21; Lekht, 1921), participating in a demonstration (Lekht, 1921), and working as a delegate with the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet (Lekht, 1921).

Spaces of learning

The selected posters introduce four distinguishable groups of buildings/ learning spaces in the New World, associated with: 1) workspaces (factories, cooperative activities), 2) workers' clubhouses and rural reading houses, 3) 'traditional spaces' of knowledge production (academy), preservation and dissemination (libraries, schools, universities,

palaces/houses of art); and 4) collective governance, collegial decision-making, and solidarity demonstration (Councils of workers' and peasants' deputies, street marches). Each of these spaces was constructed to be public, collective and distinct from the privatised Old World institutions of learning. All became spaces of learning in the new Soviet learning society.

Under the Russian Empire before the October Revolution, the family, church, and schooling system were the traditional providers of learning and education. With the establishment of anti-religious and pro-scientific discourse in the new Soviet state, the church as an institution of 'alternative' knowledge production was discredited. Private spaces of learning, such as the family, were subjected to reconstruction with the compulsory employment of women, the majority of whom used to provide full-time childcare and housekeeping, as noted in posters about women's emancipation above. The development of all types of new literacies and life skills shifted to the workshops of manufacturing plants, to factories and other workplaces, into the Councils of workers' and peasants' deputies, workers' clubhouses, libraries, schools for adults, and on-the-street learning (e.g., solidarity demonstrations and marches, placard and poster-making).

Political gatherings at the workplaces and the work of village/district/city soviets. These became an essential school of new life and the space for developing socio-political and socio-economic literacies and advanced political knowledge. Besides professional activities, every labour collective organised regular meetings to discuss the socio-political agenda, express solidarity with the party-state decisions, assess the behaviour of its members, and elect delegates to represent the collective in soviets and councils at various levels. For example, one poster read, 'Women workers and peasants! Vote for the most dedicated to the working class and all workers individuals. At delegate meetings, they will shape you into resistant and conscious defenders. At delegate meetings, women workers and peasant women learn to understand and build their lives' (Lekht, 1921). Labour collectives became educative units of the Soviet learning society which provided up-to-date socio-political and socio-economic knowledge, and, through regular assessment of behaviour, allowed control over individual socio-political and socio-economic outcomes. At each level, socialist democracy of labour collectives, and local, regional and state soviets offered learning practices to develop socio-political and socio-economic knowledge and leadership skills.

Promoting and establishing reading practices. Many of the posters introduce reading as a new type of mass social practice which was highly promoted in the 1920s. The Book is one of the symbols frequently used in the posters. On every poster it holds some practical value; for example, early posters present reading as a valuable practice that leads to women's and class emancipation (Radakov, 1920). Books are the instrument to happiness (Kogout, 1921) and stimulate the growth of agricultural productivity (Zhelenskyi, 1920). Reading supports the defeat of enemies of the working class (Ivanov, 1920). Among the book titles on the posters are textbooks for professional use (geology, farming, economy, physics, mechanics, and aeronautics), books broadly associated with liberal arts and cultural heritage (history, philosophy, literature, art, belle-lettres) and personal interests (e.g., kitchen-gardens). Another means of organising reading practices was newspapers. Being the tribune of the party-state, newspapers were providers of the party-state knowledge. Self-guided learning through reading was promoted and supported by labour collectives and in institutions of education as well as by well-supplied libraries in every village and town.

On-the-street learning. Demonstrations and marches, broadly used in other types of states to fight with the system, became part of educative system in the USSR as space of mass declaration and the manifestation of socialist morality, values, and attitudes. For

example, joining public demonstrations in solidarity with women labourers, as some posters expressed, was part of learning women's emancipatory literacy in the 1920s (Lecht, 1921; Valerianov, 1925).

Knowledge construction and dissemination

'Knowledge – to all!,' declares one of the posters (Unknown artist, 1920b). What knowledge was selected as the foundation of the new learning society?

Socio-political knowledge constructed by the party-state. The party-state became the primary producer of socio-political and socio-economic knowledge in the form of numerous documents, speeches and directives channelled primarily via newspapers and oral propaganda. In addition to materials printed for institutions of adult learning, newspapers became the guiding means for both self-education and studying in labour collectives. Besides the printed word, each collective had party-state knowledge holders, party and *komsomol* (youth organisation) members, who guided the production and assimilation of knowledge, as well as took a leading role in constructing practices of assessment of the acquired knowledge (approval, awards, admission to the party, censure, condemnation, appearance in the *tovarishcheskiy sud* or comrade court). The party-state used the printed and spoken word, and visual art to communicate knowledge, attitudes, and values in order to fill gaps in the socio-economic and socio-political literacy of the population.

Science. A scientific worldview was aimed at replacing religion. Science was declared as giving a clear and objective explanation of the material world as opposed to religious and superstition-based views. Science was also seen, in some posters, as a tool for enhancing production and productivity (Zhelenskyi, 1920). The union of science and labour was believed to support industrialisation and therefore, build a new modernity, as other posters indicated (Ivanov, 1920). Since science was seen to produce 'true' knowledge of the world, there were many efforts to interpret and frame Marxism and communism as a new social science. Scientific knowledge was considered a part of professional knowledge and taught starting early in middle school.

*Morals***.** Besides the construction and interpretation of a worldview, the church also fulfilled an essential role in establishing moral guidelines for inner behaviour and ethics for interactions with others. This gap could not be completed by science or party philosophy alone. One of the new establishments of the new socialist learning society was thus the construction of a socialist morality. By comparing pictures of old and new life, the many posters above constructed knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. The tsar, religion, mysticism, exploitation, slavery, imperialism, capital and capitalists, idleness, ignorance, illiteracy, violence against women and children, and 'full-time housekeeping' were among the rejected values of the old life. Industrialisation, collective governing through soviets, labour, and labour collectives, bread, science, arts, education, literacy, books, knowledge, school, library, kindergartens, canteens, workers' clubhouses, women's equal rights, being socially and politically active, and advocating for the working class were among the values of the new socialist learning society. They comprise a new Soviet morality.

*Arts***.** The production and distribution of knowledge occurred via literature, visual arts and performative arts, all generally referred to as producing cultural knowledge. This included new socialist literature and arts, as well as a selection of pre-revolutionary writers, poets, and artists who supported the working class through their artistic creations. As mentioned above, political posters were one of the ways of communicating socio-

political messages. Arts were considered part of cultural knowledge and were taught starting early in elementary school. Cultural knowledge was further disseminated through 'cultural–enlightening' activities of workers' clubhouses, proletarian theatre, cinema, and libraries (Ignatovich, 2018).

Educators and knowledge disseminators

One of the most prominent authorities among party-state knowledge holders represented on the posters of 1917-1928 was Lenin, whose words were quoted multiple times. He was also mentioned on posters as 'Ilyich and his covenants' (Lenin's real name was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov). Portraits of both Lenin and Marx are also central to some of the posters. One of the early posters introduces a Communist Party member in the role of a Propagandist – an educator channelling party knowledge among the masses. On the poster is a man of exaggerated size, tossing books out to the masses to catch: 'Knowledge to all!,' states the poster (Figure 7).

Figure 7. *The Day of Soviet Propaganda. Knowledge – to All!* Unknown artist, 1920.

Among other educators depicted on the posters is a Red Army soldier (Kogout, 1921), and a man in a black suit giving a speech to the masses from a raised dais (Ivanov, 1920). The position of the speakers suggests that they are the holders of relevant socio-political knowledge 'that will destroy the chains of exploitation,' as another poster states (Radakov, 1920). Both speakers point to a colossal size book behind them. The book indicates that the knowledge that they refer to is significant and bigger than just one

presenter. The size of the book aims at convincing us that it can be a weapon against enemies and a tool in building a new life (Kogout, 1921). Posters addressing women's liberation present the 'new woman' educating other women to construct a new reality (Unknown artist, 1920c). They illustrate the possibilities for women liberation's (Isnar, 1920), and women teaching other women how to govern (Lekht, 1921).

One of the posters sends out a call to join the 'Down with illiteracy' society to help reach Lenin's goal of a fully literate society by the 10th anniversary of revolution (Unknown artist, 1925). The poster suggests that the population is divided into two groups: literate and illiterate; the former is called upon to support the latter by teaching to them to read and write. The poster refers to an all-USSR literacy campaign aimed at combating illiteracy among workers and the rural population.

Self-education is also highly promoted on the posters. They depict numerous women and men proletariat reading in various settings: in the daylight in front of a school building (Unknown artist, 1920a), a hand and a farm sickle on an opened book (Zhelenskyi, 1920), under the light of a lamp stand at night (Isnar, 1920), and in the library during the day (Arshinov, 1923; Unknown artist, 1923). Books are the main source of self-education depicted on the posters.

Discussion

The findings of our analysis of early Soviet era posters positioned within historical context of the time, 1917 to 1928, demonstrate the many dimensions in the construction and implementation of a revolutionary Soviet learning society and educative state. As we show, learning societies and the notions of modernity which support them need not be confined to capitalist states, but following the notion of multiple modernities (Arnason, 2010; Eisenstadt, 2000), may take multiple forms under different state constructions. The posters analysed indicate that the newly born Soviet state aimed at creating a new socialist modernity implying the following:

- establishing new ways of ruling the state, including collective gatherings and the soviets
- making labour the central and compulsory activity that brings new society together with the production labour on the top
- prioritising scientific, Marxist and party-state knowledge over other types of knowledge as the basis for the social, political, economic, and cultural construction
- equalising men's and women's rights as the basis for developing new relations in the family, social sphere, and national economy
- constructing a new socialist morality based on the interests and needs of the proletariat and people of labour.

These aims suggest that most of social practices in the new society needed to be reconstructed; therefore, they became niches for adult education and learning. The aim of the enlightenment of the population and the development of their literacies came to the forefront. Besides basic academic literacy associated with reading skills, the population needed a new set of social knowledge and skills to navigate a new society and consciously participate in governing it. New Soviet citizens needed professional skills to function as part of a new national economy, and cultural skills to join in creating a new socialist culture.

In a dynamically changing society with clearly articulated goals of creating a new Soviet socialist society, adult learning was integrated with the construction of new practices organised as out-of-school education. In many cases, it was difficult to disassociate learning from other social practices. The holders of relevant knowledge, e.g., reading and writing skills, socio-political, cultural, and professional knowledge, were expected to teach. These teaching functions could be performed in a schooling setting, but also at meetings, during collective activities, political functions like the election of collective representatives, the work of soviets, and in other new spaces of learning. New Soviet citizens were encouraged and expected to engage in self-education, again in a variety of learning settings, in a variety of ways. As such, the state was preparing every citizen to eventually perform both the role of a learner and the role of an educator. That is, in the Soviet learning society, everyone would be teaching and learning from everyone else. Besides providing the means of learning (e.g., books, newspapers, study circles), the Soviet state strove to provide infrastructure, (e.g., libraries, workers' clubs and reading houses), and secure time for learning for adults, and in particular, women, by opening canteens, laundries, and kindergartens, thereby liberating its citizens from household labour and the constant duties of child raising. Forms of resistance and solidarity used by citizens in other types of states to fight against the system (e.g., protests, marches, political demonstrations) became a legitimate part of the first decade of the Soviet state educative system for adults.

Along with the development a new state and the establishment of new practices, the purposes of adult learning and education included not just basic literacy and socio-political knowledge, but also the learning of cultural knowledge, such as performative arts, music, and sports activities. As the posters suggest, the idealistic idea behind 'knowledge to all' was to empower workers, soldiers, and peasants by means of enlightenment, learning and education to gain a clear vision of the world and their ability to rebuild it. In reality, however, literacy campaigns and promotion of compulsory reading practices had every literate citizen promoting a single, unifying socio-political party-state discourse. The primary goal of this effort was to synchronise the ways to interpret new knowledge in order to disallow multiple or dissenting readings. Thus, a massive collective sharing of Soviet socialist values and attitudes would lead to a homogeneous learning society with synchronised teachers, learning practices, materials, and spaces of learning.

Conclusion

In the history of the Soviet Union, the period of 1917-1928 was a time of massive, state-mobilised adult learning and education embedded in the construction of a new state, new social practices, and a new society. This period and the learning society it created can be called a new Soviet Enlightenment. Yet because all learning practices were organised under the control and supervision of the party-state, the learning society was not shaped as a free, popular space of adult learning and education, neither as part of a social movement to reform the state, nor as a means of generating human capital for a capitalist economy. Instead, as our analysis of the Soviet posters demonstrates, the learning society was used to build a New World; a new collective state, with a population liberated from the ideology, material oppression and social confinements of the Old World of pre-revolutionary Russia. The posters show that mass adult learning and education intended not only to educate the population about the goals of the state, its vision of 'reality,' and the knowledge they needed to achieve a new socialist society, but also to motivate citizens

to engage with the messages, to adopt new forms of learning and teaching, and to instil in the Soviet people a sense of responsibility, accountability and inclusion as co-creators of the new Soviet learning society.

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Contemporary dance as being and becoming in the age of ageing – existential aspects of (arts) learning among older amateur dancers

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Abstract

Taking experiences from a contemporary multi-arts dance project as a starting point, this article explores how such a project can offer opportunities for being and becoming among older amateur dancers. The article takes a phenomenological approach, in which holistic experience and sharing of experiences are central. The phenomenon of the investigation is self-conceptualisation. The artistic process and context constitute an adult educational situation. To come close to the lived experiences of the dancers, the rehearsals and performance were observed and documented. Six of the participants were also interviewed. The material was analysed in a hermeneutical phenomenological manner, and Simone de Beauvoir's thinking regarding ageing was used as a theoretical lens. The results show how the self-images of the participants change during the course of the project. The dance activities seem to give the older participants opportunities to remain themselves, even as they allow themselves to change. They learn to know themselves, each other, and the world.

Keywords: Adult dance education, ageing, choreography, community dance, self-conception

Introduction

The right to express oneself and take part in cultural activities throughout one's life is expressed in different documents regarding human rights and law texts. For example,

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Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings have the right to be engaged in cultural life and appreciate the arts (UNESCO, 2019). At a more local level the Swedish Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression (The Swedish Parliament, 2015) and Swedish cultural policies (The Swedish Arts Council, 2019) underline the right of all citizens – including older adults – to take part of and express themselves with artistic expressions.

With these fundamental rights in mind, this article follows a contemporary multi-artistic dance project for older adults. Over the period of a year twenty older people – sixteen women and four men aged between 65 and 85 years – participated in rehearsals for a dance performance that also included other artistic forms of expressions, such as music, art, photography and drama. The rehearsals were led by the choreographer Charlotta Öfverholm, and consisted of warming up, choreography and improvisation, as well as preparing. The process and performance were constructed from the participants' formulated life stories, which were shared in a performance, *Stories*, at the big dance venues in Stockholm. Most of the amateur dancers had participated in initial workshops a year earlier (Andersson & Ferm Almqvist, 2021) and thereby knew the format and Charlotta Öfverholm's way of designing activities.[1]

I am a 54-year-old white female researcher with an academic background active within the area of music and dance education. For four years I have followed Charlotta's projects with the older amateur dancers as a part of a collaborative, arts-based research project. Apart from me and Charlotta, the research project also included a co-researcher, an assistant, and a professional photographer (Ferm Almqvist & Andersson, 2019). The dancers had little or no experience of dance when they entered the workshop series. In the process of working towards the performance, the participants had the chance to use dance and individual artistic forms of expression in individual and collaborative choreographies and improvisational activities. The arts educational project explores, and analyses opportunities and challenges related to old age and equality. The ambition is to describe and explore how such a project can offer opportunities for being and becoming among older amateur dancers. I take phenomenological philosophy as a starting point, which implies that the lived experience of human beings constitutes access to phenomena. The following research question was formulated: How do older amateur dancers conceptualize themselves through artistic learning processes constituted by dance rehearsals and a performance?

Adult learning in artistic activities

As Wildemeersch (2019) states, arts or aesthetics in relation to lifelong learning can be viewed and explored in many different ways, based on various scientific grounds and philosophical ways of thinking. Dance and music learning processes among older adults are most often investigated within the research areas of community dance and community music (Camic et al., 2014), where wellbeing in relation to creativity constitutes a crucial concern (Hallam et al., 2013, 2014, 2016; Higgins, 2007). Liz Lehrman's (1976) initiatives and models for physical and creative modern dance activities with older persons constitute valuable pioneering work in this area. Social interactions including both participants and facilitators offer opportunities for everyone to express themselves, connect to life experiences, and find their identities in social relationships (Barr, 2013; Green, 2000; Hartogh, 2016). Such experiences are also found to contribute to social wellbeing among older adults (Camic et. al., 2014; In-Sil et al, 2015; Lee, et al., 2010; Pearce & Lillyman, 2015; Phinney et al., 2014). That dance and music activities offer

health and social benefits, and at the same time contribute to lifelong learning, is shown by the results of Söderman and Westvall's (2017) study of cultural activities in a Finnish society in Sweden. Another angle is explored by Laes (2015) who studied the process of learning music in bands involving older women. She states that the participants developed empowerment and musical agency. Further she discovered that the elderly could use their agency to understand the present and also provided tools for handling the future. Such an approach brings education among older individuals to the forefront and put well-being and health in the background of the situation. In this article, I am interested in how the older participants view themselves and their development in dance learning activities, over the course of one year, with the aim of being able to say something about adult education and how it can be organised for by society.

Arts learning can be understood to contain performative, tensional, structural related, bodily, emotional, and existential dimensions (Ferm Thorgersen, 2013; Nielsen 1998; Varkøy, 2017), all of which are relevant to adult education (Ferm Almqvist & Andersson, 2019). Concepts like *Bildung*, or cultivation, are closely related to education and learning in the context of arts activities outside traditional school institutions. *Bildung* can be seen as a field of tension where experiences, relationships, and actions are formed, a field that includes existential – human related – as well as essential – content related – dimensions. Hence, *Bildung* partly contains an inner, reflective, and self-constructive dimension, related to how a human being sees herself or himself and the world. *Bildung* also encompasses reflections upon what is learnt (Burman, 2018), in this case the essential dimensions of dance and music (Nielsen, 1998). *Bildung* as such is heavily laden with history, tradition, and ideals regarding human cultivation and educational goals. Still, it has the potential to frame and draw attention to various perspectives and understandings of the conditions for and the meaning of the formation of the human being (Burman, 2018; Varkøy, 2017). In this way, learning in and about the world, and oneself as well as developing a capacity for artistic expression are intertwined and happen simultaneously. From this perspective, *Bildung* can be characterised as an impetus for continually new learning and an openness to unknown and unexpected perspectives as well as a willingness to re-evaluate one's own values and imaginings (Ekberg & Schwieler, 2020). Consequently, the view of *Bildung* used in this article includes existential dimensions—formation—and essential dimensions—cultivation.

In earlier studies of participation in dance workshops for older people (Ferm Almqvist & Andersson 2019, Andersson & Ferm Almqvist, 2021), it was stated that organised aesthetic communication offered participants opportunities to develop physically, emotionally, and existentially. These studies showed, in part, how the choreographer influenced opportunities for participation in terms of how workshops are *designed* and what *inputs* are given in the process, what *atmosphere* is created, how participants use their *bodies*, and how *dance is offered as an artistic form of expression*. Another interesting result of these studies was the demonstration, based on field notes and video recordings, that practising dance among older people accentuated four interrelated levels of activity conceptualised through Arendt's (1958) thinking about *vita activa*, namely: a functional body with an impetus to move; to embody dance as a form of expression; to use dance in aesthetic communication; and in reflecting on life, body and dance. Accordingly, the essential-existential intertwinement becomes obvious. In this article I am interested in increasing the understanding of how older adults conceptualise themselves in an artistic process where a dance performance was developed and performed. To be able to grasp such conceptualisations within adult education framed as artistic activities, I use de Beauvoir's (1976/1992) phenomenological investigation of age, and complete that with Merleau-Ponty's (1968) concepts of chiasm and flesh.

The coming of age and intersubjectivity

All throughout her life, de Beauvoir engaged socially and politically with people considered as secondary, and therefore marginalised. When she discovered that she was met and treated differently than men, she decided to investigate what it means to be a woman, which resulted in her most famous work, the phenomenological investigation *The Second Sex* (1949). Through examining the phenomenon *woman* from all possible perspectives, she made clear that one is 'not born, but rather becomes, [a] woman' (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 283). Hence, humans who are born female 'become woman' – the second sex – as a result of societal values and standards.

De Beauvoir's philosophical study of ageing, *The Coming of Age* (originally published in 1970), is also based on her own personal experiences: 'But the reason why I made up my mind to embark upon this book was that I needed to understand a state that was my own, and to understand it in its implication for mankind as a whole' (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p. 130). She wanted to break the silence around the topic of ageing. Older age, like womanhood, was perceived as 'the other', and widely marginalised and oppressed in society, according to de Beauvoir. A starting point was that an individual is conditioned by the society's theoretical and practical attitude towards her as an older person: 'An analytical description of the various aspects is therefore not enough: each reacts upon all the others and is at the same time affected by them, and it is in the undefined flow of this circular process that old age must be understood' (1992, p. 9). She begins by stating that the phenomenon of age cannot be studied from physiological and psychological perspectives separately, since biological change is situated and influenced by existential, historical, and societal circumstances and responses. Therefore, de Beauvoir studied how age showed itself 'from without' through scientific, biological, anthropological, and historical perspectives, as well as 'being in the world' through lived experiences of the same.

Her extensive phenomenological investigation concludes that it is old age – the unavoidable process of decline – exists in contrast to earlier life, rather than death: 'Old age is life's parody, whereas death transforms life into a destiny: in a way it preserves it by giving it the absolute dimension' (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p. 539). Her inquiry confirmed age as 'otherness' and 'oppression', and additionally showed how strong powers and norms to a great extent take away older human beings' empowerment, or agency, to run projects and make meaning in their lives. Hence, the study can be defined as a fierce indictment of society's indifference and cruelty toward old people. The degradation, the hatred of the elderly has to be taken into account, she underlines. The only way to lend old age dignity according to de Beauvoir is to give value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation, and compassion.

She also emphasises that class influences how ageing is experienced. Physical and mental damages cannot be repaired in advancing age. The huge space between those privileged, either by talent or class, is extended in the case of the old. The study illuminates that millions of people are abandoned, as if while still breathing they were already dead, buried alive. Hence, she asserts that human beings must be treated in human ways all through life, and that in turn puts demands on the way a society operates.

De Beauvoir (1976/1992) suggests there is only one solution to aging becoming a parody of life, and that is to participate in activities that give life meaning. She points out that the ageing body is transformed not only in the physical sense, but more importantly in the sense of restricted existential possibilities, and she stresses the need to 'go on pursuing ends that give our existence a meaning – devotion to individuals, to groups, or to causes, social, political, intellectual, or creative work' (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p.

540). She further stresses that older people must accept new images of themselves in order to resolve identification crises and live a meaningful life. It should be underlined though, that an existential phenomenological way of thinking does not account for psychological or medical views of human bodies and developments but should be seen as one of several perspectives.

The transformation included in changing images of oneself can be understood with the help of Merleau-Ponty's (1968) metaphorical concept of chiasm, which also inspired de Beauvoir's thinking about situatedness. Merleau-Ponty (1964) underlines that human beings are not self-contained subjects, but beings who are formed in and through social interactions. Expressed by the Greek letter χ (*chi*), chiasm means a crisscrossing of the perceiving and the perceived, of self and other, and of language and meaning – based on human beings' bodily being in the world. Additionally, the concept accentuates intertwining or intersection and reversibility – in other words, processes where phenomena flow into one another. Merleau-Ponty (1968) uses the metaphor of 'flesh' to represent an image of 'Being', which includes chiasmic spaces and gaps between human beings and the world, wherein they are intertwined and ensnared in relationships. Flesh as Being gives rise to the perceiver and the perceived as interdependent aspects of subjectivity.

Chiasm can be viewed as a situated confrontation involving individuals and groups, who can change and transform their life-worlds through common action (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). The transformation of self-conception can be viewed as a process where the flow of action is intertwined with the flow of thought, a process where new experiences are reflected and offers new views of oneself, others and the world. It is within the chiasm that older dancers' perception is doubled, embodied, and entangled. Consequently, Merleau-Ponty's (1968) thesis of reversibility proposes that 'to see' opens up the body to others. It is one way of knowing and being formed in closeness and through encounters that constitutes the base for transformed self-conceptions, and by that lifelong learning.

Methodology and methods

To come close to the lived experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Bengtsson, 1998) of the older amateur dancers both the rehearsals and performance were observed and documented by field notes and video recordings in May 2017, November 2017 and May 2018. Field notes were taken throughout the workshop series, and the activities were video recorded with a stable and a mobile camera operated by a professional photographer. I recorded some of the sessions myself, using my tablet. The twenty participants, four men and sixteen women, 65-85 years old, were encouraged to bring written stories based on their life experiences, and these were used and interpreted in the workshops. The participants were also asked to include other familiar forms of expressions in the performance, as drama skills, instruments, photographs, painting equipment, or specific dance artefacts. The material that forms the main source for analysis in this article though, consists of transcribed interviews with six of the participants, four women and two men, aged 70 and 72, and four women 86, 80, 80, and 79 years old. The six interviewees live in, or close to the capital of Sweden and represent the middle class in Sweden. Two of them were born outside of Sweden, in Great Britain and the USA.

The areas covered in the interview guide were reasons to participate, experiences of participating, being and becoming in the dance activities, and physical and emotional reactions connected to age. The interviews lasted for 50–60 minutes each and were

transcribed verbatim, resulting in 40 pages of text. Approached phenomenologically, the text is seen as a broad collection of expressed lived experiences, that collectively give access to the phenomenon. For this reason, individuals are not referred to in connection to specific quotations.

The transcriptions were analysed using a phenomenological hermeneutic perspective (Alrø & Rønholt, 2003; van Manen, 1990). The process of analysis included naïve reading, structured analysis, comprehensive understanding, and the formulation of results in a holistic manner. In other words, the interviews were first read several times in order to grasp their meaning as a whole. This naïve reading was followed by a phase of structural analysis – a way of identifying and formulating themes that provided opportunities for testing the emerged concepts. A theme is a thread of meaning that penetrates parts of a text in the process of conveying the essential meaning of lived experience. The process was finished when the themes validated and deepened the naïve reading. Then, the main themes and constituting aspects were summarized and reflected upon in relation to the research question and the context of the study, and finally, the last step concerned formulating the result in a situated language. The last step also included finding quotations from both the participants and de Beauvoir that showed the different sides of the phenomenon in concrete ways and illuminate how an artistic dance project can help to challenge existing structures and policies related to adult education, as well as offering suggestions for what life-long learning could be.

Dance as transformative being and becoming

To view oneself as a human being with a meaningful life, and not an old person, seems to demand change in many senses. The analysis of the material made clear that this change concerns the following transformations: from being seen as a 'what' to a 'who', from oppressed to equal, from being what you already are to becoming your full potential, from materialised conceptions to bodily experience, from the known to the unknown, from long past habits to future directed projects, and from the individual to intersubjective relations. In what follows, each theme is presented through descriptive text and quotations from the six interviewed older dancers which specifies the terms. Based on a phenomenological way of thinking, the material is seen as a whole, and the quotations are not related to information about the individuals. Each section is introduced by a quotation from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Coming of Age* (1976/1992).

From 'what' to 'who'

> From the outside the old man is the object of a certain knowledge (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p. 10).

The change from 'what' to 'who' among the participants concerns the transformation from being viewed as an old person, to being seen as a human being participating in a multi-artistic creative process – as a person who has something to say artistically and is able dance together with others. The project demonstrates that such a transformation is based on curiosity and mutual respect. The interviewees express that in the beginning they talked about their ailments and injuries, but soon they abandoned those subjects and began to talk about makeup, the dance, anxiety, the group, and the challenges and opportunities in the performance. They talk about what they do together. They talk about

how they see each other and themselves; and they compare this to how they are met in ordinary life – as 'whats'.
The participants testify that they experience this transformation based on warmth, on seeing each other as individuals, as persons. They see each other as humans with different sides, and the cracks caused by age are moved to the background.

> Yes, I experience warmth to a greater extent, and everyone has become a person, everyone has become individuals, and I mean, even [though] I am a senior and you can see all cracks, now you see a person.

In addition to their experience of warmth, reasons cited by interviewees for the transformation include the new and creative way of thinking about working with older people, in which older human beings' bodies and movement are given space and are taken seriously and worked collectively within the form of contemporary dance. That they all fall within the age bracket of 65 to 85 is also seen as a prerequisite for the way in which they are able be open to each other. The focus lies on expressing oneself in dance, individually and together, and working towards the performance.

Moreover, part of the transformation is the development of a common message to the audience and society which emerges during the process. How they are approached and supported by the choreographer is also mentioned as an important prerequisite for the transformation from being seen as a 'what' towards being seen as a who; this will be further developed below. They trust the choreographer fully, and they really appreciate being full members of the developing artistic process and performance.

From oppressed (the other) to equal

> We will discover, through the words and actions of others that we now belong to the social category of those who, no longer having a useful function, modern society designates as 'pure objects' – as not worthy respect (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p. 88).

A wider view of the transformation or change is to see it as a move from experiencing oppression to experiencing equality. An important catalyst for this is being approached and met seriously. But the first step that the interviewees mention is the very fact that this kind of activity is actually offered to older people.

They feel invited and involved, as artists and as participants in the creative process and the coming performance, through the sharing and treatment of their stories, upon which the whole performance is built. They appreciate having had the opportunity to decide what they wanted to share and in what ways, and that their messages are taken seriously.

At the heart of the participants experience of being taken seriously by the choreographer is the fact that she sees them and believes in them as dancers and artists capable of developing and performing at the large dance venue in Stockholm. The choreographer is appreciated because she offers direction and knows what she wants. Not least, the participants perceive that she wants authenticity, which demands presence. She opens spaces in such a way that the participants feel that there is space to be creative, but that they cannot do just anything.

> You listen, and then you do.

The participants also recount that Charlotta changes her mind very quickly, and they feel they must be prepared for that. These changes of mind concern corrections, transfers, and

re-buildings. The closer they get to the premiere, the stricter she gets, and the participants seem to like to receive critique, and to be corrected. That is experienced as a part of be taken seriously.

> Well, I think all of us appreciate Charlotta very much, which makes us able to enjoy her, independent of what she does. And when she says 'no', or when she gets angry, or when she thinks that we should do things in totally other ways. Or when she says that we look like a 'kindergarten' which she said one day. You never take what she says as criticism. And that is very special. I have never met that before.

They also trust that the piece will come together as a whole even though at the time of the interviews time was short, and all the bits and pieces were creating chaos and feeling like a mess. One of the participants does raise a concern, however, that a hindrance to her own transformation towards equality is that she doesn't hear well due to an accident a year ago; she would have liked the choreographer to wear a microphone. She says that it is possible to ask each other what was said, but then it is easy to miss the next message.

From being an old human to becoming her full potential

> We must live a life so committed, so justified, that we can continue to cherish it even when all our illusions are lost and our ardour for life has cooled (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p. 567).

One aspect of change connected to self-image is to see oneself as not finished, to see that new things can be learnt, and that one can handle oneself in new ways in new settings. It is about becoming one's full potential. One way of doing this is to go into new roles, to use the whole body in new ways, and to make new discoveries, or just to participate in a performance at stage, which the project also both encourages and demands.

> She takes us seriously and she uses all participants potential at a maximal level.

A precondition for becoming one's full potential is to be open to the idea that new learning is possible – to see yourself as a learner, to see the situation as a place to try new things, and also to bracket earlier experiences, to be open to what the new situation can offer. The participants express that they have been encouraged to use their bodies in new ways, which in turn inspire new movements that they hadn't been aware they were capable of. They also say that such experiences give something back to their whole selves.

> It gives energy to how the body functions.

Adopting new roles happens at both the abstract and concrete levels. One of the participants recounts a situation in which they all tried on clothes for the performance. Suddenly he saw young people, and he describes how strange this transformation was and how he was mirrored in the appearance of the others. A part of that process for him was the experience of being able to move, to actually dance, in ways they hadn't imagined earlier:

> I can dance, and it doesn't become very strange.

It has become clear to the participants that they do not think of anything else when they are participating in the artistic process. They are aware that concentration and focus are needed. They express that they have learnt to be in the moment, to be present, which also

is a part of being your full potential, and that this is the core when the premiere is coming closer.

> Yes, but I think that has become more and more easy, or more important, or how to express it, to keep the presence, the closer the seriousness is coming. With the premiere.

The sense of how important it is to do one's best encourages the participants to be as present as they can.

An important aspect, though, seems to be that the choreographer sees the potential in the human bodies and encourages them to stretch out from where they are. She makes it possible for the participants to create something based on their life experiences and preconditions. She sees potential in their movements, hears when they feel uncomfortable, and identifies alternative ways to develop what is already there. They appreciate that she sees nuances in movements, that they are not expected to look like ballerinas, they are not expected to be perfect, it is even accepted to express oneself in ugly ways.

From being in the known to being in the unknown

> To go on pursuing ends that give our existence a meaning – devotion to individuals, to groups, or to causes, social, political, intellectual, or creative work (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p. 540).

It became obvious through the analysis that being in the unknown is an important step toward changing the image of self and finding meaning. It is about daring to lose control, being in a state of exploration and discovery, and being in the art, which the project also both demands and makes possible – it is being in the space of wonder.

Several of the interviewees describe the excitement of being in the dance. They say that it is hard to put in words what happens when they use their bodies in dance as a form of expression. Either they take an instruction, for example to improvise with a specific set or kinds of movements, or they are encouraged to experiment with a specific feeling.

The analysis also makes clear that the space of wonder can be created in the interplay between different forms of expression: between spoken story and movement, or between music and movement, or vice versa.

> Yes, it is just to internalise that content and letting it get an adequate expression. I don't know how to say it, that is something just possible to do.

Translation to another form of expression can also create spaces for wonder and discovery. For example, one participant tells of when she was encouraged to tell her story in English (which is her mother tongue) instead of Swedish. She says that it was a relief to tell it in Swedish, because that gave her distance from the painful history of her life. When she told it in English, she came very close to the experience and it hurt in another way. So, she started to cry, which she did not do at all when she told it in Swedish. She found it interesting to be out of control of her feelings. The same feeling of giving up control is told by a participant who saw her story performed by others, even though she had initially rather wanted to dance it herself.

One word that is used for the creative activities is 'play'. Play opens a space for discovery, a possibility for which the choreographer sets the base, a platform. She encourages them and makes them safe, and she is balanced in her way for correcting. 'She is our play leader. ´

It is defined by the participants as an adventure, a discovery, and a deep experience, where they have the opportunity to get to know their bodies in soft, smooth movements.

The participants say that being part of a creative process close to the premiere of the show is an experience of the unknown. They did not know how it will be in the end, or whether they will be able to participate in a way that would make it a worthwhile experience for an external audience. At the time of the interviews, they had a feeling of chaos: 'We forget [what we have agreed upon] from day to day.' But they try to trust the structure the choreographer has in mind. Still many changes are made in the moment, as the choreographer gets inspired by something the participants do when they rehearse. They are prepared for changes to continue until the bitter end. And that is also expressed as a state of being in the unknown.

From materialized conceptions to bodily experience – of age

> Can I have become a different being while I still remain myself? (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p. 283)

Another aspect of self-image is the assumptions regarding what it means to be an old person, and how such a person is expected to behave. In the project conservation of traditional age patterns and structures become open to challenge. One way of challenging materialized conceptions showed to be to offer bodily experiences of what a person is and what she can do, through dance or other artistic expression.

The participants talk about movement as a prerequisite for life, for creating and creativity. Throughout the project the participants have discovered that they want to be creative human beings for as long as they can. There are lots of comments in the material regarding how alive they feel when they are in the dance. Not least, they appreciate the interplay with music.

> I just feel so alive. When I am in the dance, I feel that I live and is in deep contact with myself. I just to go into the feeling that the music awakens inside of me.

Dance and movement are perceived as ways of keeping young – of evidence that the body can remain lively and mobile. The participants say the dance helps them to age in meaningful ways. They see the risks of saying, 'I am too old, I can't do this'. And they understand that such an attitude can lead to them sit down and get stiff. Instead, they appreciate the access to dance and movement as a life affirming opportunity. The participants also accentuated the opportunity to force the body to remember patterns of movement as a means for them to stay lively and attentive.

To some extent the analysis shows that older human beings have not been expected to move their bodies in lively ways, and that shyness and body awareness have hindered them from moving freely. Expectations about what kind of dance older can participate in have also been shown to create barriers to the full use of the body.

> Yes, it is joyful, because now I get to use the upper body as well. Because in the kind of dances I have practiced earlier, it is only the lower part that is moved. You just follow, and the legs are moving.

But on the other hand, the participants state that, because they are older, they do not have so much to lose, and they dare to try and to investigate. When the barriers are taken down, and the 'eye from the outside' is not taken into account, the older have much to give, and

they play together in the dance. When the old body seems to be forgotten to a great extent, pain is no longer felt, or it is handled in new ways.

From limitations to future directed projects – from immanence to transcendence

> The greatest good fortune, even greater than health, is to have his world inhabited by projects: then, busy and useful, he escapes from both boredom and from decay. The times in which he lives remains his own (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p. 492).

Like other oppressed groups in society, older citizens have been silenced more or less consciously in society. Opportunities for older people have encouraged immanence rather than transcendence. The project reveals opportunities for older people to formulate and express inner thoughts and ideas, which provides directions for possible future directed projects.

The analysis makes clear that, for a human being who has not been listened to, finding one's own ideas and opinions – finding your own core – is a great achievement. To become true and authentic, according to the interviewees, all surface layers must be taken away in order to reach the core and start to grow from there.

> Yes, for me dance is a sense of wholeness, you feel something, and then it is expressed with the body, there is nothing you hide. If you want you can hide it, if you want you can imitate, but you can also make it like a bridge between what I have inside and how I express myself outside. So, I think that is rather exciting.

The sharing of stories seems to be crucial to breaking limitations and having the opportunity to run their own projects allows the dancers to transcend their bodies. Most of the participants greatly appreciate the opportunity to share what they have been holding inside for a long time. The opportunity – even demand – to use their bodies to express experiences and feelings in artistic ways make them happy.

> And I want something with that. And that is really important, but it becomes very focused and strong inside me. And of course, I feel happy.

The choreographer tells the dancers that they are on a journey of discovery with their own expression and their own bodies. She encourages them to take advantage of that and encourages them to be 'more' and 'wilder'; she urges them not to be careful and anxious, but to dare be rough and ugly. By that, the participants discover that they can use more of their inner powers.

The playful approach promotes creativity. The material shows that the dance gives the participants possibility to explore a variety of feelings. They talk about how they translate a feeling into a movement. The improvisational duets are especially mentioned in connection with this aspect.

The interplay with music is also underlined as important in activities of expressing oneself and running one's projects, to use de Beauvoir's concept. They talk about how the music nurtures movement inside them.

> Yes, it is so wonderful to let oneself be filled with music and that a movement becomes expression of that feeling you are filled with.

Both the creative playful work and the choreographer inspire the participants to use other forms of expression in the same manner. One of the participants is asked to paint, live, on stage, as a part of the performance. Others play instruments, share photographs, and dance styles they knew since before.

Hence, the participants have been trained and encouraged to express themselves with their bodies individually and collectively, to listen to each other, and to be clear to each other. They also emphasize that they will have the opportunity to express themselves onstage – giving an extra dimension to their ability to express their thoughts and ideas artistically.

> It becomes some kind of focus in the body, which makes it really exciting. It gets tense, it gets happy, but I do not stand there for my own therapy's sake, I have to think about the audience. I must think about the beholder.

The task for the choreographer, among other things, is to put all the individual-based scenes together in a way that intertwines the individual projects, in time and space. She works with the group to create one whole piece out of the different parts, with transitions in between.

From the individual to intersubjective relations

> Life without culture, interests and responsibility denies transcendence, it denies ambiguity. In order to embrace ambiguity, each and every human being should not look forward to the coming age alone and empty handed. Ambiguity demands that society look upon women and men as useful at every age, not as atoms able to be negated by other atoms, but as part of a collective in which even the old can fulfil and renew their lives as they prepare to distance themselves last timer from the weight of the past (de Beauvoir, 1976/1992, p. 542–43).

Ageing has been viewed as something individual, even if that has started to change lately. In viewing ageing as a matter of intersubjective relations, this study brings to the fore the importance of sharing and responsiveness, while remaining honest with oneself and in interaction with others. Other important factors in an intersubjective-relations-based understanding of ageing are atmosphere, togetherness, and caring about one another.

Fairly early in the process the participants were asked to communicate bodily with each other, in pairs and groups. The participants recount that they learned to relate to each other in authentic, trustworthy manner. They were encouraged to learn from each other's ways of moving. They were trained to be responsive, and this was something they developed all through the process. Sometimes they had to do things they did not like, for example hugging each other in groups, in authentic ways, which was challenging in the beginning.

Based on the kind of communication the design of the workshops offered, a strong sense of togetherness was developed. To be together with others and to do things collectively is appreciated and experienced as meaningful.

> We are not at this planet to live individual lives. We must decide to gather, because it doesn't look that great. To have these moments all the weeks we have worked together and feel this setting, and feel it without words, that's like heaven.

Some of the participants express that they do not want the project to stop. They do not want to return to loneliness. Doing things and investigating life together has energized them.

> And that the interplay with all the others in the group. It is so exciting, and one fantastic thing was, that after one day, we had lost … or become safe with each other, all anxiety and tension disappeared.

The group scenes, the 'snake-pits,' are mentioned here specifically, where responsiveness towards others and one's own movements, authenticity, and the feeling of being a part of something larger are at the core.

> When it works, then it is a great feeling of happiness, as you are a cog in this fantastic artistic machinery. And just create in a way, it is wonderful.

Because of the nonverbal communication and togetherness, the participants share that they have developed a great caring atmosphere together. 'It is clean, everything is clean, but emotional. It is a perfect combination.'

Implications for adult arts education

As mentioned, this study was driven by an interest to better understand how older adults conceptualise themselves in artistic processes, such as development and performance of collaborative contemporary dance. Through taking de Beauvoir's stated view of old age; The unavoidable process of decline, that exists in contrast to earlier life rather than death, I found that arts education can contribute to transformation of self-images among oppressed people, such as older citizens (cf Butterwick & Roy, 2018). The results implicate that a starting point for successful educational or pedagogic arts activities have to account for transformation from being seen as a 'what' to a 'who', hence that the learners are seen as dancing human beings rather than old people. In addition, transformation concerns change from being oppressed to being equal, in other words to exist equally and have the possibility to be heard and seen, which the dance activities offers. Also, it seems important to encourage change from being what a human being already is, to becoming her full potential, independent of age, which makes dreams and imaginations important. Instead of letting materialized conceptions of age and long-past habits be conserved, it seems that well conducted dance activities instead can accentuate bodily experience of age and future directed projects. Finally, the importance of offering older human beings to develop inter-subjective relations is underlined, and it is clearly shown how arts activities can offer such situations. Conducting transformative activities for older people, that challenge established structures regarding age and ageing, demands that existential as well as essential dimensions of *bildung*, in other words human- as well as content-related aspects of arts are accounted for. By that, this study contributes with an understanding regarding older people and arts activities that complete what is already found in community dance and community music research (Barr, 2013; Green, 2000; Hartogh, 2016; Higgins, 2007; Lehrman, 1976).

In addition, it has become clear that conscious choices must be made in planning, conducting, and evaluating of dance activities for older people. The situation for each and every arts-based educational activity will need to be examined for what can possibly be taught and learned in relation to the participants, and for how it can be organized and offered. Bodies, stories, room, imaginations, atmosphere, forms of expression and

continual dialogue must be taken into consideration. Hence, social benefits and well-being among older people cannot be the main aim of the activity (cf. Camic et. al., 2014; In-Sil et. al., 2015; Lee, et. al., 2010; Pearce & Lillyman, 2015; Phinney et. al., 2014), but could come as an important bonus. All mentioned dimensions of arts knowledge must always be taken into account (Ferm Thosrgersen, 2013; Nielsen 1998; Varkøy, 2017). Existential, emotional, and bodily dimensions of arts education have to be balanced in relation to performative, audio-visual, and structural ones. Only then, will people have the opportunity to experience themselves as 'whos', to feel that they have equal opportunity to participate and learn, to be in the space of wonder, to become their full potential, to bodily experience who they are, and to run projects in togetherness, independent of age, or any other basis for discrimination. Söderman and Westvall's study (2017) touches upon these aspects, but the current study underscores the importance and contributes with theoretical tools through which it becomes possible to view, and perhaps develop, current and future arts educational activities for older people in the direction of achieving a transformation of self-conception. Of course, the current approach puts demands on arts teachers, but if we take aesthetic dimensions of education seriously, we must rise to that challenge. Otherwise, community activities for older people risk preserving inequalities related to age and aging.

The dance activities seem to give the older people the opportunity to remain themselves, even as they become different (cf. de Beauvoir, 1976/1992). They learn to know themselves and each other as dancing human beings, and the world as a place for being and becoming. The intertwining transformative process of becoming, independent of age, could be seen as a crosspiece or a meeting place of dancers' and a choreographer's selves with the world of different and unique life and learning experiences, and unpredictable turns, challenges, and wonders. For the choreographer, physical movement, speech, and dance-teaching activities are central. Dance knowledge seems to be embodied among the older participants, and thereby constitutes the flesh of practice and the field of becoming. In the intertwined chiasmatic interplay with each other, with life-stories, with the dance, and the music, the participants discovered who they are and who they could become as (dancing) human beings. One task for the choreographer is to orient older people to what lies beyond the immediately present, and thereby draw them into a magical but now taken-for-granted realm of meeting each other and themselves, in a world of ideas characterised by physical movements, speech, and artistic expressions. The double chiasmatic constitution of the flesh where the older dancers meet each-others and one-selves in the dance activities offers opportunities for the transformation of self-conception. In other words, artistic activities provided in the ways presented the article can be defined as life-long learning.

Notes

[1] Information about the workshops was communicated through an e-mail sent out through the choreographer's own connections, as well as through organizations connected to older people in Stockholm. There are a rather large number of activities for older people available in Sweden, not least in the bigger cities, but contemporary dance, and activities focusing on artistic expression are not so common. All applicants, from various backgrounds, were accepted.

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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.

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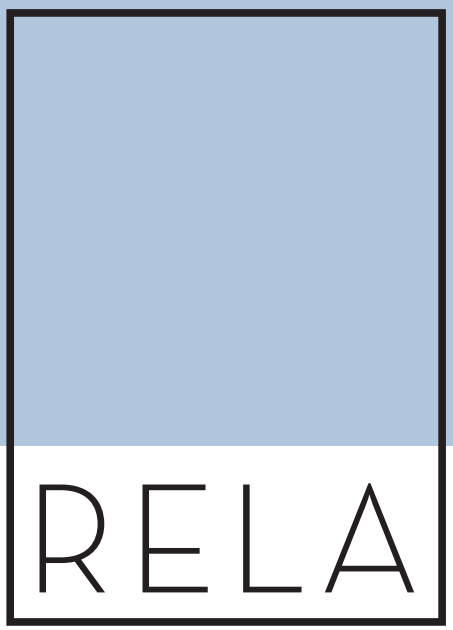

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