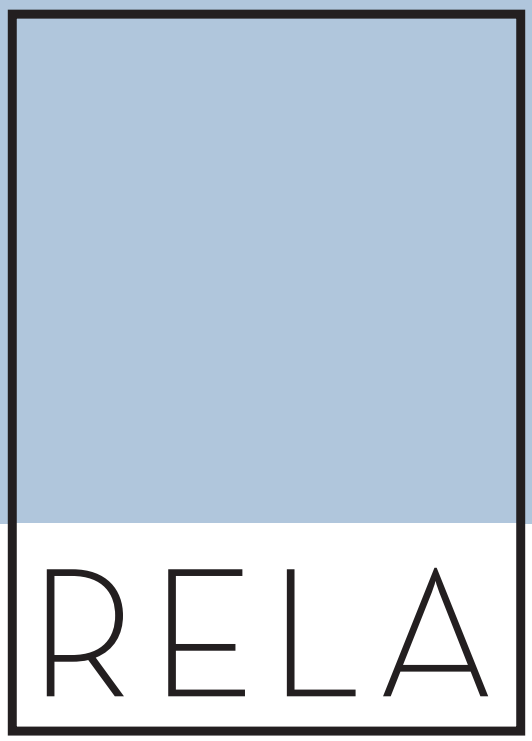
RADICAL POPULAR EDUCATION TODAY: PROSPECTS AND POSSIBILITIES



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Fergal Finnegan
National University of Ireland, Ireland (fergal.finnegan@mu.ie)

António Fragoso
University of Algarve, Portugal (aalmeida@ualg.pt)

Barbara Merrill
University of Warwick, UK (barbara.merrill@warwick.ac.uk)

Introduction: Freire's pedagogy and popular education

Freire's centenary was widely celebrated in 2021 and this led to extensive reflection, debate and discussion within adult education in many countries. This Special Issue on popular education builds on the celebration and discussion of Freire's work while also extending the debate to focus on radical popular education today. This has provided the opportunity to reflect on the current state and future prospects of radical popular education in relation to theory, praxis and methodology.

Freire's work has been enormously influential within adult education and is also the most widely cited and used adult educator outside of the field. Underpinning Freire's ideas is the proposition that all education is political, most famously in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972). Freire states that education is either for 'liberation' or 'domestication' (Freire, 1972). Education for liberation entails, for Freire, the need for educators to overtly take the side of the oppressed and marginalised and that this political stance involves 'educational dialogue and social action, or *praxis,* with the oppressed in order to understand and act upon the causes of their oppression' (Crowther & Martin, 2018, p. 11).

This radical version of popular education is especially well-developed in Latin America but is also associated with a range of educational initiatives across the globe. It 'embodies a commitment to social justice, the promotion of a critical democracy and a vision of a better, fairer world in which education has a key role to play' (Coare & Johnston, 2003, p. ix). Freire advocates that popular educators seek to create knowledge dialogically and that learning should begin with the lived experiences of learners and that the educational process is a learning experience for both the educator and the learner. The aim of radical popular education is to create 'really useful knowledge' (Johnson, 1988; Thompson, 1997) which aims to link experience and theory in a critical way and facilitate

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learners with a deeper understanding of their lives and how they are positioned in society and become transformative agents. In Freire's words:

> The oppressed are not marginals living outside society. They have always been inside – inside the structure which made them 'beings for others'. The solution is not to 'integrate' them into the structure of oppression but to transform that structure so that they can become beings for themselves (Freire, 1972).

It has been argued that this sort of social and educational transformation requires the following (Martin et al.,1999, p. 9):

- 'its curriculum comes out of the concrete experience and material interests of people in communities of resistance and struggle;
- Its pedagogy is collective, focused primarily on group as distinct from individual learning and development;
- It attempts, wherever possible, to forge a direct link between education and social action'.

Freire within the wider radical tradition

From our perspective Freire's work is best seen as one, albeit particularly rich, contribution to a much wider collective tradition and part of the rationale of this special issue it hold this in mind. Popular education has been created and recreated through waves of social movement activity in various contexts, most notably anti-colonial, workers, feminist, anti-racist and alterglobalisation movements. This has occurred on a range of scales. For example, in Portugal after the 25th April revolution there was an attempt to build a system of adult education emerging from popular education associations (Melo & Benavente, 1978). There are several examples of large-scale effort in Brazil, such as the democratisation of schools and adult education at a state level (Apple, 2013; Freire, 1993) and also in movements such as the 'Movimento Sem Terra' (landless) movement, and those fighting for the homeless or indigenous rights (Souza, 2007).

During high points of social movement activity popular education can be usefully described as a social learning process which seeks to develop really useful knowledge at a local level but which also aims to transform public institutions and change power structures in a profound way (Wainwright, 2018). In less active periods or contexts this activity operates at a smaller scale with much more 'local' and modest goals but retains a strong sense of the importance of non-formal educational processes that combine with forms of action and struggle for social transformation (Canário, 2007). For example, the Adult Learning Project in Edinburgh, Scotland, the Highlander Centre in Tennessee, USA or CREA in Barcelona, Spain.

Since the 1980s we have witnessed a 'reduction of democracy as a political process to the market as an economic process' (Crowther & Martin, 2018, p. 9). The workers and anticolonial movements and mass left parties that have been important to popular education in the past century have waned in power. Adult education as a field has also changed and in many contexts; 'politics is thus diminished to the making of market choices facilitated by lifelong learning' (Crowther & Martin, 2018, p. 9) with a focus on learning rather than education. The landscape of adult education work has been further reconfigured in recent years through economic crisis, widening inequalities and more recently by the pandemic crisis. But as Lima (2018) argues 'particularly at times of crisis, it becomes evident that what is needed most is democratic adult education, capable of

resisting adaptation, despite the fact that an education of this nature is difficult to achieve, since it is considered subversive' (2018, p. 230).

Thus, radical popular education has a rich history of experiment and major social and political transformations and the papers in this Special Issue reflect this as well as highlighting different cultural approaches and traditions. One of the aims of the Special Issue also provides a space for critical reflection on the state of radical popular education in the present conjuncture and its significance to the broader field of adult education.

The Contributions to this Special Issue Radical Popular Education

We were delighted by the keen interest that the Call for Papers for this Special Issue generated. We have eleven papers that cover diverse themes and issues in relation to radical popular adult education in movements and organisations, in community and higher education settingz and in literacy projects. It offers a fascinating insight into the varied ways radical popular education has been approached. The articles deal with the past and present of radical popular education and in Brazil, Tanzania, Poland, Portugal, Ireland, Spain, England and Scotland.

The first paper by Astrid von Kotze and Shirley Walters from South Africa reminds us that popular education today needs to think and act globally in responding to what refer to as a 'climatic catastrophe'. In doing so they are arguing that radical popular education is still relevant to today's issues such as climate change albeit in a changing way. In their paper they are calling for 'humanity to change the way we live' if we are to change the current climatic crisis as well as asking 'how do radical popular educators respond to this call?' To address this question they draw on their activist work in Africa from the perspective of ecofeminism thus challenging patriarchal male perspectives. Using examples from Africa they link questions of equality to ecology and argue for the need to learn from each other in supporting communities to sustain and conserve their land against the climate damage to the land by the wealthy.

Mariateresa Muraca explores in the second paper a Freirean analysis of the Peasant Women's Movement (Movimento de Mulheres Camponesas MMC), a movement that today exists in eighteen Brazilian states. Muraca offers a detailed account of the MMC based on collaborative ethnography. The paper discusses the inspiration provided by Paulo Freire's pedagogies in this movement and how this movement has developed and adapted Freire's ideas and that he is 'a crucial reference point for the MMC'. This influence is rooted in the history of liberation theology and popular political and cultural struggle in Brazil. Specifically, Muraca discerns Freire's influence in the dialogical and participatory approaches to education and research, the way that militant subjectivities are built, the critical positioning and permanent problematising, and the strong connections between the concrete experience of social actors and their attempts to change social reality. Muraca's paper does an excellent job in presenting popular education as an integral, living component of the MMC's work. As such Freire is remade and rearticulated through new experiences and concerns and in the case of MMC agroecology and reflecting on the value of feminism to the movement.

An interesting case study is presented in the third paper from Spain illustrating the importance of transforming popular adult education ideas and theory into practice in different settings. The paper by Laura Ruiz Eugenio, Itxaso Tellado, Rosa Valls-Carol and Regina Gairal-Casadó use the term dialogic popular education to illustrate how popular education has been developed in the post-Franco era. They describe the establishment of an adult education centre La Verneda Saint Marti School in a popular quarter of Barcelona in the 1970s which still exists today. Freire was a major inspiration

for this work but it is also other emancipatory educational currents such as the vibrant, if discontinuous history of socialist and anarchist education in Spain and contemporary feminism. The aim of La Verneda Saint Marti School is tackling oppression and fostering progressive social change in this area of Barcelona. The article details some of the activity and successes of this project in supporting learning and solidarity. It outlines how this is tightly linked to the work of CREA at the University of Barcelona and offers a fascinating example of how popular education can be supported by university researchers and how the lessons learnt through popular education can then be brought to the university (in the example offered in the article this relates to tackling gender inequalities). Large- scale and ambitions academic projects led by CREA utilising these emancipatory approaches, and synthesising a wider body of critical social science, were then applied in formal educational reform. The article offers a fascinating example of how ideas and practices travel between settings and institutions in a generative way.

The fourth paper is by Carmen Cavaco, Catarina Paulos, Rita Domingos and Emília Alves takes us to the Cova da Moura neighbourhood in Portugal, self-built by African migrants on abandoned land and with a long story of popular struggles. The paper analyses the dynamics of popular education inspired by participatory research in the association Moinho da Juventude, where the role of the 'expert by experience' and the 'work in tandem' is central. The paper shows a wide range of popular education initiatives jointly built and managed by the association and the people that seek to change and improve the social, cultural and educational life of the neighbourhood. The findings emphasise that participatory research centred in the political action does have a strong potential to foster a collective-critical interpretation of the social reality, and the capacity to transform it via counter-hegemonic emancipatory processes

The fifth paper by Silke Schreiber-Barsch, Joseph Badokufa and Lukas Elbe offers a conceptual and transnational/continent approach to radical popular adult education by looking at the work of Paulo Freire as a Brazilian and that of Julius K Nyerere of Tanzania. The authors explore the relevance of their work on education for liberation to radical popular adult education today. The paper draws on qualitative comparative methodology to explore and enter a dialogue into the commonalities and differences between the approaches of Freire and Nyerere and their contribution to radical popular adult education. Within this framework issues of solidarity and sustainability are central.

In the sixth paper Marjorie Mayo and Fiona Ranford discuss popular education in the UK. They argue that in an era of populism and growing inequalities popular education is needed more than ever. The article notes with concern 'increasing exploitation and oppression, along with persistent xenophobia and violence against women and minority communities'. Recent political history in the UK means that this article foregrounds the challenges we face but argues, pace Freire, for the need for hope. With that in mind the authors discuss empirical reseach The World Transformed (TWT) project 'a festival of political discussions and cultural events' launched in 2016. This initiative was held alongside the Labour Party's annual conference but was not directed by the party. The aim was to reach to activists in community and movements and trade unionists. Between 2017-2019 18,000 people attended these festivals which 'included political discussions, debates, workshops, training sessions, exhibitions, performance, guided historic walks, music and sports' including a session dedicated to creating a popular education network. TWT has also branched out to do local events. The authors indicates that this work has had a positive impact but is faced with scarce resources and issues of inclusivity, funding and reach. They authors conclude that the findings point to the 'need for the development of mutual support systems and networks' and suggest that universities could play a role in such work.

The seventh paper takes us to northern Europe presenting another case study. Juha Suoranta looks at the changing Finnish higher education system and the move to establishing managerial neoliberal universities and crucially asks how can radical popular education find a space in such a climate? Of course, this is not a situation which is confined to Finland as it has relevance to what is happening to universities globally. Adult education has a long history in Finnish universities but like in other countries it has been marginalised academically. The paper presents the findings of a project undertaken at Tampere University which highlighted that even in a managerial led university popular adult education still has a role to play in offering 'meaningful knowledge' and a sustainable future.

Our eighth paper by Piotr Kowzan explores the role of protest songs and how they were used as a popular education pedagogical tool by a trade union during a strike by teachers in 2019 in Poland. The teachers were striking about increasing managerialism and worsening working conditions. The wider political context in Poland is riven by debates over history, curriculum and nationalism and sharp concerns about the undermining of democracy. In the article Kowzan discuss the importance of songs in protest including of course in efforts linked to popular education such as Highlander centre in the United States and in Poland's recent history (most notably in the struggles of Solidarnosc). Drawing on the critical sociology of Eyerman and Jamison's (1991) work on the nature of learning in social movements, a somewhat neglected source in adult education, and directs the reader's attention to the role of popular culture in popular education. Kowzan looks at 78 of the protest songs of the teachers which were shared on lineas an educational tool to highlight their situation. However, Kowzan argues that the protest songs rather than furthering their cause the attempt misfired. The article concludes with reflections on what can be learnt from this

Bernie Grummell is the author of the ninth paper. This paper moves the focus to adult literacy and in particular the contribution of adult popular education in the development of and current practice of adult literacy in the Republic of Ireland. Like other European countries the work of Paulo Freire has been significant in 'Irish adult education and community development. However, the article describes the specific way Freire was interpreted (with a strong emphasis on dialogue and learner-centredness and less on political praxis). Based on extensive empirical research it also documents how policy change in recent years have constrained radical adult education in the Further Education and Training sector (post-compulsory education) with its ethos of performativity and professionalism. By analysing the findings of research reports Grummell argues that adult literacy educators can still find spaces to counteract performativity but not in a way which leads to transformation.

The tenth article by Lyn Tett examines if health inequalities can be combatted using popular education methods whereby people identify and challenge inequalities in their communities. The concept of health used in this paper departs from student's writings from the Health Issues in the Community (HIIC) project and show the impact of unemployment, lack of facilities, or food poverty on people's physical and mental health. The practices of popular education analysed in the text allowed people to link their experience with wider political structures, helping individuals, collectives and social movements to identify and understand problems, fostering a critical consciousness that counteracts oppressive structures and lead a struggle for dignity and liberation. Tett argues that popular education can challenge the ways in which discrimination is reinforced through the very processes and outcomes of education, but the educator must resist the power they have to steer students in particular directions.

The final paper by Mai Atta and John Holst focuses on the concept and understanding of social movement learning, not through direct empirical research, but through an analysis and review of existing literature that discuss research studies. From their review of empirical studies, Atta and Holst have identified five elements that could serve as the foundation of a theory of learning in social movements – interrelated elements but each can be unique within a movement. But in their own words, it 'potentially leads the field to consider the need not for a theory of learning in social movements, but rather a theory of learning and education within social movements'. There are only a handful of such theoretical syntheses of this scope in our field. Given the increased interest in the topic of social movement learning it is a significant resource for those interested in developing theories of popular education which integrates the insights of social movement studies.

Read as a whole the special issue illustrates just how difficult it can be to develop and sustain meaningful radical popular education in many contexts. As Suoranta and Mayo argue the neoliberalisation has had profound effects on what can be done or even envisaged as popular educators. As Kowzan notes radical intention and great efforts do not necessarily result in vibrant popular education and the process and modes of communication need to be genuinely dialogical to be effective. Nevertheless, the articles in the special issue also demonstrate that radical popular education can be sustained over long periods of time through conviction, vision and genuine community collaboration. The accounts of popular education in Portugal, Brazil and Spain contained in this issue attest to this and the generative impact this can have. In theorising popular education the article indicate Freire remains a central figure but it is worth noting that in when popular education is sustained over time Freire's ideas and practices always need to be adapted, rethought or refined. Feminist and ecological currents in contemporary popular education appear to have been particularly fruitful in this regard.

Undoubtedly the power of some of the popular education initiatives described in the issue comes from their rootedness in local context. Nevertheless, it is striking how much of this activity, some in projects over forty years, remain largely 'under the radar' in the European adult education research landscape. It is worth reflecting on why some of the projects documented here or why large-scale political-educational struggles in South America are not more visible despite a substantive body of research on them (Kane, 2001; Maison, 2023; Souza, 2007; Tarlau, 2013; Zibechi, 2012). We are inclined to see this as, amongst other factor, as evidence of fragmentation between progressive movements (Fraser, 2022). At the very least, as Mayo points out in her article in this special issue, this indicates there may be a need to develop or revive popular education networks and to think much more systematically about how to support transversal and transnational popular education (Arribas, 2022).

We want to conclude by directly connecting this discussion of possibility of popular education and fragmentation of progressive social movements to the arguments made about the severity of the climate crisis in this issue. As Wainwright and Mann have argued

> Though we contend with climate change now, its most significant ecological and political consequences are still to come. The challenge of analyzing and anticipating those consequences is enormous. This is partly because both the planet's ecologies and its politics are extraordinarily complex and subject to an almost infinite variety of influences, and partly because climate change is changing what it means to be human on Earth. (Wainwright & Mann, 2018, p.18)

As Von Kotze and Walters outline in the first article featured in this special issue to respond in a reflexive and agentic way to these circumstances is a daunting task. In these

circumstances building on what we know about the potential and limits of radical popular education acquires a new urgency and relevance.

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Taking risks: Exploring ecofeminist, climate-just popular education

Astrid von Kotze
University of the Western Cape, South Africa (astridvonkotze@gmail.com)

Shirley Walters
University of the Western Cape, South Africa (ferris@iafrica.com)

Abstract

The climate catastrophe is a clarion call to humanity to change how we live. How do radical popular educators respond to this call? We 'join the dots' using climate justice, ecofeminism and our own insights from our engaged activist scholarship as theoretical positions to explore this question. Dominant Western worldviews which separate humans from other life forms contribute to ecological degradation. For climate justice, this hard-wired worldview needs to be disrupted. Drawing on multiple examples from Africa, we conclude that ways to do this require the foregrounding of cognitive justice which includes recognising the validity of multiple knowledges, learning from others and supporting communities' in their struggles for reparation, reclamation and conservation of their land. These actions can be amplified in engagements which disrupt the unsustainable behaviour and policies of the wealthy. We argue that radical popular education in these times is climate just and ecofeminist.

Keywords: popular education, ecofeminism, risk, climate justice, Nature

Introduction

Twenty people from different countries, speaking different languages, are constructing a risk profile of the Southern African region by naming the risk factors that impact their daily lives. Many of these reflect the Western capitalist, colonialist histories of the participants. They label old tin cans with them. Next, the precarious exercise of stacking the tins on top of one another. The first tin is labeled 'colonialism', that carved up the land and denuded the earth; there is 'capitalist economics' that turned people into competitive individuals and elevated profit above people; there is 'patriarchy', the

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continued domination and degradation of women and Nature; there is 'rapid urbanization' that turned people into migrants without homes; there is 'unemployment', stacked on top of 'poverty', balancing precariously on 'inequality'; lack of access to clean safe 'water' teeters on 'food insecurity', and 'ill health' without reliable accessible health care, is topped by 'violence' against women and children. As we build, we hold our breath: how high can we go until the tower collapses? Just how many risk factors do working-class people and peasants juggle in their daily lives? Finally, 'drought' tumbles the stack – it is both the cause of many named risk factors and the final straw that topples survival capacities of communities in this drought-risk prone region. The process is an example of a popular education activity conducted with development and aid workers who participated in a Southern African disaster mitigation course, in 1995. (von Kotze & Holloway, 1996) Since then, 26 years on, the risk factors have increased many-fold, climate crisis ground has shifted further and become more unstable, and there are strong winds blowing.

In the context of the climate catastrophe that is unfolding, we explore and imagine what role radical popular education can play. We follow the interpretation of 'radical popular education' as education that leads to the production of 'really useful knowledge' (Thompson, 1997) but goes beyond conscientisation towards organising for action. We argue that a climate-just popular education is ecofeminist. We explore parameters of climate-just popular education and provide examples of climate-just popular education in action. We begin with a brief setting of the scene, including a questioning of whether or not we

Setting the scene

We are both activist-scholars from South Africa. The climate emergency is very much in our hearts, minds and bodies as scientists have declared the Southern African region, which consists of 14 countries, a 'climate change hotspot', particularly for women who are the main growers of food, care-givers to the vulnerable and preservers of local Nature – even if their work is not counted in the economy. This means that we will experience much more severe impacts with more frequent droughts, less regular rainfall, less certain food supplies, more cyclones and flooding. The fall-out from such events will be borne particularly by women who are always on the frontline of disaster-risk. Average annual temperatures across Southern Africa may increase by up to 3 degrees by the 2060s and 5 degrees by 2090s – a temperature that would render human life nearly impossible. (WFP, 2021) The drought is no longer just the final straw but infuses every aspect of living and livelihoods: social, economic, environmental, political. This is not just a problem for Southern Africa - the whole planet is impacted. Faced with a deluge of dire warnings from scientists and alarming signals from the environment, confronted with the trauma of starvation and the ongoing violence of displacement, war, migrations, living feels ever more precarious and it is hard to stay positive and hopeful. Especially, as van Diemen (2022) reports, oil companies claim record profits and, 'In a time when rapid and drastic emission cuts are required, the global economy has been rebooting from a once-in-a-century pandemic, and this is largely powered by burning more coal and gas than ever.'

The planet is in trouble and our survival as a species is in jeopardy. Dilworth (2010, p. 394) suggests this has been known since the early 1970s. Governments at that time either refused to face the ecological facts or played down their seriousness. This is a situation that has not changed in the ensuing 50 years. A central message has been that the current growth trends cannot be sustained, and this has been reconfirmed every year by thousands of headlines, hundreds of conferences and many new scientific studies,

including the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2022) report, as much as people's direct experience of increasing global climate events.
The Western worldview with the distinct separation between humans and other life forms, its belief in the validity and importance of modern science, its emphasis on technological development remains strong, especially in the hands of the powerful. While Sachs (2019, p. xi) had already questioned the notion of 'development' in 1993, as a 'ruin in the intellectual landscape', development as limitless economic growth with the maximisation of profits continues to dominate within the global capitalist economy. It also enables access to 'natural resources' which humans are destined to control and conquer for their own ends. There is a symbiotic relationship between the ideology of endless growth, more extraction and consumption by the world's elite, and the ecological crisis. 'The fast-moving climate crisis represents not just an economic threat to people invested in the extractive sectors but also a cosmological threat to the people invested in this worldview' (Klein, 2022).

The impacts of the 'climate crisis' are nothing new for Indigenous people who have for 500 years fought off the social, cultural and environmental genocides of racist settler-colonialism, patriarchy, global capitalism, the 'externalities' of toxic, industrial and consumer waste, the killing, starvation and sickening of their people, forests, lands, air, seas and rivers. (Walter, 2021) We give one example below of how local peasant communities view risk in relation to the destruction of their community structures and cosmological beliefs. Here, it is important to note the importance of our own learning through attentive listening to local perspectives and old wisdoms.

The environmental crises around the world are highlighting multiple and interrelated economic, political, cultural and environmental risks. This is the complex, dangerous environment through which popular educators must navigate and in which we explore radical popular education's role.

We begin by questioning whether there is a purpose to writing this article, given that so much has been said before. We resolve to proceed, drawing on our immersion as ecofeminist, climate justice activist-scholars in order to share our own questions, conundrums and emerging insights.

To write or not to write – what is the point?

As ecofeminists we identify in Salleh's (2017) terms, as 'streetfighters and philosophers.' Much of our praxis is rooted in the belief that we must view the world and struggle inter-sectionally: by joining the dots amongst racism, sexism, patriarchy, capitalism and ecological degradation. We are clear that the deep social, economic and political problems of our times are not signs of a passing "moment" or a single issue; they rather signal a crisis made up of multiple accumulated risk factors, whose components all strengthen and reinforce each other. In these circumstances we asked ourselves whether we could justify accepting the invitation to reflect on the role radical popular education can play and what shape and form it should take. The following dialogue ensued between us:

> I find it hard to write this. We have nothing new to say. Radical popular education continues to play a role in social movements and progressive NGOs. We have been writing about it and have explained why the move to ecofeminism was/is necessary.
>
> Yes and no. Indeed, many of the arguments we have been making again and again over decades. And the context is changing – the planetary limits are being reached and the conditions under which radical popular educators are working are shifting. I believe that it is still important to support ecofeminist movements and groups who are challenging

> patriarchy, racism and capitalism on the ground. One of many ways of supporting may be to write about what they are doing in order to amplify their struggles so they do not feel alone – so writing can also be an act of solidarity.
>
> I would agree that empathy and solidarity are crucial, but since we believe that the struggle must come from below, people on the ground are much more knowledgeable and better placed to tell their own stories. The women in the countryside and informal settlements experience the crisis much more directly, and in order to cope and adapt, they call on old wisdom and skills. Besides, will we not be accused of becoming complicit with 'her words on his lips', in other words: muscling in and speaking for people?
>
> Is it not more a case of 'learning from the other'? We read about and are inspired by the many initiatives of ecofeminists in different parts of the world and we recognise that they have a lot to teach us.
>
> So, the tables have turned: it's no longer the middle-class, formally educated educators who do the teaching. If only we could find a way to really listen, with all our senses!
>
> Given the precariousness of the planet, of our tentative knowledge of how to respond, let's write the paper as a process of emergence. Let's take the risk of uncertainty as a starting point and see what insights emerge for radical popular educators in our uncertain present and future.

So, we proceed. We have briefly sketched the realities of ever-present risks confronting poor, working class, marginalised communities vis a vis the climate crisis. We begin by presenting our understanding of climate justice. We then describe ecofeminism which we understand to be an integral part of climate justice. Once we have introduced these concepts, we proceed to discuss radical, climate-just, ecofeminist popular education with its various dimensions.

Conceptual frame

Climate justice

Language is culturally weighted: The words we use to interpret and make sense of the world colour the way we see it. They are not 'objective' tools for description, as the natural sciences would claim. The language used is imbued with power and the knowledge framework or system it draws on is equally representative of specific power relations. As Motta and Esteves (2014) have argued, the politics of knowledge is deeply monological, authoritarian and violent. For example, in isiZulu the word 'imvelo' means environment, ecology, and nature. The perception by English-only speakers that the lack of separate words demonstrates the language's conceptual shallowness builds on racist colonialists' ideas of the inferiority of 'natives' whose language was described as 'mumbo jumbo' and whose knowledge was eradicated, deleted, eliminated under colonising regimes. In spoken language, words with multiple meanings are differentiated and clarified through the addition of other words, and references to context. The result is precise, specific and illustrative. For example, 'drought' may be endemic to Southern Africa, however, particular drought events are often described by outlining coping mechanisms, rather than one word, for example 'the time when children were sent to town', or 'the time of picking wild berries'.

The choice of the words 'climate justice' rather than 'climate change' allows us to point to the interconnected struggles when responding to multiple accumulating crises. If

we speak of climate justice, instead of climate change, we are already drawing attention to the ethical and political dimensions, and to the injustices and inequalities that must be driving any suggested adaptation or mitigation measures. Debunking the notion that accelerated climate change is natural and normal cannot be overstressed: The increase in carbon dioxide through growth-lead industrialisation, the greenhouse effect, the acidifying of oceans, over-exploitation of fisheries and forests, the poisoning of soil, are results of human actions. Further, ecological degradations and related conditions of livelihoods often give rise to or coincide with social conflicts involving matters of ethnicity or gender, class or caste, or territorial rights. Climate justice implies that human actions skew conditions so they benefit some, while harming others. This process is deeply political.

'Climate justice' is a term and, more than that, a movement that acknowledges inequities and addresses them directly through long term mitigation, adaptation and transformative strategies. The term 'climate justice' began to gain traction in the late 1990s following a wide range of activities by social and environmental justice movements that emerged in response to the operations of the fossil fuel industry and, later, to what their members saw as the failed global climate governance model at COP15 in Copenhagen. The term continues to gain momentum in discussions about sustainable development, climate change, mitigation and adaptation (Holifield et al, 2018; Tokar, 2019).

Climate justice, as elaborated in the Climate Justice Charter (SAFSC, 2020), is concerned with food sovereignty, health, economic activity, gender equity, housing, transportation, and more. It demands fundamental change in the political and economic order towards socio-economic, gender and racial justice. It is about foregrounding those people who have contributed least to 'crises' and are most affected by them, both in terms of their adaptation and in acknowledgement of the knowledge they bring to the finding of just solutions. Women often occupy the frontlines of environmental justice movements because they experience climate instability more acutely than other groups. Therefore, gender justice is a crucial part of a just transition. Climate justice activists call for 'systems change not climate change'. They also call to be recognized as knowledge creators in their own right and not just consumers of knowledge (Chiponda, 2022; Visvanathan, 2005). Ecofeminism can be seen as an elaboration of climate justice.

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminists argue the inseparable connection of capitalism, patriarchy, racism and ecological breakdown. Salleh (Institute for Global Development [IGD], 2021, p. 3) states that compartmentalizing issues as 'single issues', for example, drought, health or gender-based violence, inadvertently 'disguises existing, often, intersectional power relations because it stops people "joining the dots"'.

Mies and Shiva (2014, p. 47) have traced the historical roots of the connection between capitalism, patriarchy and ecological breakdown. Put succinctly, an ecofeminist perspective posits that current dominant development processes and decisions are shaped by the view that Nature is at the service of humans (Randriamaro & Hargreaves, 2019). This view reduces Nature to `natural resources`, inanimate 'things' to be exploited for human consumption and profit. Additionally, dominant divisions of labor assign women primary responsibility for production, processing and preparation of food, provisioning of water and fuel, and caring for family. Because of these roles, women – working-class, Indigenous and peasant women in particular – rely on Nature and healthy environments.

Even though provision of sustenance and care-work are vital, a masculinist economy treats them as non-work.

Ecofeminism holds that patriarchy, where men's perspectives and interests are at the apex of hierarchical systems, dehumanizes women, excludes women from decision-making, brings women's labor into exploitative service of the economy and men's interests in households and communities. It is why ecofeminists argue that poor women must be central in strivings for climate justice. An ecofeminist framework holds promise for both the understanding and attainment of climate justice.

At the centre of ecofeminism is praxis. Theory is forged in the struggles to challenge the brutality of patriarchal capitalism and to form alternative ecofeminist visions of the future. As Gough and Whitehouse (2019, p. 333) argue, ecofeminism is decidedly transformative rather than reformist in orientation. Ecofeminists seek to radically restructure economic, social and political institutions. It makes explicit the links between the oppression of women and the oppression of Nature in patriarchal cultures.

Ecofeminist orientations challenge one of the core reasons for advancement of climate emergencies - the invalid barrier between knowledge (held by 'specialists') and ignorance (the 'non-specialist'). This has led to knowledge of Nature being articulated either as raw material to be used for beneficiating production or as fragmented pieces separated from human systems and human lives. As Burt (2020) elaborates, non-specialist knowledge is often viewed as raw material to be interpreted and formulated by 'the specialist', and in the process local knowledge and practices are distorted or reformulated within a capitalist frame. The global extractive food system is a good illustration of this. Another example of what knowledge is seen as valuable is how formal education curricula are geared for the production of economic actors, and not for ecological caring. Orr (2004) argues that western educational systems and practices equip people to become more effective vandals of the Earth.

An important component of climate justice and ecofeminism is cognitive justice, and Nadeau (2020, p. 5), as a 'white settler', describes how decolonisation is a 'process of unlearning a worldview and values and ways of acting and being in the world that have prohibited and continue to prohibit any meaningful and mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people'. It is a process which is both deeply personal and political.

Ecofeminist climate-just radical popular education

The description of 'the tin can' workshop at the beginning of the paper contains the essence of all the 'ingredients' of popular education: community-based, working class people participating actively in dialogue, constructing the knowledge they need to develop a deeper understanding of the dire conditions that threaten their lives. The process of learning together draws on all the senses and faculties, engaging 'hands, hearts and heads' as much as different roots of knowledge and insight, recognising embodied ways of knowing, as illustrated by Menakem (2017) who describes racialised trauma and resilience expressed through the body. Yet, while radical popular education, clearly defined as education for deep transformation, would build on new insights towards action, popular education often 'stalls' at the point of conscientisation. Radical ecofeminist popular education is collective, deeply participatory and democratic, with the 'really useful knowledge' built through critical dialogue giving rise to organising for action. (Thompson, 1997; Crowther, Martin & Shaw, 1999; Crowther, Galloway & Martin, 2005; von Kotze, 2022)

So, what makes radical popular education climate-just and ecofeminist? In a previous paper (Walters & von Kotze, 2021), we highlighted what we understand by ecofeminist popular education. It does all that feminist popular education does, and more. As Mohanty (2012) succinctly states,

> Feminist popular education provides innovative feminist pedagogical and methodological lenses that allow us to 'see', analyse, and enact pedagogies of personal, cultural, and political resistance to inherited patriarchal and misogynist practices. It offers pedagogic and transformative practices, designed to speak truth to power, and transform ourselves in the pursuit of gender justice. (Mohanty, 2012, p. viii)

Ecofeminist climate-just radical popular education deliberately pursues socio-ecological justice; however, it requires organising for progressive action in response to new insights, to become 'radical'. A key to this is cognitive justice which acknowledges and incorporates multiple knowledges (de Sousa Santos, 2018).

Cognitive justice: Recognizing multiple knowledges

Calls for including other knowledges from Indigenous, working class people, in particular women, have long been part of bottom-up development discourses and community education (Chambers, 1983). Capitalism is built on alienations and hierarchical arrangements that are re-produced through separation, dispossession, divisions. Lange et al. (2021) describe Indigenous knowledge systems as profoundly relational and argue that we need to move from the `separation paradigm` which carries the techno-industrial values of Western Eurocentric culture, towards the 'relationality paradigm' that can take us beyond entrenched ways of thinking and being. Lange et al (2021, p. 25) are careful not to reinforce the dichotomy and argue that they do not see one paradigm replacing the other but there is a need for understandings 'to be stretched toward deeper approaches that transform our very patterns of our thinking/being/doing'.

de Sousa Santos (2014), informed by decolonial theory, highlighted that the struggle for global justice is inseparable from the struggle for cognitive justice and he introduced the idea of epistemicide, as 'the murder of knowledge'. The ideology of science and technology has long dismissed other knowledges as 'old wives' tales' with women's embodied knowledge being 'intuitive'. Knowledge systems built over generations as cultures developed expertise in survival within particular ecological contexts have been undermined and deleted. Ecofeminist critiques of science arose out of women's lived experience in a world of gender discrimination, heterosexism, environmental devastation and threat, increasing militarism, and nuclear proliferation. As Glazebrook (2017, p.437) has pointed out, 'Changing this world means understanding it through historical and other analyses that uncover the role of science and technology in supporting and enabling the degradation of ecosystems, labor conditions, and lived experience.' Cognitive justice is at the root of ecofeminism which recognises different and diverse knowledges, also as a way to avoid what Adichie (2018) termed 'the dangers of a single story'. Arguing for an embodied materialism, Salleh (2017, p.206) outlines how women's activities and work are punctuated by the complex rhythms of life. Observing how hydrological engineers would control water flows by stochastic calculation, she comments how this very process of knowledge-creation constitutes illusory epistemology. Furthermore, "The time-negating separation of body and mind, earth and water, is an early gesture toward the steadying of women's subaltern wisdoms."

Nature as educator

Resilience for the 1% of humanity is a very different matter than for the 99%. For many agrarian people, farmers, fishers, Indigenous people, whose lives are intertwined with Nature, the catastrophe has already happened, and some have found ways to survive. They have also developed deep understandings from which others could learn. People living in close proximity with Nature form close alliances because their mutual survival depends on it. We give two short examples to illustrate learning from / with Nature.

Sicelo Mbatha grew up in a remote rural village in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa. He says,

> We humans have acquired much information, but have lost much wisdom. We have enough information to dig out the last lump of coal, to drain the last drop of oil, yet we lack the wisdom to protect our one and only home and source of life. (Mbatha et al, 2021, p. 273)

He is a wilderness guide who dedicates his life to 'rekindle the wildness in all of us, to bring people into the presence of wildness and help open their souls to its beauty, wisdom and infinite power to heal'. (Mbatha et al, 2021, p.4) He has a deep understanding of the coexistence of all life forms. He, like Vandana Shiva, believes that if we have deep recognition of our interconnectedness we will act to conserve and preserve Nature. Mbatha's life's work is dedicated to this end. Drawing on his Zulu culture, he knows that humans are socio-ecological beings, entangled with Nature. He acknowledges that his wilderness stories don't come from him but are told by the rivers, the lonely buffalo, the butterflies, 'I am one with them. I breathe the same air as the lion roaring for the moonrise and the dung beetle foraging underfoot' (p.3) and describes himself as lucky 'to receive teachings from more living beings than I can count – from the fragile butterfly to the great, ponderous elephant.' (Mbatha & Pitt, 2021, p.7) Mbatha is addressing one of the major questions confronting educators globally: how do we humans redefine our relationships with Nature through co-existence?

Mbatha gives detailed examples of how animals and plants have been his teachers. He describes how openness to listen and learn brought about unlearning and changes in perspective, but also embracing new lessons and enacting new insights:

> I have learned about the power of forgiveness from the jaws of a crocodile. I have learned about grief from a bereaved baboon. I have learned about resilience from the burnt protea. I learned about ubuntu from the elephant. By walking on the ancient elephant pathways, I have learned that love can wash the dust from our eyes, and I have seen what wisdom these pathways have brought to so many others. (Mbatha & Pitt, 2021, p. 273-274)

As a wilderness guide he shares this learning with many groups of people helping them to heal and recognise their oneness with Nature.

Similarly, Jacklyn Cock (2018, p. 134) writes the biography of an ancestral river because she believes 'Supporting living rivers involves supporting human needs and rights, as well as local ecologies.'

> Rivers can connect us not only to nature, from which many urban people are alienated, but also to questions of justice. Understanding that we are all part of nature in the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe means recognising both our ecological and social interdependence and our shared vulnerability. (Cock, 2018, p.12)

In particular, as rivers have a destination:

> we can learn from the strength and certainty with which they travel. I believe this learning is valuable because acknowledging the past, and the inter-generational, racialised privileges, damages and denials it established and perpetuates, is necessary for a shared future. (Cock, 2018, p.13)

The land, too, is a holder of knowledge, a keeper of memories, an ontological mirror and ethical teacher. A long walk through a drought-ravaged semi-desert can teach us about the past and how it came to be parched; relics of human habitation will tell a story of activities that asked the earth to yield and give – but also of exploitation and violence. Like the river, the land is not a passive object – and anyone who has seen protea plants emerging out of a burned, charred landscape will know that there is much below the surface, unseen, that will sprout new life. Mbatha and Pitt (2021) and Clegg (2021) illustrate this clearly as they talk about initiation rites and passages of growing up. The land is sacred: it connects us to the ancestors and their counsel. It offers identity and belonging, comfort and security.

Indigenous knowledge and skills

In his study of hunter-gatherers and the agricultural system, Brody (2002) suggests that hunter-gatherers were much more settled than farmers because they needed to know the land like the back of their hands. Their knowledge and skills are tied to specific locations as they need to meet their needs now – not as a result of long-term strategic planning:

> Far from being simple or primitive, the economic and cultural techniques of hunter-gatherers were hard to see and difficult to assess precisely because they were meeting needs of mobility, decision-making and resource harvesting that were both varied and subtle. (Brody, 2002, p. 122)

Living frugally and sustainably they demonstrate how most of the world had lived for most of human history. The daily livelihood activities of poor and homeless people often resemble those of hunter-gatherers yet their actions are often derogatively described as ‘hustling’, rather than `resource mobilising`, as they live off the shards from the affluent. Like traditional knowledge and wisdom, their knowledge is contextual as the stories and testimonies of Indigenous and marginalised people are usually connected to a ‘home-place’.

Snively et al. (2016) make the distinction thus: while to `settler minds` land is property, real estate, capital, a resource, to many local people it is their library and pharmacy, their grocery store and the source of everything that sustains them. They use the metaphor of braiding to illustrate the intimate connection:

> We braid cedar bark to make beautiful baskets, bracelets and blankets. When braiding hair, kindness and love can flow between the braids. Linked by braiding, there is a certain reciprocity amongst strands, all the strands hold together. Each strand remains a separate entity, a certain tension is required, but all strands come together to form the whole. When we braid Indigenous Science with Western Science we acknowledge that both ways of knowing are legitimate forms of knowledge. For Indigenous peoples, Indigenous Knowledge (Indigenous Science) is a gift. It cannot be simply bought and sold. Certain obligations are attached. The more something is shared, the greater becomes its value. (Snively et al, 2016, p. 4)

How can we learn from the certainty and strength of a river? How do we go about hearing and seeing the lessons offered by animals, as described by Mbatha? How do we learn and

teach the mutual reciprocal relationships between Nature and humans? As educators, how do we initiate or guide such learning, when this learning is new to us as well? We suggest that education must include a wide range of different people, and other life forms, bringing different knowledge, perspectives, histories, cultural roots and experiences to the dialogue, so that new views and insights are opened. Educators must ask the difficult questions that uncover interests, power, privilege and damage. Respectful of others' dignity – whether they are an elephant, a plant or a person, as Mbatha describes, all our survival is mutually dependent on finding a common language and path. One place to look, as we show below, is amongst Indigenous, working class, peasant communities, women, and the more-than-human. Writing about public pedagogy, Motta and Esteva (2014, p. 5) suggest that, 'Practices of visibilisation (be that textual, visual, embodied, audio) are an act of public pedagogy embedded in ethical and political commitments to recognising the epistemological privilege of those represented as uneducated, irrational and illiterate'. Thus, 'bracketing' and suspending our preconceptions and understandings in order to better listen, is a good start.

Lessons from African wisdom

At a drought mitigation workshop in 1987, participants were asked to explain the cause of the recent drought emergency in Zambia. One participant suggested that communities had not come together to worship their ancestors, and the disregard for cultural dictates had caused the disaster. Derisive laughter from disaster managers present was the response. Yet, analysing the deep, lasting effects of hazards such as drought in the light of current climate emergencies, it is clear how important community links and chains of care and support are. What s/he was suggesting is that drought emergencies must be addressed collectively - an action that requires organising. Mobilising for rituals rooted in past practices would be a way to do this. It is only by standing together, practicing 'ubuntu' that groups and communities can change their conditions.

Ubuntu is an African-wide ethical paradigm that expresses the obligation to look after one another and the environment. Ubuntu - abbreviated from 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' - literally means: a person is a person through people'. It expresses an obligation to look after one another and the environment, believing that all our wellbeing is mutually contingent. Ubuntu, being for/through the other relies on an encounter with the other, a coming into being through the other, a building of relations and relationships. This is the core of care and, arguably, of education.

As an ethics of interrelationships, it is situated in the communitarian social fabric of caring and sharing. Terreblanche (2018, p. 169) states that ubuntu may equal and even exceed, socialist notions of a 'radical egalitarianism'. While ubuntu has been misappropriated and co-opted for opportunistic ventures there are contemporary moves to tease out those tenets of ubuntu that could catalyse a project of radical transformation to a more ecologically just future. There is complementarity between ubuntu and Latin America's buen vivir. Both reject modernity's nature-society duality and regard restorative justice as the principal mechanism to achieve harmony with the cosmos.

Nonhle Mbuthuma (2022, p. 91), the spokesperson for the Amadiba Crisis Committee of Xolobeni, a rural village in Pondoland, South Africa, describes how their community, and those still to come, would not survive if ubuntu was not practised. She illustrates ubuntu at work when she says:

> This culture, it helps people love and care for each other. For example, barter exchange: If you know that that family does not have livestock, you think "no let me do that and let me share". You know sharing is very rare these days but my community has the kind of culture

> where if I left my child at home with your children, there is no problem. I'm not worried that my child will be stolen…. I am very proud of our community to say that we are feeding ourselves. (Mbuthuma, 2022, p. 91)

Since the 1950s when colonial powers were trying to colonise the whole of Pondoland, the Amapondo have been fighting for their right to determine their own future. Their land is agricultural and ancestral. Their ancestors fought for the land so that the present and future generations can survive and live in a peaceful environment.

Today, Xolobeni is at the forefront of the fight for environmental and sustainable rights in their area. In 2021 the community won a legal battle against Australian mining company Mineral Commodities (MRC) which sought to access what is claimed to be the world's 10th-largest deposit of ilmenite, a core titanium ore, on the Umgungundlovu land. 'They must not bring us mines. We do not want mines. They must not carry out extractivism in our oceans because that ocean gives us life. They must bring clinics, hospitals and fix the roads; they must do what we want when we want it,' said a resident who called herself Mam'Sonjica. (Ngcuka, 2022)

Learning from communities who are conserving their land, who know how to live sustainably, with a sense of 'enoughness', is key for radical ecofeminist climate-just popular education. It's the practice of cognitive justice where Indigenous, working class, peasant women and men's knowledge, skills and understandings are placed at the centre. It's a source of inspiration in the quest to challenge the worldview which has humans as superior and separate from Nature. It can also be referred to as 'two-eyed seeing' which is the gift of multiple perspectives treasured by many Aboriginal people (Institute for integrative science and health, n.d.).

Radical ecofeminist popular education – creative solidarity in action

Lange (2018) suggests,

> […] in a process-based pedagogy, restorative and transformative learning are continuously unfolding into each other like spiraling water. […] Restorative learning welcomes intuitive knowledge as a process of growing attunement and ancient practices that 'speak' outside Western frameworks. Restorative learning is open to stories, rituals and ceremonies that can help us to access forgotten channels of knowing / being. (Lange, 2018, p. 40)

Given the hard-wired belief in Western society that humans are separate and superior from Nature, and that the individual is more important than the collective, radical popular educators, along with many others in society, will need to grapple with how this is best achieved. If Nature is in crisis, so are we.

In order to do the hard work of unlearning, re-imagining and planning for cultural alternatives that nurture and respect life on Earth, are critically important. Which ways of knowing and what kind of knowledge is most helpful in this time, and how can the education affirm life, rather than sow more fear and uncertainty? Radical popular education has long traditions of challenging the hierarchical dualisms of culture/nature, mind/body, science/folk knowledge, reason/feelings, materialism/spirituality. It does this through use of creative, participatory methodologies which include play, aesthetics, drama, storytelling. One of these is song. Singing has always played an important role in popular education – as people sing together they form stronger bonds and the trust grows. Johnny Clegg, South African songwriter, musician, dancer, describes how song and song-writing became the lessons of migrant culture and 'instructions' for children and youth regarding what lay ahead of them when it would be their turn to leave home, as migrant

workers: 'The cycle of leaving and returning became ingrained in migrant culture […]. The leaving (rupture), the struggle for sustenance in the city (the fight), and the return (either with booty or a broken spirit) were the main themes of songs in this genre.' (Clegg, 2021, p. 160).

Dramatic performances in community venues and public spaces that told stories of struggles were a useful tool by unionized workers to draw attention to the wider ramifications of their struggle and call for solidarity and support. Plays about climate justice by/for working class people performed in public spaces and community 'commons' will hopefully emerge again, now that the COVID pandemic lock-down conditions have been lifted.

Focusing on what we eat and drink, food systems and food insecurity, nutritional health and hunger are a good starting point for radical popular education. Beginning with what people know from their daily lives can light a spark about climate justice easier than talking about carbon emissions. The biggest impact of the climate crisis will be on agricultural and food systems, says the IPCC's (2022) recent report on food security and impacts. Current processes of food production, availability and access to nourishing foods, especially in vulnerable regions, undermine food security and nutrition. The bottom line is that by eating more plant-based foods and less meat, the affluent world can drastically reduce the carbon emissions that come from the food systems, by a third. However, as the IPCC report shows, the ability to produce food relies on water, soil fertility and pollination and as global warming weakens soil health, overall food productivity is undermined. Those who attempt to grow the food will feel the effects most.

One task for educators has always been to put seemingly disparate pieces together, connecting the dots to tell a whole story and stretch learners' critical imaginations to see the interrelatedness and connections in life. For example, the connections need to be made between the exploited, casualised workers on a fruit farm, and the shiny 'perfect' fruit on the supermarket shelves. Similarly, while peasants raise and consume fowl sustainably, the consumption of meat by the affluent is often disconnected from the animals who were slaughtered. The task of a radical ecofeminist popular educator might be to make the food system that produces hamburgers and steaks visible: the story of using animals as food should include an account of their brutal treatment in factory farms and slaughterhouses, the environmental impact of animal agriculture, and the impact of meat production on world hunger and human health (Sulcas, 2022).

The emotional component of learning/teaching is strong because we are dealing with fear: the fear of climate destabilisation, the fear of hazardous events, the fear from continuing uncertainty, the fear of impending doom, the fear of having to make changes irrespective of whether ready or not, the fear of ridicule, and so on. Importantly, the message delivered (for example regarding diet) may be perceived as threatening people's values which may result in hardening their resistance rather than encouraging openness to change. Therefore, educators need to respond empathetically and with care, providing safety and support, for exploring the unknown. The aim is to surface moral and ethical sensibilities which link to the integrity, honesty, respect, courage, and responsibility necessary to explore alternative ways of living.

Imagining alternative futures

Much of the learning about alternative ways of being and creating livelihoods happens in concrete physical living conditions of communities and neighbourhoods in working class areas and informal settlements. Increasingly, young and old people come together to establish community gardens, food growing initiatives and clean-up operations. The

direct agency exercised in participating to re-claim the commons within the constraints of structures contributes to healing and forges a collective spirit. As described elsewhere, many of these initiatives include education. (Walters & von Kotze, 2021; Walters, 2022)

An essential element of climate-just popular education is imagining alternative futures. There are community organisations educating and organising both to support immediate struggles on the ground and to imagine alternative futures. A network of ecofeminists, the WoMin African Alliance has a programme on Advancing African Ecofeminist Development Alternatives (AAEDA) that is ecofeminist, post-extractivist and transformative:

> This entails building African ecofeminist perspectives, conceptualizing, and advancing an African Ecofeminist concept of the Just Transition, defining just renewable energy alternatives, and supporting the democratization of decision-making through struggles for consent rights of women and their communities. (WoMin, n.d.-a)

WoMin African Alliance are working across Africa in solidarity with peasant, Indigenous and working-class women who are leading communities to challenge degradation of their land and destruction of their livelihoods. WoMin collects inspirational 'stories of struggles and resistance' that illustrate what women, collectively, do to defend the commons. (WoMin, n.d.-a, WoMin, n.d.-b) For example, a group of women in Bargny in Senegal (Coalition for Fair Fisheries [CFFA], 2021) have been bound to the ocean over centuries. Commercial fishing and changes in climate are threatening their ways of life. They are defending the ocean and their land – they are imagining alternatives which allow them to continue with ancient ways. In Burkina Faso, women are saying no to gold mining as they defend a future for their children. Over 500 women's associations in West African countries, the NSS (Nous Sommes la Solution), have organised themselves into an ecofeminist movement that promotes agroecology and food sovereignty. They promote sustainable farming practices, often rooted in traditional practices held by women. As the leader, Mariama Soko, says: 'It's the Indigenous knowledge and the practices that have always supported food sovereignty and this knowhow is in the hands of the women … Ecofeminism for me is the respect for all that we have around us.' (Shryock, 2021)

WoMin runs a Feminist Political School which crosses national boundaries, brings people together when possible to learn from one another, to deepen their analysis of the issues and to build solidarity amongst one another. An ecofeminist analysis is not a theoretical construct – to many African women who are defending their lives and livelihoods, it makes practical sense.

In the educational and organising work, they invite possibilities of other knowledges and ways of seeing and being in the world, interrogating how Eurocentric thought, knowledge and power structures dominate present societies, and how that thought and knowledge have consistently undermined colonised people. These processes help in the imagination of alternative futures.

With the urgent need to re-imagine, revise, re-create an alternative, more just, healthy and sustainable world, a greater number of educators are using the imagination and aesthetics – they use drama, play, artistic forms, film, experiential learning of various kinds (Spring & Clover, 2021; Butterwick & Roy, 2016). Art-making can create impulses towards an alternative future; strong rhythms, drums, singing, dance are part of any collective rituals as much as healing ceremonies performed by traditional healers, and they offer cathartic as much as aesthetic experiences. Plays can ignite, they can light fires and elicit strong affective responses both in the makers/performers and in the audience because the process appeals to the senses and emotions. Participants of performance event engage with `hands, hearts and heads` all at the same time: they act, they feel and they

reason. (Walters & von Kotze, 2021) Experiences as feminist popular educators have taught us this; we now need to consciously add ecofeminist sensibilities to strengthen our efforts.

Conclusion

The title of this paper suggests 'taking risks': for us, this has meant trying to find something useful to say that has not been articulated over and over again. We think, we both learned much in the process of writing and hope the emergent messages are clear. The climate catastrophe is a clarion call to humanity to change how we live. As Oksala, (2018, p. 231) states, "the reason for calling capitalism into question today is no longer merely our exploitative social and economic relationships to other human beings but the immeasurable devastation we are causing to the non-human world". In the process of dialoguing and writing we have discovered many communities, networks, movements, and organisations around the world that try to prefigure ways of undertaking collective action which is more just, equal, respectful – and thus contributing to an inclusive movement for feminist ecopolitics. We recognise that our practice as radical ecofeminist popular educators will deepen through active support for those at the forefront of confronting capitalism, patriarchy, racism and ecological degradation. Dawson (2022) argues:

> In the face of mounting environmental and social calamities, the only coherent stance must be to join Indigenous and local communities around the world in demanding the return of stolen land, respect for their sovereignty, and a radical transformation of the Colonialism that characterizes the unsustainable behavior and policies of the wealthy. (Dawson, 2022, para. 13)

As radical popular educators, inspired by climate and epistemological justice and ecofeminism, we can usefully learn from and support communities' struggling for reparation, with reclaiming and conserving their land. Those lessons can be amplified in engagements which disrupt the unsustainable behaviour and policies of the wealthy. If social movements' educational practices decentre 'the knowing-subject of capitalist coloniality through unveiling the violent logics at the heart of this practice of knowing' (Motta & Esteves, 2014, p. 9) radical popular educators can contribute by asking questions that deepen collective understandings of how best to unsettle the Western worldviews about relationships between humans and Nature. They can contribute through research and by using their access to power for raising issues. In this way we give credence to the feminist assertion that 'another world is possible'.

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Re-inventing Paulo Freire: the political-pedagogical practices of the Peasant Women's Movement

Mariateresa Muraca
Universidade do Estato do Pará, Brazil (mariateresa85muraca@gmail.com)

Abstract

The paper explores the importance of social movements as reinventors of Paulo Freire's pedagogy and promoters of a radical popular education. It particularly focuses on the Movimento de Mulheres Camponesas (MMC) (Peasant Women's Movement), which was founded in 2004 and is currently organised in eighteen Brazilian States. My reflections arise from a collaborative and multi-sited ethnography conducted with the Movement in the State of Santa Catarina, in the South of Brazil, between 2011 and 2015. In the light of this research, I will argue that the Freirean inspiration represents a path and a challenge for the MMC and is evident in its genealogy, struggles for education, political-educational methodologies and in the process of forming of militant subjectivities. On the other hand, I will argue that the Movement contributes to expanding Freire's proposal to new themes, such as: feminist struggles and the environmental question.

Keywords: Peasant Women's Movement, Paulo Freire, popular education, pedagogy of social movements, collaborative ethnography

Introduction

The thematisation of the link between education and politics by Paulo Freire[1] has marked a point of no return in the history of pedagogy, after which it is no longer possible to claim education is neutral. In recent decades, however, the educational policies of a neoliberal kind have endeavoured to appropriate the type of adult education, which gave rise to this breakthrough (Mayo & Vittoria, 2017). In this scenario, the question that arises is how to remain faithful to the philosophy and experiences of popular adult education and their transformative and radical goals. Some interesting attempts in this direction have been made by researchers who have sought to explore the educational dimensions of collective subjectivity (Abdi & Kapoor, 2009). Such research promotes the emergence of a pedagogy of social movements as a domain of political pedagogy, by highlighting the educational dimension of political practices and the political dimension of educational

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practices. This paper is situated within this horizon of research. In particularly it explores the importance of social movements as reinventors of Paulo Freire's perspective and promotion of radical popular education, by dealing with a specific research experience: a collaborative and multi-sited ethnography carried out with the Movimento de Mulheres Camponesas (MCC) (Peasant Women's Movement), in the State of Santa Catarina (Brazil), between 2011 and 2015, and focused on the understanding of political and pedagogical practices of the Movement.

Theoretical framework: Paulo Freire and social movements

Paulo Freire's pedagogy is one of movements (Streck, 2009). First and foremost because it originated in the practices of social movements, that is, the collective subjectivity, political practices and forms of participation that are not primarily expressed through institutional channels. It is a known fact, of course, that Freire developed the initial elements of his method of literacy-consciousness within adult education movements at a time in Brazilian history when popular participation was extremely vibrant (Brandão & Assumpção, 2009). Moreover, Freire rethought, expanded and radicalised his pedagogy throughout his life in dialogue with movements and intellectuals organic to them (Beisiegel, 2010). In this context, examples could be the Liberation Theology movement in Latin America; the decolonisation movements in Africa; the civil rights movements in the United States; and the re-democratisation movements that played an important part in putting an end to dictatorship in Brazil in 1985. Freire contributed directly to some of these experiences, inspired others, and felt an intense solidarity with others; he allowed himself to be questioned by all of them (Freire, 1992). To give just two examples, one can consider, on the one hand, the incorporation of a discussion based on the concept of class starting from The Pedagogy of the Oppressed following a deeper analysis of social reality (ibid.) and, on the other hand, the adoption of a sensitive language with gender differences thanks to the dialogue with some feminist thinkers. Freire never denied the importance of institutional politics and was, in fact, the councillor for education in the municipality of São Paulo from 1989 to 1991 (Torres, O'Cadiz, Wong, 1998). But he had a profound faith in grassroots political processes which bring together personal aspirations and collective utopias and generate an essential orientation towards life based on commitment and sharing. In his last interview, given to Luciana Burlamaqui of the TV PUC of São Paulo, April 17th (just fifteen days before his death), Freire referred to social movements, and in particular to the Movimento de Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (Landless Rural Workers Movement [MST]), stressing that it was one of the strongest expressions of the political and civic life of Brazil. In fact, his practice was confirming the analysis of political thinkers about the necessity and fruitfulness of conflict to promote social transformation.

Even today, Freire is still a fundamental reference point for many movements, which in every corner of the world continue to elaborate his pedagogy in the light of current matters, such as: the social and environmental justice (Gutiérrez & Prado, 1999; Gadotti, 2009), the intercultural encounter (Fleuri, 1998; Catarci, 2016), the decolonisation of knowledge and relationships (hooks, 1994; Walsh, 2017), and the challenge of nonviolence (Vigilante & Vittoria, 2011).

As I argued in two of my earlier works (Muraca, 2019, 2020), starting from my research and my educational work in Brazil, Guatemala, Italy and Mozambique, from a Freirean perspective, the educational dimension of social movements unfolds into four dimensions, which qualify the movements as: a) political-pedagogical subjects; b)

learning contexts; c) knowledge decolonisation laboratories; d) generative spaces for pedagogical theories. I will explain each dimension in more detail.

Firstly, social movements are political-pedagogical subjects and agents of transformation in the society in which they interact. They can be viewed as prophets of utopian possibilities of the future. It is exactly their marginal and hidden position, their character of minority and unrecognized forces that allow social movements to interpret reality with lucidity and to understand the need for struggle for change (Freire, 1997).

Secondly, social movements are also complex and plural learning contexts of a theoretical, practical, symbolic, reflexive, ethical, technical and cultural nature, which profoundly affect the formation of subjectivities. That is, in social movements we learn new content and analytical categories but also to participate and to organise ourselves; to critically interpret reality and to build a common language; to reflect on our own practice by elaborating knowledge; to coexist with others, cultivating values such as sharing and solidarity; to recognize and relate to different interlocutors within the public sphere; to value differences and to confront one another in a non-violent way etc. (Gadotti, Freire & Gjuimarães, 1989).

Thirdly, social movements can be considered as knowledge decolonisation laboratories where forms of domination are questioned and alternatives are created by, and in solidarity with, historically excluded subjects, communities, genealogies, rationalities, systems of civilization and life (Fleuri, 2008).

Finally, social movements constitute generative spaces for pedagogical theories, where collective self-research and collaborative research can promote theorising processes based on the need to understand and transform real situations. This aspect is revealed throughout Freire's life: as it was discussed above, the author created his pedagogical theory through constant dialogue with different social movements.

The Peasant Women's Movement in the State of Santa Catarina

The MMC began in the early 1980s under various designations in different regions of Brazil. Notably, in the southern State of Santa Catarina, the Movement was founded in 1983 under the name of the Farming Women's Movement, in the municipality of Chapecó, in the western region, where the state secretariat is still located today. After a long and intense process of dialogue and networking and thanks to the leadership of the more consolidated and structured movements of the Southern region, in 2004, several regional organizations united to become a national one (i.e. the Peasant Women's Movement). This allowed them to wage their battles with more strength and incisiveness. In Santa Catarina, the Movement's initial commitment focused not only on education – as I am going to explain in more detail below – but also on recognising the identity of 'female farmer'. This meant fighting to obtain personal and professional documents, such as identity card, social security number, voter registration card, rural producer notepad, which peasant women did not have access to before, and for defining social security rights, such as maternity pay, a pension at 55 years of age, sickness or accident benefits, etc. This path allowed peasant women to escape invisibility and to obtain social and economic recognition. In addition, the fight against violence towards women has always been at the heart of the Movement's activities. From the beginning, the MMC has adopted political and educational practices of struggle, such as: meetings, workshops, assemblies, marches and campaigns.

Since the turn of the century, and thanks in part to the consolidation of social security rights, the Movement's attention has turned to agroecology, which now represents the core around which all its struggles are articulated. Agroecology is an ecological paradigm

of agriculture in opposition to the dominant agribusiness model. It is not only a farming method which does not use pesticides or chemical fertilisers but also a way of life and a project for society, based on fair relations between men and women and between peoples, other living beings and the planet (Balestro & Sauer, 2009). In the MMC, agroecology takes on a feminist dimension, aiming at recognising and enhancing traditionally women's practices – such as the recovery, self-production and exchange of seeds – but, at the same time, at redefining them in a political perspective. In fact, these practices pursue the safeguard of the people's sovereignty and food security against the monopolies of a handful of multinationals (De Carvalho, 2003). The agroecological commitment connects the MMC to other national and international peasants' organisations, such as the Via Campesina (Fernandes et al., 2009).

Methodology

The reflections presented in this paper stem from the doctoral research I carried out with the Movement in the State of Santa Catarina from 2011 to 2015. The research aimed at exploring the political-pedagogical practices of the Movement and was based on a collaborative and multi-sited ethnography. This is a method characterised, firstly, by a deep immersion in the research context, secondly, by the participatory involvement of the subjects of the research in all its phases (Lassiter, 2005) and, thirdly, by multiple displacements of the researcher aimed at connecting different places and phenomena (Marcus, 1995). After an initial three-month period of negotiating access, I carried out a more intensive phase of the fieldwork, from July 2011 to February 2012, when I stayed in the homes of twenty-three of the Movement's militants[2], moving from week to week into their homes and crossing five municipalities in the west of Santa Catarina. Therefore, this approach was based at the same time on coexistence and itinerancy. In line with the collaborative ethnography approach, I later returned to the field several times to discuss the preliminary results of the analysis with my research interlocutors, especially when my interpretations differed from prevailing positions within the Movement.

I was therefore able to collect a large amount of in-depth data through different tools. In particular, I carried out twenty-seven narrative interviews with each of the women who hosted me in their homes and with others, whose life and commitment were significant for the purposes of the research. I conducted six focus groups, four during the intensive phase of the field research involving twenty-six women, followed by two more with seventeen women. Moreover, I compiled a field diary based on reflective participation[3] in the activities of the movement and the daily lives of the women who belong to it. Lastly, I collected and examined the documentation produced about and by the Movement (e.g., reports of Movement meetings, photographs and videos, information and educational material, theses or scientific articles written about the Movement during its history). The narrative interviews and focus groups carried out during the intensive field research phase and the reflective participation followed a common thread. The aim was to explore a) the participation process in the MMC (Rural Women's Movement) and in other organisations; b) the conflicts provoked by militancy and the strategies implemented to manage them; c) the transformations generated at multiple levels; d) the influence of the Movement on agricultural production choices and e) the commitment to agroecology. The focus groups, on the other hand, centred on the migratory path that my interlocutors and their families had taken and on the cultural complexity within the MMC and in the context of the research, which – as I will explain later – proved to be of primary importance during the research but had been rather neglected.

I transcribed and translated the narrative interviews and focus group content myself. For the purposes of the analysis, the transcription provided an initial understanding of the recurring themes which partly reflected the questions I proposed and partly arose spontaneously from what my interlocutors said. Identifying these recurring themes was subsequently fine-tuned by repeatedly reading all the material collected. I was thus able to compile a detailed list of mutually exclusive categories and subcategories, which was as precise as possible and conceptually congruent, to help me draft the final text. I will elaborate on these methodological dimensions later.

Findings

In this part of the article, I focus on what the research has highlighted in regard to the ways in which the MMC adopts, reinvents and relaunches Paulo Freire's pedagogy. In this respect, I will also focus on the main strengths and weaknesses, contradictions and challenges, which emerge from the Movement's political-pedagogical practices.

Freirean genealogy of the MMC

The first aspect in which Freirean influence can be seen is the *genealogy* of the MMC. In fact, as I have already mentioned, the MMC started up in the early 1980s, at a time of democratic transition (the regime in Brazil collapsed in 1985), in which many popular organisations sprang up in both the countryside and the city. One example is the MST[4], which is undoubtedly Brazil's best-known movement. This ferment, however, did not arise from nowhere; it was the result of the grassroots work carried out by the Church of Liberation Theology (LT). As shown in the documents of the Episcopal Conferences of Medellin in Colombia and Puebla in Mexico, which mark its foundation, the LT adopted Freirean pedagogy as a fundamental theoretical, political and operational reference (Mayo, 2008). This is especially evident in the intense activity involved in promoting the popular organisation and in training leaders, which was widespread in many rural and urban communities in Brazil (and Latin America). Indeed, many female MMC coordinators began their participation in core ecclesiastical communities as catechists, ministers of the word and of the Eucharist, or social pastoral agents (pastoral care of the land, health and youth, etc.).

This origin is still reflected today in the life of the Movement, particularly in *mística*, a dimension that is difficult to conceptualise, but which can be traced back to a profound sense of belonging to the MMC, which is nurtured, reaffirmed and celebrated in all the Movement's activities (Hammond, 2014). In particular, *mística* is a word with two meanings. On one hand, it is an abstract concept which indicates a form of spirituality rooted in the experience of participation. On the other hand, *mística* designates concrete expressions of this spirituality, that characterise every moment of the Movement's life. For example, a very common *mística* in the biggest and most important events of the Movement is the celebration of remembrance and gratitude for the women who had contributed to the Movement's struggles and who have died: they can be leaders of the MMC but also comrades from other parts of the world, who dedicated their lives to social transformation and in a certain sense have allowed us to carry on this process. In the smaller meetings, however, the *mística* may consist of a simple but well-presented scenario in which agroecological seeds, foods or plants produced by the militants are shared. It could be said that *mística* nurtures gratitude towards other women, the awareness of not being alone in the struggle.

The LT thus represents a dense but also contradictory legacy, which, according to some authors (Paulilo, 2009), has delayed the MMC's self-affirmation as a feminist movement. Although the experience of women living and working in the countryside has always been the main reference point for the Movement's struggles, many women are still reluctant to recognise themselves as feminists. My research has shown that this must also be attributed to the MMC's socialist character, which requires considering the rural family as a cohesive unit in order to better pursue class demands.

Freirean relevance in MMC's struggles for formal education

The importance of Freirean references also emerges from the *centrality that formal education has assumed in the Movement's struggles* since its foundation. In fact, one of the first needs it faced was to support women who wished to complete their studies, which they had interrupted at an early age due to the organisation of agricultural work within a patriarchal culture. The *No female farmer without education* campaign was devised for this purpose. In the years that followed, the commitment of the MMC and other popular organisations also led to the establishment of their own schools and universities (e.g. the Florestan Fernandes National School in São Paulo); as the creation, in collaboration with public universities, of degree courses, that develop theoretical perspectives relevant to the farming context, such as courses in the Pedagogy of the Land and Agroecology (at São Carlos University, for example), which are in fact much more widespread in Brazil than in Europe; the stipulation of agreements with Latin American universities, especially with Cuban and Venezuelan medical faculties, in order to foster mobility and further the higher education of militants.

A particular mention must necessarily be made to Peasant Education, an approach created to counter the hegemonic perspective that characterises educational interventions within the rural context. Their aim is to educate an uncritical workforce that is functional to the modern agricultural market, subordinate to the industrial sector. Freire's influence can be observed both in the political-pedagogical principles (Paludo, 2013) and in the scholastic organisation of rural education. In relation to the first aspect, the training contents start and aim at generating positive effects on the socio-cultural context of the learners and are, in fact, compiled together with the participants, starting from their interests and needs. As for the second aspect, in this approach scholastic organization is based on the alternation between school time and community time: during school time the students attend school and live together; in community time they return home, helping their family with the farming by applying the knowledge acquired through study. The pedagogy of alternating periods in the classroom and in the community aims at fostering a closer link between theory and practice and between vocational training and general education (Freire, 1978). It also facilitates access to education for rural workers. In other words, Peasant Education is characterized by the recognition of the specific social reality and needs of students living in the rural context.

Freirean dimension of MMC's political-educational methodologies

The Freirean approach also operates in the *political-educational methodologies* adopted by the Movement, which I intend to explore through the words of my interlocutors. It must be pointed out that, despite the Movement's struggle for formal education, its activities are mainly in the area of so-called informal and non-formal education and include, for example: a) the creation of sharing and collaborative relations in the grassroots groups spread within the rural communities; b) methods of discussion and

decision-making in assemblies and congresses that take place at different levels of the Movement; c) the distribution of responsibilities and the development of coordination strategies; d) training, socialisation and storytelling moments at meetings and workshops; e) the organisation of national and international campaigns by collectives focused on specific themes or synchronized with other movements etc. (Motta & Esteves, 2014). The main features of the educational processes carried out in the MMC are as follows:

they are dialogical and multi-directional, i.e., they involve each participant as a student/teacher, as Raquel Nunes makes clear by emphasising the centrality of each person's experience-based knowledge: 'Everyone shares their experience and this sharing makes training possible. The point of reference is reality itself, not the actual study but rather life's experience, the experience the women share' (from the words of Raquel Nunes, focus group in Guarujá do Sul, 10 October 2012).

they problematise modes of transmission by promoting the exchange, multiplication and re-invention of knowledge. Angela de Deus, for example, focuses on the contrast with the university, giving value to the co-construction of knowledge experimented in the MMC: 'I went to a faculty. Where I studied, we, including the professors, didn't ask ourselves many questions, but later, when I started to take part in the movement, in the training meetings, my way of seeing things changed. It changes the way you analyse society; you try to see what lies behind appearances. If I had learned these things earlier, I would have been better at school, they would have helped me to be more critical' (from the words of Angela de Deus, focus group in Dionísio Cerqueira, 6 March 2013).

They are rooted in the militants' needs, social reality and existential universe, as Mirian Milan states, also underlining the integral character of education in the MMC: 'In the MMC, rather than studying a specific topic, we study everything that affects our lives as workers, mothers, housewives, farmers, everything' (from the words of Mirian Milan, focus group in Anchieta, 29 September 2012).

They are gradual and differentiated, always starting from an interpretation of the world of the women who participate in the Movement in order to foster a more critical and in-depth knowledge. 'In the Seed Recovery, Production and Improvement Programme, the idea was to create a group that would have more theoretical background but could work from what the women knew, for example, how to produce tomatoes. The question is: how can we improve this knowledge? Why doesn't the tomato grow better? And so, we study the components of the soil, how the tomato was produced, where the seed came from… and this creates a link between theory and practice. So, little by little the women improve their production and acquire new theoretical and practical knowledge because there is an exchange among them' (from Catiane Cinelli's interview, 14 June 2013).

They include differences and asymmetries which can favour paths of mutual growth and maturity, even if they can sometimes crystallise into fixed hierarchical positions, as can be seen from the words of Justina Cima on the theme of generational differences: 'I think the great challenge is how to develop the young. How can we, who have had a longer path, not suffocate those who have less experience? And how do we ensure that the young people do not think that what has been done is done and now they have to start from the beginning? It's a very big challenge' (from Justina Cima's interview, 2 May 2013). This is an ongoing challenge in the MMC and is even greater when we consider that the Movement is also fighting against the phenomenon of rural exodus. This is a global phenomenon, which has local repercussions, by driving young women from the countryside.

They combine technical and political education: training activities focusing on agroecology, for example, do not simply aim to replace farming methods but also to

generate reflection, dissolutions and political choices. Here we can consider the words of Lourdes Bodanese: 'I bought this land more than twenty years ago. It had been abandoned and was full of rubbish. We didn't even know if it could be improved. Later, when I began to take part in the MMC, I started to cultivate it, to produce more, to put tasty food on the table, and a transformation slowly took place. I can now say: 'I am a farmer; I am producing healthy products and can also offer them to those who come to buy.' It is a joy for me to sell a healthy product, the exact same product that I put on my own table. Therefore, I don't just want to benefit myself, I want to benefit humanity' (from the documentary *Mulheres da Terra*).

They pursue transformation of the self and of the world as two dimensions of the same path. 'If I were asked to talk about my personal life as something separate from the movement, I would not be able to because my personal life is very much intertwined with my political path and, from my point of view, they cannot be separated. Many people ask me: 'now you are retired, you have a minimum wage, don't you think it is time to live a little better?' But what is living? For me, living means organising women, mobilising them, nurturing family life, advancing production, building a relationship with my partner' (from Justina Cima's interview, 2 May 2013).

Freirean echoes in the formation of militant subjectivities

Freirean influence is also manifested in the *process of militant subjectivity formation*, which can be interpreted as all the profound and decisive effects that participation in the MMC has on women's lives and which configure commitment to others and to reality as an essential aspect of their personality. When talking about the effects of the MMC on their lives, my interlocutors alluded to complex and always unfinished transformative processes, difficult to name because they involve multiple dimensions of experience. They described militancy as a permanent political-educational process that encourages overcoming a naive vision of reality and the critical unveiling of its reasons for being. In this sense, conscientization is not just an intellectual attitude nor a prerequisite for struggle; it is achieved precisely in the action and reflection dynamics that characterise struggle (Freire, 1987). For militants, being committed to the MMC also means dealing with conflicts. For example, inner conflicts, which are not always easy to recognise, arise from problematisation, provoked by militancy itself, by self-ideals, social models and established trajectories (Benasayag & Del Rey, 2007). But these conflicts also involve the family and community sphere, the dynamics within the MMC, the relationship with other social movements and with society as a whole. Conflicts are usually problematic phenomena. They are not always overcome positively and can often produce further lacerations and suffering (Contini, 1999). However, *love for the world*, which, for the Movement's militants, is a fundamental motivation for political action, guides them to experience conflicts without reducing them to their destructive components, but rather as a way of transforming situations towards greater justice (Gadotti, Freire & Guimarães, 1989). Commitment to the Movement, therefore, has a profound effect on the lives of the militants, resulting in a constitutive belonging of subjectivity, of the sense of self and of relationships with others. In particular, it encourages a search for personal happiness that is in no way conceived of as *unrelated* to others, *to the detriment of* or *without* others. Recognition of interdependence, therefore, becomes key to a person's existence in the world, albeit in a way in which problems and the risk of suffering are never excluded.

Research as a Freirean practice

Lastly, the Freirean perspective shaped the very *configuration of the research* that I carried out with the Movement and directed me towards a collaborative ethnographic approach. The value of this approach lies in putting at the centre what is usually left in the background (Clifford & Marcus, 1986), enhancing dialogue and recognising the subjects of the research as co-researchers (Lawless, 1991). This is a distinctive feature of educational and scientific work that draws on popular pedagogy and can be traced back to the beginnings of Paulo Freire's work at the Social Service of Industry. In fact, he motivated participants to express their views at all stages of the research and reflectively take account of the critical issues raised (Freire, 1992). The dialogical option is demanding. It guides research right from the initial choice of the object of study, which must be defined not only on the basis of the researcher's interests but also by considering the needs of his or her interlocutors. In this sense, I have paid fundamental attention to the theme of agroecology and its relationship with feminism, which are issues of pressing relevance for the MMC. In the perspective of collaborative ethnography, restitution also takes on broader and more complex meanings: it is not an action to be relegated to the conclusion of the research, it is not focused exclusively on sharing the final text, but unfolds instead in multiple practices aimed at recognising and nurturing the shared construction of knowledge (Alga & Muraca, 2016). The focus on restitution motivated me to:

a. share in the daily work of the twenty-three women farmers who hosted me in their homes during the intensive fieldwork phase;
b. contribute to the Movement's cultural production activities with my specific skills; process the data collected in forms and languages that were interesting to my interlocutors, for example, by producing the documentary (Muraca, 2019);
c. encourage the Movement's access to institutional and academic areas that are generally precluded, for example, by putting two of the Movement's leaders on my PhD thesis panel;
d. constantly consult the protagonists of the research about the interpretations I was elaborating, especially when they disagreed with the prevailing positions in the Movement, both by confronting each of them individually and by preparing opportunities for collective discussion during the process.

I would like to delve into this last aspect, in consideration of the importance of these occasions of collective confrontation. Indeed, they allowed me to further extend and complexify the data collected; produce socially meaningful knowledge; enhance polyphony in the elaboration of knowledge. But above all, these actions allowed me to put the formative dimension of research participation to work in a liberating and particularly decolonial[5] direction, promoting a common reflection on the conflicts associated to cultural complexity within the Movement and in the particular context of the research. In fact, in the west of Santa Catarina, the Movement's militants are predominantly white and of European origin, especially Italian and German. This aspect greatly facilitated my access to the field and led me to reflect on intercultural relations. However, whenever I raised the issue of race relations in everyday conversations and life story interviews, my interlocutors appeared reticent. In fact, the development of family farming in the region where I carried out the fieldwork is linked to violent processes of expulsion and land expropriation from the indigenous and mestizo population. These processes were sustained by a racist ideology that still feeds inequalities and implicit conflicts today and that also has repercussions on the Movement (Fleuri, 1998). I

therefore suggested specific opportunities to my interlocutors for discussion based on the community use of the genogram, which is useful for bringing to light forgotten, misunderstood or unmentionable dimensions (Rosenbaum, 1997). These were moments of research, characterised by significant formative depth. They made it possible to problematise the dominant rhetoric regarding indigenous and mestizo people as well as to recognise each person's own positioning by problematising whiteness, which is usually considered as normal both in the MMC and in the context of my research, as well as in social sciences (Corossacz, 2012). It was therefore possible to trace connections and forms of co-implication from specific experiences of oppression, resistance and conflict (Mohanty, 2003). In this sense, the research has contributed to the problematization of the long-time inequalities between women belonging to different socio-cultural groups by decolonising relationships and knowledge (Walsh, 2017). This issue, in recent years, especially since the establishment of the National Movement in 2004, has been gaining increasing relevance.

Conclusion: Freire's legacy in the Peasant Women's Movement

The educational dimension runs through all the MMC's areas and activities and has a strong political component. In other words, it aims to generate reality transformations by activating processes of awareness. As I have argued, Freire is a crucial reference point for the MMC. Freirean inspiration is evident, especially in the dialogical and participatory approach of the educational processes that take place within it, in their constitutive link with concrete experience and social reality, in their critical and problematising approach. On the other hand, the Movement contributes to keeping Freire's proposal alive, expanding its scope to themes that even Freire hardly explored: feminist struggles and the environmental question, to name two that have emerged several times in these pages. These critical perspectives often feed on and support each other, although sometimes, they can also generate questions and produce contradictions. This is the case, for example, when recognising oneself as a feminist requires opening up conflicts that call into question the comforting unitary representation of the group of the oppressed. It is also important to point out that Freirean heritage continues to represent a path and a challenge for the MMC. Like any social movement, in fact, it does not constitute a homogeneous subject but is crossed by multiple differences, which, in some cases, can become inequalities based on age, the role within the movement, socio-cultural affiliation etc., and giving rise to forms of authoritarianism and exclusion. Throughout the article, I have attempted to show that this aspect particularly emerged in the theme of intercultural relations within the Movement, which are marked by the colonial legacy still operating in the context in which the research was carried out. Participatory and collaborative research, however, can bring these problems into focus, make them the object of reciprocal research and training, and overcome them, favouring the political-educational maturation of the Movement in a non-ideological way.

Notes

1 This aspect characterizes the whole of Paulo Freire's work, starting from *Educação como prática da liberdade* (1969).

2 The women who participate in the MMC use two main categories to define themselves: *militante*, which is "militant" and has a political meaning, and *integrante*, which is a more neutral word and can be translated as "member" or "participant". In my writing I use both of them. In particular, I adopt the concept "militant" because, unlike for example the term "activist", it is more appropriate to indicate modes of participation which involve the whole life of a subject, influencing one's sense

of self and the relationships with others (Apostoli Cappello, 2012). Therefore this term is more consistent with my interlocutors' experience.

[3] Reflective participation is a term which I have renamed and redefined from the classic ethnographic practice of participant observation because it is more consistent with my involvement in the research and with the characteristics of pedagogical knowledge.

[4] It is relevant to clarify that there is a deep bond of solidarity between the MST and the MMC: they are organized in the Via Campesina network, therefore many struggles are common; above all, some militants participate in both movements. In this sense, the MMC's specificity consists of its character as an autonomous and feminist organization of women.

[5] This is a concept of the Latin American Decolonial Thinking, a critical perspective which arose in the 1990s in social and human sciences. In particular, according to Catherine Walsh (2013), the "decolonial" category calls into question the existence of a transition from a colonial moment to a non-colonial one, and instead identifies an ongoing process in which positions, transgressions, creations, alternatives and horizons can be traced.

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Dialogic popular education in Spain and its impact on society, educational and social theory, and European research

Laura Ruiz-Eugenio
University of Barcelona, Spain (lauraruizeugenio@ub.edu)

Itxaso Tellado
University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia, Spain (itxaso.tellado@uvic.cat)

Rosa Valls-Carol
University of Barcelona, Spain (rosavalls@ub.edu)

Regina Gairal-Casadó
Rovira i Virgili University, Spain (regina.gairal@urv.cat)

Abstract

Dialogic popular education developed by La Verneda-Sant Martí School for Adults in Spain, influenced by the work of Paulo Freire, has had a range of significant social and educational impacts. Starting with an emancipatory approach to eradicate oppression, this dialogic popular education resisted and has transformed aspects of the Spanish educational sphere despite ongoing hindrances and difficulties. This article presents a path of events, a history of interventions and findings from research on how dialogic popular education has affected and changed educational practices as well as how research is approached elsewhere in Europe. In addition, it presents ways in which a radical commitment to social change can be combined with scientific standards in the pursuit of achieving a better society for all.

Keywords: dialogic education, popular education, learning communities, successful educational actions, Freire

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Introduction

Dialogic popular education developed by La Verneda-Sant Martí School for Adults in Barcelona, Spain, influenced by the work of Paulo Freire, offers us insight into social and educational transformations that can come about through popular education. Transformations that occurred in this country spread to other countries. These practices have promoted new theoretical approaches and ways of analysing social impact of research in Europe.

In Spain there have been many popular education projects influenced by the contributions of Paulo Freire and other radical thinkers. But this article focuses only on the dialogic popular education that began in a school for adults in Barcelona created in 1978, as well as in its influence on subsequent social and educational transformations. Dialogic popular education is understood in this article as those that have been influenced by the theory of dialogical action developed by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970b). This dialogical approach in education is based on the inclusion of all participants in the decision-making processes and the creation of knowledge with the aim of social transformation in their communities. The first section, 'Paulo Freire in Spain', offer some historical context and describes the influence of Paulo Freire's work in popular education at the end of, and after, Franco's dictatorship in Spain.

In the following section on 'La Verneda-Sant Martí School for Adults in Barcelona' we present an educational project which was strongly influenced by Paulo Freire's theory of dialogical action. This school has been an important agent in its neighbourhood's social, cultural, and educational transformations and has received international academic recognition (Sanchez-Aroca, 1999).

In the following section 'Dialogic Learning and Schools as Learning Communities' Ramón Flecha's theorisation of dialogic learning is outlined. This learning theory is connected with Freire's theory of dialogical action (1970b) and combines this with the contributions of other authors (Austin, 1975; Bakhtin, 2010; Bruner, 1990; Chomsky, 2006; Cummins, 2000; Habermas, 1981; Mead, 1934; Rogoff et al., 2001; Searle, 1995; Vygotsky, 1934/2012; Wells, 1999) and was first developed in La Verneda-Sant Martí School. It has since been transferred to more than 10,000 pre-schools, primary and secondary schools in 14 countries in Europe and Latin America through the School as Learning Communities project (ENLARGE Consortium, 2018; Natura Institute., 2018; Rodriguez-Oramas et al., 2021; SEAs4all Consortium, 2016; Soler et al., 2019; Step4Seas Consortium, 2017; Vieites et al., 2021). The impact on the improvement of learning and social cohesion in schools as Learning Communities was the centre of a study by the *INCLUD-ED project: Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion from Education in Europe*, funded by the 6th Research Framework Program of the European Union during 2006-2011. The social impact of the INCLUD-ED project led the European Commission to select it as one of the ten success stories in all knowledge areas of all EU Research Framework Programmes (European Commission, 2011).

The 'Dialogic feminism and 'the other women'' section describes the dialogic feminism of women who are also influenced by Freire's theory of dialogical action. The 'other women' are those who do not have a university degree and participate in dialogic popular education projects such as La Verneda Sant Martí School, the schools as Learning Communities and other grassroots organizations. These women have traditionally been excluded from the spaces of public debate on feminism. Lídia Puigvert (2001; Beck-Gernsheim et al., 2003; De Bottom et al., 2005) theorises dialogic feminism as when 'other women' create their own spaces for dialogue. They are the protagonists of their transformation processes, contributing to the diversification of feminism.

This is followed by the 'Dialogic struggle against gender violence and violence in schools' section. It presents the contributions of the other women (mothers, grandmothers, and other family women without basic qualifications) in working together with teachers and researchers to promote a dialogic model of prevention and conflict resolution to prevent violence and gender violence. The subsequent section is 'Transferring the dialogic fight against gender violence to universities'. It presents how the commitment of researchers working from a dialogic approach in La Verneda-Sant Martí School and the Schools as Learning Communities to prevent gender violence led them to break the silence about this type of violence within the university, making it visible and promoting the implementation of measures for its attention and prevention as well as a solidarity network of support for victims of sexual harassment in the university made up of students, professors, and researchers.

The last section, 'Dialogic Popular Education with impact on research in Europe' explains how dialogic popular education, first in the La Verneda-Sant Martí School and then in schools as Learning Communities, contributed through the INCLUD-ED and IMPACT-EV research projects to create a new framework for the analysis of social impact in European research.

This article presents ways in which the practice of dialogic popular education in Spain has gone hand in hand with social impact research, building together over the last four decades.

Paulo Freire in Spain

Paulo Freire's work began in Spain at the end of the 1960s through Christian activists linked to the Latin American movements and Liberation Theology. They introduced his works and his literacy method clandestinely, when they were not yet published in book edition but rather in mimeographed form. From that time until Franco's death in 1975, and during the political transition until 1978, Freire was the main author of reference for the cultural literacy work carried out by the popular education movements in Spain (Flecha, 2007). Freire's materials were read and commented on by Christian grassroots groups, in pedagogical renewal movements, and in some Marxist and anarchist leftist clandestine organizations (Flecha, 2007).

Three decades earlier, with the end of the Civil War in Spain in 1939, the Dictatorship of General Franco's regime was established, which was to last 40 years. The dictatorship eliminated popular education aimed at the emancipation of the most oppressed. The great tradition of cultural education that had developed in the workers' athenaeums since the mid-19th century, the Popular Universities, and the Pedagogical Missions since the beginning of the 20th century, and the Free Women's movement during 1936-1939, among other experiences which had achieved so much social transformation and international recognition, were harshly repressed, and annihilated. Despite the repression, in which hundreds of thousands of people were murdered, exiled, and disappeared (Preston, 2012), there were people who continued to work in popular education and literacy programmes in the poorest neighbourhoods (Oliver et al., 2016).

Freire's work united non-Christians and Christians involved in organisations in the underground struggle against Franco by offering them through popular education a path to nonviolent social transformation. Nonviolence and opposition to any kind of dictatorship were part of Freire's contribution to the anti-Franco movement. Obviously, his theory of dialogical action, which he developed in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was important as well (Freire, 1970b). Freire created this theory more than a decade before Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981). Freire's dialogical conception fitted

very well with the popular education that was already being carried out in the neighbourhoods where illiterate people were considered as creators of culture with whom the educator establishes a dialogue on an equal basis, jointly generating knowledge. Freire's work not only provided a theory that coincided with popular education in Spain, but it also provided a literacy method that, when used well, was very effective.

The double dimension of social commitment and academic recognition embodied by the figure of Paulo Freire multiplied the impact of his work in Spain and worldwide. Freire's positioning led him to elaborate this theory from years of experience in the literacy of rural peasants in cultural circles in Brazil and Chile; at the same time, he was recognised by one of most prestigious universities in the world. In 1969 Harvard University offered Freire a position as a visiting professor. He worked at the U.S. university for 10 months (Flecha, 1989). Harvard decided to publish in English *Cultural Action for Freedom* (Freire, 1970a) and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970b), manuscripts originally published in 1967 and 1968 respectively (Ramis Salas, 2018).

With the process of democratic transition in Spain, after the death of the dictator in 1975, there was an opportunity to break with the dictatorial regime and to begin to re-establish all those organisations and movements that had promoted popular education before Franco. However, reforms within the regime meant there was no clean break with the dictatorship. Thus, there was a continuity of Francoist political positions in the nascent democracy that had an impact on all areas of society, including education (Flecha, 2011). The democratic transition did not lead to the strengthening and visibility of Paulo Freire's work in formal and 'mainstream' education in Spain. Freire's contributions to popular education and social pedagogy were not present in broader educational policies (Caride, 2021). However, dialogic popular education survived in some neighbourhoods and towns and with the professors that persisted to transmit their work in the faculties of education of some universities, continuing as pedagogies of resistance (Caride, 2021; Groves, 2011, 2016).

An example of the dialogic popular education is La Verneda Sant-Martí School, created in Barcelona in 1978 (Aubert et al., 2016; Sanchez-Aroca, 1999). The school received significant support from the centre of research CREA. La Verneda-Sant Martí School and CREA were both founded by Ramon Flecha (Giner, 2018). At the moment of its foundation in 1991 at the University of Barcelona, the Spanish acronym of CREA corresponded to the name Centre of Research on Adult Education. Subsequently, CREA became the Community of Research on Excellence for All, formed by research groups of different universities and researchers from various disciplines and countries. With this shift, CREA positions itself in a changing society, moving increasingly towards scientific and human excellence available for everyone (Soler, 2017).

Recent studies by Caride (2021), Igelmo and Quiroga (2021), and Roca et al. (2021a) are major contributions to understanding the influence of the Brazilian pedagogue's thought in Spanish universities and in the dialogic popular education projects that have been promoted at all educational stages and in social and community education in Spain.

The following sections present how elements of Freire's theory of dialogical action have been recreated in La Verneda-Sant Martí School, as in turn this school and Freire's contributions, have influenced schools as Learning Communities, dialogic feminism, and the fight against gender violence in schools and universities, as well as in educational and social research in Europe.

La Verneda-Sant Martí School for Adults in Barcelona

When the time of democratic transition in Spain came it was not free from the influence of the political reform promoted by the Francoism. Despite this some people remained committed to the challenge of transforming society by overcoming the economic, social, and educational inequalities of the most disadvantaged. Multiple popular education projects were developed in cities and towns aimed at breaking the accumulation of social and educational disadvantages of oppressed populations (Sanchez-Aroca, 1999). In this context, a school for adults was created and adopted the name of the neighbourhood where it is located, La Verneda-Sant Martí in Barcelona. Several pedagogical and intellectual references influenced the project of this school, such as the Institución Libre de Enseñanza [The Free Institution of Education], the workers' athenaeums, the Popular Universities, and the Pedagogical Missions of the Second Republic, as well as Paulo Freire (Giner, 2018).

Elisenda Giner's book, *Creative Friendships* (2018) and the article published in Harvard Educational Review (Sanchez-Aroca, 1999) are the works that most rigorously explain the origins of this school. The school for adults ended up being a request from all the neighbourhood entities, becoming a pluralistic school in which relationships were being created that had never happened before. People of very different ideologies, worldviews, religions, and ages came together with the common goal of transforming the neighbourhood through culture and education (Giner, 2018).

One of the key factors of its success is its dialogic approach (Flecha, 2000), following Freire's contributions, that includes an egalitarian, plural and democratic organisation involving the participants in all decision-making processes. Ramon Flecha and a small group of neighbours occupied an empty building that had been the location of the women's section of the Francoist movement. This building would become the community centre of the neighbourhood where the adult school would be located among other projects. One of the testimonies collected by Sánchez-Aroca (1999) is that of a woman who was part of the first group of learning participants. She explains how they were all involved in the decision-making and management processes, including meetings with policymakers to seek funding:

> We, the neighbours, decided what we wanted it to be like and what to do to achieve it. Afterwards, once we managed to get the centre started, our struggle turned in part to demanding the different public administrations to take on their share of responsibility with funding. What still remains from all that is the way in which everybody gets involved and participates... What we achieved is an extensive cultural project for the community, housed in our centre. This centre brings together most of the community's cultural life, and that is why here, on its fifth floor, the School for Adults is located (Sanchez-Aroca, 1999, p. 323)

Almost 40 years after its creation, its success and growth are evidenced by more than 2,000 participants, 5 employees and more than 150 volunteers engaged in a school open seven days a week from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm (Aubert et al., 2016). Throughout its history, the school has always maintained a democratic and dialogic approach, with free educational courses, responding to the educational needs of the people of the neighbourhood and schedules decided based on their demands. Over the years, the activities offered have increased and diversified. Currently, the school offers initial training activities that includes literacy and instrumental certificates, preparation for the free exams for the Secondary Education Graduate and university admission tests for people over 25 years old, various dialogic gatherings (literary, artistic, feminist, scientific, musical, and mathematical), languages, ICT, artistic workshops, physical activities and

various training modules in philosophy, economics or literature, and family education, among others.

The dialogic management of the school has influenced and transferred to other entities in the neighbourhood. Since the beginning of the school, it promoted the creation of an organisation that coordinates the neighbourhood's entities in order to carry out the dream of improving the living conditions of all the people there. This organisation is VERN, still a very active movement that has continued to play an important role in the transformation of the area. During more than four decades of history, the school together with VERN, has promoted mobilisations that have achieved the extension of the subway line to the area, the construction of the long and tree-lined Rambla Gipuzcoa where a beltway had been planned, fought against racism against Roma people living in the local shantytown, the removal of a fascist association that had settled in the neighbourhood, the obstruction of the bulldozers that wanted to demolish the last farmhouses around the church of Sant Martí, and instead led to them being renovated for use as a playroom for children, a space for homeless people, as well as urban vegetable gardens and a large park, among other achievements (Giner, 2018).

La Verneda-Sant Martí School has not only promoted social transformations in its neighbourhood, but it has also been fostering a democratic and dialogic adult education movement, in Catalonia, Spain and internationally. The two associations of participants of this school, Agora and Heura, the second one specifically of women, were two of the organizations that were created in 1996 FACEPA in Catalonia. FACEPA is the Federation of Cultural and Educational Associations of Adults; and within the national scope, FACEPA promoted CONFAPEA, Confederation of Federations and Associations of Participants in Adult Education in Spain (Oliver et al., 2016). This movement, following the dialogic approach of Paulo Freire, is based on the premise that the people participating in the learning and education of adults without university degrees are the people who decide about their own educational processes and projects, avoiding falling into an adult education that is governed by the corporativism of some professionals.

Roca et al. (2021a) report some details about the beginning of this movement, which are described below. The adult school was also involved in preparing for CONFITEA 1997, of which Flecha was the research coordinator, where at the end 21 delegations from 13 countries (Spain, Belgium, France, Holland, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Denmark, Romania, Czech Republic, Australia, Brazil, and India) signed the declaration of rights of the participants that had been under preparation and discussion for several years.

Freire, on his first trip to Barcelona, held a conference that was overflowing with people. Ramon Flecha, who brought Freire to Barcelona in 1988, gave his five minutes for a literacy participant to speak, to whom Paulo gave a hug at the end that was enthusiastically applauded by the audience. Freire loved the meetings promoted by La Verneda-Sant Martí School in which the people who spoke were the participants and the professionals listened. Later as Education Councillor of São Paulo, he organized the congresses of literacy learners, where the literacy participants spoke, and the teachers listened.

Dialogic Learning and Schools as Learning Communities

At the Congress of New Critical Perspectives in Education that CREA organized in Barcelona in 1994, Freire witnessed first-hand how CREA offered the project of democratic and dialogic education to anyone who wanted to recreate it in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools. Months later Schools as Learning Communities project inspired by La Verneda-Sant Martí School had already been started in four primary

schools and that it would be replicated in many parts of the world, including Brazil (Roca et al., 2021a).

Contrary to the principles promoted by the dialogical and democratic model of adult education in the national Spanish educational reform in the 1980s disregarded Freire's contributions in favour of others promoting less progressive proposals (Garcia-Carrión et al., 2021; Racionero & Padros, 2010).

La Verneda-Sant Martí School for Adults and CREA have fostered a movement that currently includes more than 10,000 schools and other educational and social settings in 14 countries in Europe and Latin America (Spain, Cyprus, Malta, Italy, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Portugal, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru), which are implementing the successful educational actions that are part of the Schools as Learning Communities project (ENLARGE Consortium, 2018-2021; Natura Institute, 2018, 2020; SEAs4all Consortium, 2016; Step4Seas Consortium, 2017-2019; Vieites et al., 2021).

Schools as Learning Communities is a project based on a set of educational actions aimed at social and educational transformation (Soler & Rodrigues de Mello, 2020). This educational model is in line with international scientific theories that highlight two key factors for learning today: interactions and community participation (Bakhtin, 2010; Bruner, 1996; Chomsky, 2006; Cummins, 2000; Flecha, 2000; Freire, 1970b; Habermas, 1981; Mead, 1934; Rogoff et al., 2001; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978; Wells, 1999). Schools as Learning Communities involve everyone who directly or indirectly influences the learning and development of students, including teachers, families, friends, neighbours, local organizations, volunteers, etc.

The social and educational impact of Schools as Learning Communities has been studied by the European Union's 6th Framework Programme of Research project *INCLUD-ED: Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion from Education in Europe* (Flecha & INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015) and by several research projects that have been developed subsequently. The impact on the improvement of learning and social cohesion of the educational actions implemented in Schools as Learning Communities has been enhancing pro-social behaviour as well as increasing the academic achievement of all students, family education amelioration, better coexistence in the school and the community among others (Flecha & Soler, 2013). These educational actions are Interactive Groups (Valls & Kyriakides, 2013), Dialogic Gatherings (Fernandez-Villardon et al., 2021; Flecha, 2015, Soler, 2015), Family Education and participation (Rodriguez-Oramas et al., 2021), dialogic teacher training (Roca et al., 2021b), and dialogic model of conflict prevention and resolution (Serradell et al., 2020; Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019). In all these educational actions based on dialogic learning some of Paulo Freire's contributions can be identified, although they also go further. For example, in Interactive Groups, as in Freire's theory of dialogic action, knowledge is created jointly among all the learners with the guidance of an adult who dynamises the interactions; but this adult person is not only the educator but might be a family member or other people from the community. In the Dialogic Gatherings all contributions are valued according to their arguments and not according to the position of power of the person who makes them (educator versus learner). The concept of unity in diversity of Freire (1997) or the similar concept of equality of differences of Flecha (2000) is also embodied in Dialogic Gatherings when one of their principles is respect for differences. What makes all participants in the Dialogic Gatherings equal is that they have the same right to think and live differently. All opinions are accepted as long as they respect human rights.

Dialogic feminism and 'the other women'

Paulo Freire has also influenced the women's movement initiated at La Verneda - Sant Martí School: the 'other women' movement. Lidia Puigvert is the co-author with Judith Butler and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim of the book *Women and Social Transformations* (2003). The book has contributed to making visible the contributions that the 'other women' - those who have not had the opportunity to access higher education- made to making feminism more dialogical. Lidia Puigvert theorised dialogic feminism as a feminism in which all women are included in the spaces of public debate, especially those who, because they do not have academic degrees, have been left out of the feminist movement dominated by academic women (Ostrouch-Kamińska et al., 2021). From dialogic feminism, all women are organized on the basis of solidarity, always prioritising the voices and interests of those women who are in a situation of greater inequality. The 'other women' are participating in the spaces of public debate at different levels, as well as in decisions on adult education and learning projects, and in Schools as Learning Communities where their children attend. Some articles have already collected evidence of how the involvement in decision-making and participation of these 'other women' in the educational actions of the Schools as Learning Communities have improved their own lives and those of their families, but also improved their communities (Flecha, 2015). Immigrant mothers with low levels of formal education have been involved in the decision and design of health literacy activities addressed to them and their children. In some of the Schools as Learning Communities there is constant coordination between the health centre, the school, and the mothers, jointly organizing health literacy activities that have had a direct impact on improving the health of their children, for example, by increasing the level of vaccination among them (A. Flecha et al., 2013). There are Schools as Learning Communities that are conducting scientific dialogic gatherings in which women with low literacy skills are reading and discussing articles on scientific or health topics they have chosen. The narratives of these women show that they have developed critical thinking about what health information is evidence-based and what is not, just as they have stated that the scientific dialogical gatherings have helped them to make better decisions involving their health, for example, to improve theirs and their family dietary habits (Buslón et al., 2020). The social and educational research developed by CREA through the communicative methodology, also influenced by Freire's theory of dialogical action, has included the voices of the 'other women' through an egalitarian dialogue with the researchers to co-create knowledge about the educational actions that are contributing to better learning and community cohesion (Melgar et al., 2011).

From this perspective, scientific evidence has been gathered of the triple discrimination that some women suffer not only because of their gender but also because they do not have academic qualifications and belong to cultural minorities and/or have an immigrant background (Oliver et al., 2014). Evidence has been collected as well of how solidarity networks promoted by women in the communities have facilitated immigrant women's access to basic social and educational facilities, also contributing to the dismantling of racist discourses (Sordé et al., 2014).

Several studies have been developed in overcoming prejudices about non-academic Moroccan immigrants and Roma mothers who have been involved in family education in their children's schools and later as volunteers in the children's classrooms, becoming new references for all children, helping to improve their learning (De Botton et al., 2014). Other studies focused on women with low ICT skills that have achieved solidarity networks to break social isolation by participating in online dialogic literary gatherings

during the months of total lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2021).

Many of the women participating in dialogic popular education were very actively involved in massive and very diverse Feminist Strikes of March 8, 2018, in Spain. Furthermore, the growing recognition of these 'other women's' contributions into the dialogic feminism and the process of diversification of this movement, that it has undergone in recent years, has contributed to the fact that more and more women of very diverse profiles and ages are taking an active part in grassroots organizations and movements and thus contributing to social transformation.

Dialogic struggle against gender violence and violence in schools

Freire's dialogical approach is also present in the contributions of the 'other women' to prevent violence in schools. Migrant mothers, grandmothers and other family women without basic qualifications are participating jointly with educators in the spaces of decision-making for the implementation of measures to prevent gender violence and violence in their children's schools (Oliver et al., 2009; Serradell et al., 2020). These contributions are framed within the dialogic model of conflict prevention and resolution (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019) and in the promotion of measures and ways of interacting that prevents gender violence (Puigvert, 2014).

The dialogic model of conflict prevention and resolution is based on dialogue as a tool for discovering the causes and origins of conflicts and to solve them within the community long before they appear. This approach focuses, therefore, on conflict prevention, through the creation of a climate of collaboration, where people participate in the creation of rules, the functioning of schools and how to resolve conflicts, creating greater understanding and meaning for all involved. To this end, the necessary spaces and conditions are provided so that all people have the same opportunities to express their voice and find joint solutions. To make this dialogue possible, it is considered that all people, regardless of their culture, educational background, etc., have the capacity to intervene, give their opinion and participate in the search for a consensual solution that helps to prevent conflicts. The responsibility and capacity to manage coexistence is not limited to an authority figure or to people who are experts in mediation, but extends to all students, teachers, families, and members of the community. This type of model allows a qualitative improvement of coexistence both in schools and in the community (Rodriguez-Oramas et al., 2020).

In the dialogic model of conflict prevention and resolution, actions are also developed that involve the whole community in promoting a socialisation that prevents gender violence. These actions are based on the line of research initiated by Jesús Gómez on the social bases of love focus on the analysis of the social interactions that shape models of sexual and affective attractiveness. Gómez (2015) suggests the existence of a majority and prevalent socialization, neither unique nor exclusive, that encourages the models that are socially considered more attractive to be those related to violent attitudes. Further research has analysed how there is a coercive dominant discourse that associates attraction with violence and influences the socialization processes of many girls during the awakening of their affective-sexual relationships, which has been shown to constitute a risk factor for suffering gender violence (Puigvert et al., 2019).

By developing ways of interacting that prevents gender violence, the whole community is involved in the promotion of interactions that generate learning that focuses on the attractiveness of those who are not violent (Valls et al., 2008). Interactions that promote new alternative masculinities are fostered from early childhood. Families,

teachers, and the community are trained in the encouragement of interactions that from the earliest years offer self-confidence, courage to take a stand against the use of violence and the creation of relationships based on friendship and solidarity (Flecha et al., 2013).

These topics are also discussed in depth not only with families but also with children, from preschool and primary education, in actions such as dialogic literary gatherings. In these gatherings, which were also created at La Verneda-Sant Martí School and have been transferred to pre-school, primary and secondary schools and other social and educational spaces in the community, literary works of universal reference, or quality adaptations for children, are read and discussed (Flecha & INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015). In the dialogues about these works, the language of desire is promoted along with the language of ethics about those who are not violent. It is understood that the language of desire has the ability to promote greater interest and desire about a given fact, behaviour or issue, while the language of ethics describes what is considered good (Lopez de Aguileta et al., 2020).

Transferring the dialogic fight against gender violence to universities

Consistency between discourse and actions is one of the organising principles of Paulo Freire's theory of dialogical action. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, coherence entails acting in accordance with those one defends, committing oneself with those who suffer the oppression of structures and relations of power for their transformation into structures and relations that make people freer. In these words, Paulo Freire stated it.

> The essential elements of witness which do not vary historically include: *consistency* between words and actions; *boldness* which urges the witnesses to confront existence as a permanent risk; radicalization (not sectarianism) leading both the witnesses and the ones receiving that witness to increasing action; *courage to love* (which, far from being accommodation to an unjust world, is rather the transformation of that world in behalf of the increasing liberation of humankind); and *faith* in the people, since it is to them that witness is made—although witness to the people, because of their dialectical relations with the dominant elites, also affects the latter (who respond to that witness in their customary way). (Freire, 1970/2018, p. 176)

Flecha and his research team were working on the Schools as Learning Communities project so that the right to the best education would be real for all adults and children. As has been explained in previous sections, these schools were developing the educational actions that were obtaining the greatest improvements in instrumental learning, values, emotions, and feelings, and includes the whole community in these transformation processes. It would not have been consistent in the development of a project such as Schools as Learning Communities if Flecha and the CREA researchers had not committed themselves to the victims of gender violence in their own university, supporting them, breaking the silence in the face of this oppression, and promoting measures for its eradication and prevention within the entire university community. Flecha (2011) analysed the impact of the feudal structure in Spanish universities, which has been more intense than in other democratic countries and has allowed a law of silence that has lasted longer in this country. He explains that in order to understand the submission of university professors to a feudal system and their silence in the face of gender violence in the university, it is necessary to place it in the historical context that allowed its consolidation during the 1980s, blocking the break with the university inheritance left by Franco's regime. The total arbitrariness in the decision of the tribunals to opt for a permanent

position meant that many of those who did not submit to the professors were excluded, whether they rejected the harassment or were in solidarity with those who rejected it.

The revolution initiated by CREA in breaking the silence against gender violence in universities has achieved very important objectives in a very short period. In just a few years, almost all Spanish universities have equality plans and officers. Many of these plans already include mechanisms to prevent gender violence. A further important step which has been achieved is that in December 2020, the Catalan Parliament unanimously approved to include in its law against gender violence for the first time in the world, the concept of isolating gender violence (IGV). The elaboration of this concept and its name has been the fruit of a long process of dialogue between researchers, policymakers, governments, parliaments, victims, survivors, social organizations, and citizens (Vidu et al., 2021). The IGV is the attacks and retaliation launched against gender violence victims' supporters so that victims remain isolated (Vidu et al., 2021, p. 178). Gender violence is a social problem that requires the involvement of the entire community to eradicate. Not looking the other way, reporting the cases that are known and positioning at the victim's side are fundamental actions to overcome it, but for this, it is necessary to establish mechanisms in our laws and institutions that overcome the IGV, protecting victim supporters (Melgar et al., 2021).

Dialogic Popular Education with impact on research in Europe

The Dialogic Popular Education described above has also influenced the way research is done in Europe. From La Verneda-Sant Martí School, the first school as Learning Community, the analysis of the social and educational impacts of schools as Learning Communities developed in the INCLUD-ED project (Flecha & INCLUD-ED Consortium, 2015) gave a new frame of analysis of the social impact to European research. Indeed, the FP6 INCLUD-ED project, was the only one selected from the social sciences within the first ten success stories of all EU Framework Programmes of research for all knowledge areas for its added value and innovation (European Commission, 2011).

The communicative approach followed in the above-mentioned research allowed both researchers and people from the communities to contribute with knowledge and new understandings informing about solutions to social problems, thus achieving social impact from the research results (Gómez et al., 2011). The 7th Framework Research Programme project IMPACT-EV (Flecha & IMPACT-EV Consortium, 2015) analyses the instrumental differences between evaluating the scientific and the social impacts of research; considering social impact as:

> […] the social improvements achieved as a result of the implementation of the results of a particular research project or study, in order to measure the social improvements achieved by scientific research and that contribute to reaching EU2020 targets or the UN Sustainable Development Goals. (Oliver et al., 2020, p. 956)

Focusing on social impact in research contributes to guaranteeing that the investment in research has a direct consequence in improving people's lives. Ramon Flecha was appointed by the European Commission to elaborate the new methodologies to evaluate the social and political impact of all research areas of scientific research which inform the European Commission for the monitoring and evaluation system of the Horizon Europe (European Commission et al., 2018). Indeed, the European Commission has highlighted the need to prioritize research outcomes and new knowledge which are linked to societal impact (Bellavista et al., 2022), introducing this societal impact as a key indicator to

evaluate the Framework Program for Research (European Commission et al., 2018). It means, for example, including strategies in research for the meaningful involvement of stakeholders and end-users before and alongside the life of the research projects and beyond, promoting public deliberation about scientific evidence with diverse audiences to enhance greater social transformation (Aiello et al., 2021). The way the Dialogic Popular Education has interacted with the research developed by CREA since its beginnings is a precedent of this achievement.

Conclusion

The Dialogic Popular Education influenced by Freire's theory of dialogical action is contributing to transforming current society. With a solid scientific base, La Verneda-Sant Marti School for Adults, is an example of dialogic popular education, and was the first of thousands of schools, with students and participants of all ages, to become Leaning Communities.

The impact on the learning improvements and on social cohesion from the educational actions implemented in schools as Learning Communities has contributed to transforming the lives of people, mainly those more vulnerable, and to changing schools and communities while creating new scientific knowledge highlighting the relevance of the dialogic approach within educational and social theory. At the same time, the scientific analysis of the impacts of these schools has provided a new frame of analysis for the social impact of the European research. It represents a great transformation in the way research is done in Europe, as the distance between science and society is narrowed and a greater social impact from the research results, with the potentiality for the social transformation, is achieved.

The influence of the theory of dialogic action of Paulo Freire in Spain has crossed its borders and has not been only in popular education projects. From one of these dialogic popular education projects, La Verneda-Sant Martí School, the dialogic approach has been transferred to education of all ages and beyond education, having an impact in universities and on the way research is being promoted in Europe including processes of co-creation of knowledge between researchers in all fields and citizens.

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Popular education in an association – expert by experience and work in tandem

Carmen Cavaco
Instituto de Educação da Universidade de Lisboa, UIDEF, Portugal
(carmen@ie.ulisboa.pt)

Catarina Paulos
Instituto de Educação da Universidade de Lisboa, UIDEF, Portugal
(catarina.paulos@ie.ulisboa.pt)

Rita Domingos
Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude (rita.m.domingos@hotmail.com)

Emília Alves
Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude (alvesemilia50@hotmail.com)

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the dynamics of popular education in the Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude focusing on the expert by experience and the work in tandem. The expert by experience is someone who has personal life experience of poverty and social exclusion and who has also undergone specific training in these areas. The work in tandem is a work methodology involving two individuals and grounded on the complementarity of knowledge. The empirical data was collected using participatory action research. In conceptual terms, the paper is framed by critical theory and popular education.. The research findings point to diversified and continuing popular education dynamics in the initiatives of this association, managed by residents in several interdependent areas (social, cultural, urbanistic, educational, etc) across a long time period. Its practices are geared towards emancipation and the construction of a more just world, with less inequality. Popular education has contributed both to the qualification and the promotion of the power to act of the experts by experience who take action in the neighbourhood, in tandem, in various areas of intervention.

Keywords: popular education, work in tandem, expert by experience, association

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the dynamics of popular education in the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude*, focusing essentially on the expert by experience and work in tandem. The expert by experience is someone who has lived experience of poverty and social exclusion, has undertaken specific training on the (re)elaboration of that experience and the recognition and validation of experiential knowledge, and who works in tandem with an academic expert in that area of intervention. The 'work in tandem' consists of a work and/or training methodology between two people who share their knowledge and mutually support each other, thus establishing a reciprocal and horizontal relationship based on autonomy and self-management (Cappellini & Zhang, 2013; Cavaco, 2018; Eschenauer, 2013). In the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude*, the work in tandem work is performed by a duo consisting of the expert by experience and the academic expert. The Association is located in the neighbourhood of *Cova da Moura*, in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, a context characterised by poverty, migration, low educational attainment, but also by cultural diversity and solidarity.

In contemporary society, owing to the complexity of social phenomena, when seeking to promote the suitability of the intervention, human dignity and social change, the expert by experience gains prominence (Godinot, 2014). The ethical principle of involving individuals in situations of poverty and social exclusion in measures that impact their lives, education, training and well-being is duly safeguarded throughout these processes. The academic expert is an individual holding a certificate or diploma that attests to his/her training in a specific area of scientific knowledge (for example, Educator, Teacher, Sociologist, Social Worker, Psychologist, Police Officer)

The analysis is based on empirical data collected by means of a participatory action research approach. It sought to understand the history and dynamics of the neighbourhood and the Association, the training and professional profile of the expert by experience and the methodology of the work in tandem. The purpose of the research was twofold: to produce scientific knowledge on these themes and intervene in this field. The aim of this approach was to ensure coherence with the dynamics of the popular education under study and to assume the researcher's commitment to 'social change' (Freire, 1972, 2000).

The intervention essentially entailed two dimensions: accompaniment and formation of a tandem, consisting of the expert by experience and the academic expert; support in the preparation and presentation of the expert by experience in poverty and social exclusion reference framework to the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP). ANQEP is the public entity responsible for the National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Catalogue. In this study, a section of the research focusing on the history and dynamics of the neighbourhood and the Association, the training of the expert by experience and the work in tandem is presented.

The participatory action research consisted of engaging in educational practices, with a view to producing scientific knowledge and contributing to social change in a popular neighbourhood (Fals Borda, 2015). The research conducted was based on the transversal relationships among all the actors on mutual recognition and the interdependence of knowledge given 'the creative potential of breaking up the asymmetry', and the importance of bringing together academic and popular knowledge' (Fals Borda, 2020, p. 195). The researcher collected the data and immersed herself in the reality, 'not only through observation, but also through her work with the subjects' (Fals Borda, 2015, p. 235).

In conceptual terms, popular education is considered as a critical practice and theory of education and society, based on processes organised by and with popular groups, from a perspective of 'problematizing education' and 'conscientization' (Freire, 1972). By assuming the political nature of the act of educating, popular education strives for emancipation and the construction of a more just world, with less inequality and oppression.

The theoretical framework underpinning popular education, the methodology, namely aspects regarding participatory action research and the procedures adopted, will be presented in the next section. A description of the history and dynamics of the neighbourhood, as well as the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude* will then be provided.

Popular education – specific characteristics

Popular education is characterised by diverse currents of thought, movements and actors (Chevalier & Deschamps, 2019; Crowther, 2013). Historically, it is associated with politically charged disputes and social practices (Assumpção et al., 2009). Simultaneously, popular education is a field of social practices and 'a theoretical paradigm' (Gadotti & Torres, 2003, p. 14). Thus, it has come to configure itself as a political and pedagogical alternative to the established educational projects that are detached from the interests of popular communities.

As a social practice, popular education stems from human action when it takes on the characteristics of a struggle for the rights of economically disadvantaged communities, substantiated in autonomy, self-management, and emancipation processes. From an educational point of view, these practices aim to develop important skills for survival and citizenship within the most disadvantaged social classes, with the purpose of improving their quality of life and challenging the social and political order (Torres, 2003). As a theoretical dimension, popular education developed mainly from the 1960s onwards (Steele, 2020), in line with the thought of critical theory authors concerned with social inequality, advocating the emancipation of the most oppressed social classes and social transformation. These authors, such as Canário (2007), Freire (1967, 1972) Illich (1985) and Melo (2012), assume a broad perspective on educational processes.

Popular education initiatives have evolved in accordance with the historical, social, economic and cultural context of countries however, several common, cross-cutting features are observable: the political nature, the collective and often self-managed dimension, recognition of the experience and knowledge of the popular communities, and the dialectic relationship between thought and action.

The political dimension is associated with popular communities' critical awareness of reality and the promotion of change through processes that combine action-reflection-action (Assumpção et al., 2009; Torres, 2003). Popular education is intrinsically linked to the needs and interests of poorer individuals. It is critical of the status quo and strives for social and political change (Crowther, 2013), moving away from the dominant social and educational practices in terms of contents, processes, outcomes, and relationships (Foley, 2001).

Popular education stems from the emergence of collective and frequently self-managed practices among popular communities (Melo, 2012). Popular communities are spaces inhabited predominantly by working class individuals with low levels of schooling and personal experiences of poverty whose basic rights are frequently neglected. This organisation arises from an individual and collective position-taking towards everyday problems, in an attempt to transform the existing social reality. It is argued that the

organisation of individuals generates 'collective consciousness in the sense of believing in themselves, of serving as an example to others' (Gohn, 2009, p. 41), giving rise to participation, citizenship and social movements. Popular education consists of collective dynamics in defence of freedom and equality, in an attempt to promote quality of life in the most disadvantaged locations (Chevalier & Deschamps, 2019), inhabited by popular communities, thus ensuring their 'right to the city' (Wildemeersch & Lages, 2018). Hence, they contribute to 'learning to exercise democracy' (Canário, 2007, p. 14).

By acknowledging that individuals are bearers of knowledge, popular education favours the production of knowledge over its transmission (Gadotti & Torres, 2003). The recognition of experiential knowledge fosters the attribution of meaning and the appropriation of lived experience, which contributes to the critical analysis of the reality, awareness and promotion of the 'power to act' (Ricœur, 2005). Thus, by attributing importance to citizens' life experience 'they are led to assume themselves as social, historical, and cultural subjects of the act of knowing' (Oliveira, 1997, p. 11).

The dialectic relationship between theory and practice is an essential dimension of popular education (Chevalier & Deschamps, 2019). It involves an incessant movement between grounded critical reflection and transformative action, which highlights the importance of the 'ecology of knowledge' (Santos, 2007). According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007), ecology of knowledge is based on the recognition of the plurality and interdependence of heterogeneous knowledge beyond scientific knowledge. This is achieved through processes that attribute value both to popular communities' life experience and their access to scientific knowledge, but also acknowledge their urge and ability to transform reality. Popular education is 'a facilitator of the scientific understanding that groups and movements can and should have with regard to their experiences' (Freire, 2000, p. 29).

Critical collective consciousness is worked on in popular education with a view to fostering the development of responsible civic participation, contributing to a reduction of individuals in poverty, stimulating rural and community development, and collaboration in the democratisation of access and educational success (Melo, 2012). Moreover, it can enable the discussion and visibility of complex social problems, often rendered natural or made invisible, through the implementation of new social and educational practices, as well as the emergence of 'emancipatory vocabulary and instruments, for the invention of new citizenships' (Santos & Nunes, 2003, p. 26).

Methodology

Participatory action research

The empirical data underlying the analysis resulted from participatory action research conducted in the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude* over a period of one year. Participatory action research 'may be defined as a method of study and action that goes hand in hand with an altruistic philosophy of life to obtain useful and reliable results in the improvement of collective situations, above all, in relation to grassroots communities' (Fals Borda, 2020, p. 206). From a historical point of view, this type of research is critical of the hegemonic development model, studies and stimulates integrated, endogenous and sustainable practices in territories characterised by situations of poverty and oppression (Fals Borda, 2020; Finger & Asún, 2003; Hall, 1975).

The adoption of this research approach was deemed most appropriate due to the characteristics of the context and the interests of the actors involved - the researcher, the leaders of the Association and of the Tomkiewicz Centre, the expert by experience and

the academic expert. The actors sought to simultaneously combine the construction of scientific knowledge and transformative intervention regarding the social and educational practices promoted by the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude*.

Participatory action research acknowledges the complexity of social and educational phenomena, and the importance of studying that which is concealed and silenced, from a social and scientific perspective. This type of research falls within the epistemologies of the South, as an 'insurgent, resistant' (Santos et al., 2016, p. 17) and alternative proposal, given the hegemonic ways of understanding the world. To the extent possible, this study sought to adopt an approach grounded on horizontal and sharing relationships that enhance the power to act of the actors involved, based on the assumption that 'research is a communicative interaction in which there is a process of dialogue and mutual learning and trust between the researcher and the researched' (Fals Borda, 2020, p. 197). Despite the complexity of this process, the actors involved participated 'in formulating the problem, discussing the solutions and interpreting the data' (Hall, 1975, p. 29).

The research emerged as a result of an interest expressed by: i) the researcher in becoming acquainted with the work in tandem and the training of the expert by experience; ii) an expert by experience in being accompanied and developing knowledge on the biographical approach and portfolio; iii) the directors of the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude*, the Tomkiewicz Centre and the academic expert due to the importance they attributed to the support of the researcher in the accompaniment of the work in tandem and in the preparation of the reference framework of training, recognition and validation of prior learning of the expert by experience in poverty and social exclusion. The combination of these interests gave rise to the development of research that sought to be a significant and (trans)formative experience for all those involved, from a perspective of committed action with social change (Fals Borda, 2020).

Techniques and procedures

Due to the characteristics of participatory action research, the data collection process was concomitant with periods of dialogue, reflection, sharing and learning among the actors involved. The empirical data underpinning the analysis was collected over a one-year period, via the following methods: observation-immersion, biography workshop, semi-structured interviews, document collection and informal conversations. Observation-immersion occurred in monthly meetings with the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude* team and with members of the Tomkiewicz Centre (advisory board of the Association). These meetings served for the actors to take stock of the Association's activity, to programme interventions and define strategies for action. The various actors' immersion in the research context and their reflective and collaborative processes fostered the production of empirical data that are key not only to the research but also to change, striving to ensure 'a complete inner vision of the situations and processes under study, with goals for present and future action' (Fals Borda, 2015, p. 235).

A monthly biography workshop was organised with the researcher and a tandem. The tandem consisted of a pair, namely the expert by experience and the academic expert. The objective was to gain further understanding of the training process and experiential knowledge of the expert by experience, the methodology of the work in tandem and to promote the training and accompaniment of the tandem. The biography workshop focused on 'the construction and appropriation of the training history trajectory' (Delory-Momberger, 2014, p. 169), and of the professional trajectory of the two tandem members.

The biography workshop consisted of reflection, explanation, socialization and analysis in relation to: i) significant points of the training process of the expert by

experience and the academic expert; ii) characteristics, specific features, challenges and learning outcomes of the work in tandem; iii) training process and professional profile of the expert by experience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with one of the founders and a professional from the Association, the excerpts of which are identified in the presentation of the data with the acronyms ENT1 and ENT2, respectively. During this period, several informal conversations were held and working documents were collected, especially those related to the history of the neighbourhood and the Association, and to the training of the expert by experience.

The participatory action research followed the ethical principles of research in the field of Education Sciences (All European Academies, 2017; Sociedade Portuguesa de Ciências da Educação, 2020), guided by relationships based on dialogue, listening, trust and mutual recognition among all the participants. These ethical principles were also structuring in epistemological terms since, in order to promote the participation and co-construction of the research, it was essential to ensure horizontal relationships based on respect, recognition of the experience and knowledge of others, and their ability to act.

The empirical data collected in the research underwent a thematic content analysis (Bardin, 2018) based on the analytical categories arising from the general and specific objectives. This analysis was initially conducted by the researcher and later improved with the support of the other actors. The selection presented in this paper focused on the following analytical categories: i) history and dynamics of the neighbourhood; ii) history and dynamics of the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude*; iii) characteristics and challenges of the work in tandem methodology; iv) history, characteristics and challenges of the training of educational assistants and the expert by experience. The empirical data resulting from the 'methodological triangulation' (Thurmond, 2001, p.254) of the afore-mentioned techniques is presented below.

The neighbourhood, the association and popular education

The neighbourhood – the emergence of a collective life

The Cova da Moura neighbourhood was built by migrants on abandoned land consisting of private (80%) and public (20%) property, in the municipality of Amadora, Portugal. These migrants were from rural areas of Portugal and Portuguese-speaking African Countries (PALOP), namely Cape Verde, Angola and Guinea-Bissau. From 1978 onwards, the progressive growth of the neighbourhood, through the construction of self-built houses by the residents themselves, led to several collective problems related to basic sanitation and urban planning. The neighbourhood needed essential infrastructures to enhance the population's quality of life. Due to its precarious living conditions, but also to the influence of the different cultures that characterize it, community life in this territory has been guided by the metaphor 'Djunta Mô', a Cape Verdean expression meaning to join hands, solidarity, mutual aid and synergy, in the sense of together we are stronger.

Since the late 1970s, the residents have taken collective measures to solve some of the neighbourhood's problems and also to demand the intervention of the state in areas within its competence. They have collectively taken control of various interventions in the neighbourhood: cleaning and paving the streets, collecting rubbish; planning, building and managing green spaces; constructing buildings of an associative nature themselves, determining the type of use of collective spaces in the neighbourhood, participating in the identification of problems, potential and solutions; and organising and managing the cultural practices. The residents have taken it upon themselves to demand electricity and

basic sanitation infrastructures in the neighbourhood (water, sewage, rubbish collection and the cleaning of the streets) from the relevant public authorities.

Three collective initiatives are particularly noteworthy: i) the creation of a women's group to claim the right to piped water in the neighbourhood houses; ii) the sharing of a resident couple's personal library within the community, so that children, youths and adults of the neighbourhood can have access to books and thus develop reading habits; iii) the residents' opposition and complaint activities against the public authorities' intention to demolish the houses, destroy the neighbourhood and resettle the residents in areas further away from the city centre. Over the last fifty years, the history of the neighbourhood has been interwoven with the collective demonstrations and fights of the residents against the political power for the right to the neighbourhood space and housing in decent conditions. Throughout this period, the residents have established and improved the neighbourhood's living conditions, constructing it as a place of community life, of belonging, memories and identities.

The Association - the emergence of critical and counter-hegemonic practices

The *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude* began to structure itself in 1984 and was officially established in 1987 as a result of the collective mobilisation experience and the need to ensure the continuity and consistency of the residents' political intervention. The Association is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, located in the Cova da Moura neighbourhood and created by the residents. Initially, only the residents were part of the social bodies, however, at a later stage, outside individuals were also integrated, from a work in tandem perspective. The work of the Association is based- on collective processes, geared towards the participation of the residents and recognition of their experiences, knowledge and skills, as stated by the interviewee: 'it's the result of the skills of the people in the neighbourhood, they are the ones who built the Association' (ENT1). This dynamic is explained below.

The Association promotes global and sustainable community development, geared towards improving the living conditions of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, through the organisation of activities of a social, educational, cultural, sports, professional, economic, legal and urban character. The Association's intervention assumes a political dimension: first, since its action is based on a model of integrated and sustainable local and community development; second, as it aims to ensure the survival of the neighbourhood in the territory where it was built, defying demolition attempts on the part of public entities; third, since improved neighbourhood conditions are promoted and claimed to ensure the residents' 'right to the city'. The work of the Association is inseparable from the social phenomena of colonialism, migration and racism.

The Association's intervention is anchored on a set of pillars established collectively by the managing bodies, who worked in the Association and lived in the neighbourhood in the early 1990s, through a progressive process: interculturality, communication, joy, gender equality, respect for beliefs, cooperation, empowerment, environment, creativity, persistence, quality, efficiency and effectiveness, and solidarity. These pillars are at the root of the work with the neighbourhood residents and are clearly apparent in the initiatives of the adult vocational training promoted by the Association:

> We always work on the pillars, at the beginning, on the first day of the course; normally there are twelve people on the course, each one is responsible for a pillar to then move on to action and stimulate the others to take it into account. (ENT1)

The example denotes the importance attributed by the Association to the dialectic relationship between theory and practice as it strives for the accomplishment of its guiding principles on a daily basis, through its actions and the actions of the residents. Its goals, organisation and functioning, work methodologies and choice of lexicon shed light upon the organisational culture of the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude*, while this 'form of functioning has had and continues to have implications for the work of the Association' (ENT1).

Over the last three decades, the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude* has promoted highly diverse social and cultural practices with educational potential within the community, involving families, children, young people, adults and older adults. The Association has implemented various community initiatives in the neighbourhood, such as: the participatory citizenship project with older adults, focusing on literacy, culture, civic participation and health education; the neighbourhood mothers' project, aimed at the mentoring and support of very poor families in the neighbourhood in terms of financial and family management. Other initiatives include school support for children, support for the professional integration of adults, a project to support victims of domestic violence, a project for the prevention and treatment of alcoholism, and the Kova M Studio project, which stimulates the musical production of young people from the neighbourhood. These initiatives are implemented by means of work in tandem and characterised by articulation, complementarity, accompaniment and synergies between the academic and the expert by experience professionals.

The aforementioned projects arose from the community's own reflections and requests: i) for diagnostic purposes, with door to door surveys, to ascertain the residents' concerns, satisfaction and what they would wish to change in the neighbourhood and their contributions to that change; ii) when the people themselves, in their daily lives, go to the Association and present proposals; iii) when the professionals observe and talk to the residents, etc.

Training of the educational action assistants and the expert by experience

Considering the diversity and complexity of the practices implemented by the Association, it was decided that particular emphasis would be placed on intervention in the fields of adult training and professional activity, more specifically on the expert by experience and work in tandem. Intervention in these domains is interdependent and arose from the interests, needs and experiences of the neighbourhood residents. The collective dimension that characterises the neighbourhood and the running of the Association has come to be reflected in the intentional and systematic education and training processes, implemented through resident participation in the diagnosis of problems and the identification of measures, as may be seen in the following excerpt:

> […] in the early 1990s, we introduced vocational training courses, because the women themselves said they needed support, needed to reflect better, to have training [...] the actual structuring of the courses was carried out together with these people who had been collaborating since the 1980s, here in the *Moinho*. (ENT1)

The Association's intervention in the field of adult training has been guided by the singularity and pioneering nature of the training themes, frameworks and work methodologies. The initiatives implemented around vocational training over the last three decades have contributed to increase the academic and vocational qualifications of the neighbourhood residents, but also to the emergence of a terminology that defines the

unique quality of the Association's work, such as the terms: expert by experience, academic expert and work in tandem.

The training of the expert by experience focuses on two domains: poverty and being a colonized migrant. This training is intrinsically linked to the history of the neighbourhood residents and to the Association itself, as may be observed: 'this expert by experience figure is highly connected to the history of the *Moinho*' (ENT1). The initiatives behind the training of educational action assistants and experts by experience in poverty and social exclusion are driven by the Association and interdependent on the work in tandem. The initiatives of the residents and the Association occur in a continuous and interconnected movement. The experience in the training of educational assistants has proven to be crucial for the subsequent development of the training of the expert by experience in poverty and social exclusion.

Within the scope of social intervention projects funded by the European Union, in partnership with actors from various member states, the Association promoted the conceptualisation reference framework of training for level II and III educational action assistants, and fostered the training of those working with children in the neighbourhood (in the nursery, kindergarten and with nannies). These projects, which were run between the late 1980s and 1990s, emerged when the leaders and workers of the Association realised: i) the importance of training for professionals working with children; ii) the importance of the knowledge resulting from these workers' experience; iii) since they did not hold a professional qualification in the field, the skills of these workers were not officially recognised. This was highlighted as follows: 'the illegal nannies already had these skills but they were not recognised' (ENT1).

When, in collaboration with the partners, the Association conceptualised the reference framework and promoted the training, concern about the professional qualification of educational assistants had not emerged in Portugal. The reference framework was organised into thematic modules on child development, working in partnership with parents and peers, and the organisation of resources. The curricular plan of the course had three complementary components: i) recognition and validation of experiential knowledge; ii) general and qualifying training in the area of early childhood education; iii) on-the-job training. The training consisted of the preparation of a portfolio on a computer, based on a biographical work on the explanation and recognition of knowledge and skills in the field of early childhood education. In the Association's working document, entitled Instrument for the Validation and Certification of the Informal Competences of Educational Action Employees, the perspective adopted is underlined: 'the competences acquired through informal channels may be presented and will be valued' (1988, §8). The recognition and validation of experiential knowledge allowed for the appropriation and recognition of the experience, knowledge and training power of the workers involved, as observed in the statement of one interviewee: 'after all I know how to do things [as claimed by the trainees]. The recognition that they knew a lot of things has been very important' (ENT1). The lived and experiential knowledge of the trainees were the main training resources.

In this training initiative, a dialectic relationship between practice and theory was promoted, as emphasised: '[We tried our best to] avoid the opposition between theory and practice. We give great priority to action, practice and on-the-job training' (ENT2). In this regard, the aim of the pedagogical work was to establish a process of knowledge construction 'in a spiral' (ENT1). Subsequently, the reference framework for training conceptualised by the Association was used by the public body that oversees adult education in Portugal as the basis for the design of Adult Education and Training Courses

for educational assistants and for the recognition, validation and certification of competences process in this professional area.

Since 2004, the Association has invested in the conceptualisation reference framework for training of the expert by experience in poverty and social exclusion and in the implementation of this training, within the scope of several EU funded projects, in partnership with entities from European Union countries. Prior experience and the guidelines of the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude* found resonance in the work developed by its partners. The projects fostered the exchange of experiences, namely contact with reference framework for training of experts in the field of poverty and social exclusion and knowledge of public policies that comprehend the integration of these actors in public services and associations, as is the case in the Netherlands and Belgium. In this context, the Association (re)elaborated several tools (reference framework for training, training manual, trainers' guide) in a collaborative venture between academic experts and experts by experience. Based on the conceptualised, the Association developed the training of the expert by experience in poverty and social exclusion, thus mobilising 'those with very high poverty rates, the most marginalised' (ENT1).

The reference framework for training has a modular structure and is organised into three components: i) recognition and validation of experiential knowledge; ii) general and technical training; iii) on-the-job training. The structure and logic of this reference framework are similar to those of the reference framework for educational assistants. The training of the expert by experience in poverty and social exclusion seeks to promote the reflection, (re)elaboration and socialisation of the experience of poverty and social exclusion, the acquisition of knowledge, know-how and skills deemed essential for intervention in that field, namely by working in tandem with the academic expert. In this case, training is essentially based on the reflection and (re)elaboration of 'the life story' (ENT1) of the subjects involved. The structure of the reference framework for training denotes a concern with the complementarity and interdependence of scientific knowledge and knowledge resulting from life experience. The Association believes that this perspective is essential to mobilise workers with low levels of schooling for training and, simultaneously, to promote the work in tandem.

The biography workshop, promoted by the researcher within the scope of participatory action research, made it possible to collect and analyse data on the characteristics, specific features and importance of the work in tandem, the training of the expert by experience and his/her professional profile. This data was used to refine the professional profile and the reference framework for training for the expert by experience. The researcher also participated in a meeting between the Association and the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP), with the goal of promoting the integration of the reference framework for training of the expert by experience in poverty and social exclusion in the National Qualifications Catalogue, as an Adult Education and Training Course, with a twofold academic (12^{th} grade) and vocational (level 4) qualification.

The expert by experience and the work in tandem

During the course of the training provided by the Association, the experts by experience in poverty and social exclusion work in tandem with the academic experts in interventions with the poorest families in the neighbourhood, older adults, victims of domestic violence, young people at risk of school failure and dropout, and individuals with an alcohol addiction. The participation of experts by experience is based on the need to safeguard the ethical principle of involving individuals who are experiencing poverty and

social exclusion in the implementation of measures that interfere with their lives and/or the lives of individuals in similar conditions. These agents identify and accompany those in poverty and social exclusion in the neighbourhood, who experience one or several of the above-mentioned problems.

The experts by experience take on different roles: community workers, interpreters, mediators and educators. Their intervention is extremely important in the promotion of communication and relationships based on respect, empathy and recognition among those who are experiencing problems and those who have not had such life experiences. Through the work in tandem between the expert by experience and the academic expert, the Association experiments with alternative critical intervention models, differing from those based on assistance, in a field marked by complexity and by the predominance of unequal power relations, seeking 'more human and efficient' intervention (ENT1).

The Association's intervention in the area of domestic violence with migrants in poverty is based on the work in tandem between an expert by experience and an academic expert who identify situations, make a diagnosis, define, monitor and evaluate action plans. Due to her life experience and training, the expert by experience in poverty and social exclusion assumes a highly important role in the identification of situations and in the monitoring of domestic violence victims. This accompaniment aims to support the victim in taking measures that can promote her well-being, safety and autonomy before and after the complaint has been filed with the police. The expert by experience informs the victim of her rights and accompanies her in the process of lodging the complaint with the police, to ensure that the process is handled with discretion, seriousness and dignity. This work is very demanding for the expert by experience, namely from a relational and emotional point of view, however the systematic contact with the academic expert, in the work in tandem, contributes to her accompaniment and training.

Conclusion

The empirical data collected in the participatory action research shed light upon the political dimension (of struggle, demand and change) in the collective action of the residents of the Cova da Moura neighbourhood, most of whom are migrants, poor and with low educational attainment. This collective action denotes a political positioning and the ability, on the part of the residents, to 'capture their reality, understand it in order to transform it' (Freire, 1972, p. 55). By assuming the attitude of subjects geared towards ' self-reflection and reflection on their time and space' (Freire, 1967, p. 36), they promote a 'collective consciousness' (Gohn, 2009) of their possibilities of contributing to change. In this case, hopelessness, related to the difficult living conditions, 'is replaced by hope, when they begin to see with their own eyes and become capable of planning' (Freire, 1967, p. 54) and acting.

The social and educational practices characterise popular education in the neighbourhood and reveal an understanding of the residents as 'social, historical and cultural subjects of the act of knowing' (Oliveira, 1997). Collective processes of a political and critical nature, interwoven with the popular education, are part of the history of the Cova da Moura neighbourhood and are at the origin of the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude*. Through collective and self-managed initiatives, the residents have triggered action based on solidarity, curiosity and a critical spirit to organise life in the neighbourhood, with the potential to promote autonomy, emancipation of the popular classes and social transformation (Freire, 2000; Illich, 1985; Melo, 2012; Melo & Benavente, 1978). Over the last five decades, social and educational practices in the

neighbourhood have sought to guarantee the right to housing and a dignified life, i.e., the 'right to the city' (Wildemeersch, 2018; Wildemeersch & Lages, 2018).

In the last three decades, the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude* has integrated the collective experience and awareness of the residents and promoted their civic and political education through a critical approach of a 'counter-hegemonic and emancipatory' nature (Santos, 2007), characteristic of popular education. This is particularly evident in the way the Association conceives and implements adult education, articulating it with the intervention in the neighbourhood. The lexicon -expert by experience and work in tandem - may be viewed as part of a counter-hegemonic, 'insurgent, alternative' (Santos et al., 2016), critical and emancipatory political process aimed at social transformation. The emergence of emancipatory vocabulary and instruments carries the potential to promote new citizenships (Santos & Nunes, 2003). The new grammar is a constituent element of popular education, as it strengthens the 'theoretical paradigm of the struggles of grassroots communities' (Gadotti & Torres, 2003), as a political and pedagogical alternative to the established educational projects, detached from the interests of the most disadvantaged.

The education and training of the neighbourhood's residents are the structural and cross-cutting fields of its action, achieved through intentional and systematised processes, but also through the educational potential of social, cultural, sports and professional practices. The pioneering character of the guiding principles, of the approach to the social and educational phenomena, of the methodologies, the reference framework, as well as of the instruments designed and used in the Association, points to an epistemological, political and pedagogical position towards social inequality, namely towards the way of understanding migrants, people living in poverty and the territories where they live. This is particularly evident in their conceptualisation of the reference framework and implementation of the training courses for educational action assistants and experts by experience in poverty and social exclusion. The reference framework for training has promoted the dialectic theory-practice relationship, the epistemological recognition of experience and the importance of its articulation with scientific knowledge.

The training of experts by experience in poverty and social exclusion is an academic and professional qualification pratices revealing a shift from the dominant logic, as far as contents, processes and relationships are concerned (Foley, 2001). Experts by experience are interpreters seeking to promote 'mutual intelligibilities and to articulate differences' (Santos & Nunes, 2003, p. 26) among individuals with distinct experiences. In their intervention, they assume a critical position in relation to public policies, intervention logics and strategies, and to the social, educational and economic initiatives that generate and/or perpetuate poverty. In addition, they also promote accessibility to available resources, tools and means, with the goal of improving quality of life and exiting poverty.

The work in tandem between the expert by experience and the academic expert falls within the 'ecology of knowledge' (Santos, 2007), as it allows for collaborative and reciprocal learning through the sharing of experiences and knowledge with different characteristics (popular knowledge and scientific knowledge). The training of the expert by experience and the work in tandem are based on the recognition of the importance of the neighbourhood residents' 'knowledge of lived experience' (Freire, 2000, p. 59). This 'knowledge of lived experience' must be the starting point in any popular education undertaking geared towards the creation of more rigorous knowledge on the part of the popular masses' (Freire, 2000, p. 59).

The work of the *Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude* has contributed to the visibility of complex and often silenced social problems. Its dynamics are associated with the emergence of unprecedented social and educational practices that foster a previously

non-existent ‘widening of the present’ and ‘production of reality’ (Santos, 2007). Thus, they are part of the construction of a present and a possible future, one that is more human, more dignified, more supportive, more inclusive, more sustainable and more democratic.

The impossibility of involving other experts by experience and academic experts working in tandem in the Association, to accompany their work and contribute to their training may be deemed a limitation of this study. This type of research poses the challenge of a desirable balance between the research process and the implication for change, which was felt by the researcher. Due to the specific nature and complexity of this type of research, maintaining critical vigilance, which may rely on the support of external entities with experience in research and intervention, is of utmost importance.

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The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship or publication of this article.

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Encountering works by Nyerere and Freire: Exploring the connections between education for liberation and education for self-reliance in contemporary radical popular education

Silke Schreiber-Barsch
University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany (silke.schreiber-barsch@uni-due.de)

Joseph Badokufa Bulugu
St Augustine University of Tanzania, Tanzania (joseph.bulugu@saut.ac.tz)

Lukas Eble
University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany (lukas.eble@uni-due.de)

Abstract

This conceptual paper presents an encounter of a work regarding education on self-reliance by Tanzanian educator Julius K. Nyerere (1922–1999) with a work by Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1921–1997) on education for liberation to explore their relevance for contemporary radical popular education. To this end, the study aligns with the methodological approaches used in qualitative comparative education research. Entering into a comparative dialogue between both contributions contextualises the respective features of each contribution and allows a systematic dialogue between commonalities and differences and for conclusions to be drawn regarding radical popular education. Solidarity and sustainability serve as guiding categories in this endeavour. They point conclusively to the benefits of further theoretical encounters (with, for example, the philosophy of ubuntu), to the risks of neoliberal reinterpretations and, against this background, to the quest for nurturing contemporary approaches in radical popular education in adult education academia, research and practice under the auspices of social change and transformation.

Keywords: Freire, Nyerere, solidarity, comparative research, service learning

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Introduction

This conceptual paper presents an encounter of the work by Tanzanian educator Julius K. Nyerere (1922–1999) on education for self-reliance (Nyerere, 1967a) with a work by Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1921–1997) on education for liberation (Freire, 1993) and aims to explore their relevance for contemporary radical popular education. These two landmark contributions under study had emerged at a specific period of time (between 1967 and 1973) and geographical locations (East Africa and South America) and in particular socio-political constellations before becoming *travelling concepts* (Ozga & Jones, 2006) across the centenary and across various strands in the geographies of academic knowledge production and debate as well as local education practices.

Yet, the contributions of Julius K. Nyerere to the debate on popular education and the theory of education tend to be less widely known than Paulo Freire's work, even though there exist vital contributions connecting their works not only at that time (Hall, 1974; Kassam, 1983) but also in recent times (see e.g. Díaz-Arévalo, 2022; Major & Mulvihill, 2009; Maluleka, 2021; Mulenga, 2001; von Kotze, 2010). This may be explained by the bias in the worldwide knowledge production and dissemination machinery, having long neglected authors from the African continent and rather imported deficit-oriented views on (adult) education to Africa, legitimated by Western liberal and neo-liberal paradigms (see, e.g., Ahluwalia, 2001; von Kotze, 2010, pp. 134–135). By contrast, according to von Kotze (2010), a sustainable livelihood approach as part of an adult learning and education understanding is to be valued as a 'conceptual and methodological tool developed in the Global South' (p. 132), offering vital contributions to the Global North. Similarly, Mayo and Vittoria (2021, p. 119) refer to Nyerere's educational thinking as key to postcolonial discourse in education.

Taking up these arguments, we aim to re-encounter the two landmark contributions through the lens of radical popular education, using methodological approaches from qualitative comparative education research that provide a seminal analytical procedure (Fairbrother, 2016; Manzon, 2016). It helps not only to contextualise the features of each contribution but also to promote, what we call, a *systematic comparative dialogue* between these two contributions and the commonalities, differences and conclusions to be drawn with regard to contemporary radical popular education. *Solidarity* and *sustainability* serve as guiding categories and focal points in this comparative dialogue.

We begin by introducing the paper's *Conceptual and methodological framework of analysis*. This provides the necessary understanding for unfolding the enquiry in *Freire and Nyerere: A comparative dialogue*. As transfer from rhetoric to practice in the case of Nyerere receives less attention in the Global North's academic body of knowledge than in Freirean case studies, we exemplify such transfer by briefly referring to *Education for self-reliance: An example of the Service-Learning Initiative Tanzania*. This example showcases a particular curriculum and pedagogy that attempts to foster collective learning and social change (Martin et al., 1999, p. 9). This leads to a conclusion addressing the benefits and limitations of our enquiry and pointing to implications for further considerations (*Discussion and concluding remarks*).

Conceptual and methodological framework of analysis

Conceptual framework

As our analysis elaborates on conceptual approaches to transnational adult education research, we align our understanding of adult learning and education (ALE) with the definition suggested by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO (2015). It asserts that adults are those 'who engage in adult learning and education, even if they have not reached the legal age of maturity' (p. 7). ALE, then, denotes:

> the entire body of learning processes, formal, non-formal and informal, whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live, develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their own interests and those of their communities, organizations and societies (UNESCO, 2015, p. 6).

The overall aim is 'to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work' (p. 6).

In contrast to (neo)liberal understandings of ALE, which prioritize learning for 'individual intellectual stimulation or personal enrichment' (Jesson & Newman, 2004, p. 253), approaches to radical popular education highlight the value of learners' experiences as both the starting point and continuous driver of any educational endeavour (Lovett, 1988, p. xviii). Such dialogical learning and teaching settings target a collaborative learning process, driven by teachers *and* learners and acknowledging having both knowledge *and* agency. Learning is, then, seen as a social activity that incorporates the reciprocity of individual and collective learning. Learning is to contribute to developing 'really useful knowledge' (Johnson, 1988, p. 3) and 'contesting orthodoxies, in theory and practice' (p. 4) about, for example, hegemonic structures of social knowledge production, including those of adult education institutional settings. From this way of learning, according to Jesson and Newman (2004), we 'learn not only to see the world more clearly but also *to see ourselves seeing* the world' (p. 261; emphasis in original). This enables dialogue on multiple levels:

> We learn to solve problems through reflection that may transform our whole way of thinking—that may transform our perspectives. In this kind of learning we can learn to see through ourselves and so may be able better *[sic]* to understand others (Jesson & Newman, 2004, p. 261).

Accordingly, such learning emphasises 'action and reflection' (Freire, 1993, pp. 60, 98) as key elements of achieving social change (Jesson & Newman, 2004, p. 253). Educational practice, then, enables experiencing, discussing and practicing freedom, equality, solidarity and social justice, aiming at nurturing social change by challenging the present conditions of society (Lovett, 1988, p. xviii). For this reason, the rich history of social movements may serve as 'learning resources to build and sustain change. The past gives us resources that we can use to change the present to create the future' (Jesson & Newman, 2004, p. 251), which points to the benefit of re-discussing landmark contributions to social movements, such as those provided by Freire and Nyerere. In this sense, until today, radical popular education has sought 'to link experience and theory in a critical way and facilitate learners with a deeper understanding of their lives and how they are positioned in society and become transformative agents' (Finnegan et al., 2022, p. 1).

The pedagogical aim of strengthening learners' development as 'agents in constructing a different trajectory of societies' (Barrett, 2016, p. 108), however, still requires answers from an ALE perspective to the question of who or what exactly should be transformed due to learning and education and for what purpose. Freedom, equality, solidarity, sustainability and social justice may serve as the widely agreed-upon normative leitmotifs of such change. From this range of leitmotifs, we chose solidarity and sustainability as guiding categories and focal points for our enquiry. Hence, for a popular education to be called radical, a strong link to the concept of solidarity is needed, given the understanding of solidarity as a social practice to abolish or transform existing and oppressing social, political and economic boundaries that define and regulate the status quo of societies (Eble, 2022). Furthermore, sustained individual and collective learning in today's world is not achieved without—equally radically—questioning the temporal durability and glocal (re)production and distribution of resources in their widest meaning (UN, 2015). Sustainability, then, is not restricted to serving as only a cognitive content delivered by ALE but is likewise perceived as a social practice of ALE (Schreiber-Barsch & Mauch, 2019).

A radical popular education viewpoint, therefore, emphasises that neither solidarity nor sustainability are necessarily a given motivational driver or outcome of collective learning. Instead, realising sustainability requires the social practice of solidarity to overcome the dominant social, political and economic rationales and, hence, proceed in the direction of a sustainable society. In this sense, ALE's fundamental role and the adult educator's work are far from redundant. Jesson and Newman (2004) argued that learning 'may not be articulated as learning until someone helps them [the adult learners; the authors notes] make it conscious' (p. 255). This includes discussing the direction to which change or transformation should proceed in a 'broader political economic environment of a community, a nation and maybe the world' (Jesson & Newman, 2004, p. 252) in favour of those who are socially vulnerable or excluded in some way. Popovic (2013) cited the example of Serbia, where adult education, as a conscious and intentional learning process, has played a vital role since the mid-1990s in fuelling a non-violent revolution. However, in the recent debate, Evans et al. (2022) declared that, today, 'much of adult education is not providing any response to the great social problems' (p. 1), which emphasises the need to put the topic of radical popular education back on the agendas.

Methodological approach

To establish a comparative dialogue between these two contributions, we adhere to qualitative approaches in comparative education research. These approaches seek to understand educational phenomena or topics of interest using an interpretive and ideographic approach that believes in the importance of contextualising and locating such phenomena historically, sociopolitically, geographically and temporally; generalisation is not its primary aim (Fairbrother, 2016; Manzon, 2016).

Our comparative enquiry follows, moreover, the approach of *comparing places* (Manzon, 2016). This is due to the geographic contextualisations of Freire's and Nyerere's contributions in their context of origin and to the regional associations that are made to Freire and Nyerere, which are still valid today. However, the study does not intend a strict country-to-country comparison in the traditional sense. Instead, it uses the problem approach elucidated by Bereday (1964), which shifts the focus to a particular selection of one theme or topic within the comparative enquiry (p. 23).

Accordingly, we identified as the *tertium comparationis* of our enquiry the conceptual idea of *adult learners as change agents*. To explore this, the two pedagogical

concepts of adult learners served as *units of comparison*. Based on the classification by Manninen (2012), both contributions are similar in their theoretical approach and normative background by emphasising the dialectics of individual and collective learning, by following a 'transformative' agenda ('learning for change') and by being located at the intersection of radical humanist models ('critical awareness and change of own life situation, values and attitudes; individual/personal change') and radical functionalist models ('Innovations, entrepreneurship, change agents; change in society/community activis') (p. 75). However, they have emerged in two conceptual variants: education for liberation (Freire) and education for self-reliance (Nyerere), which opens up the question of commonalities and differences.

In establishing a comparative dialogue between these two variants, our objective is not only to describe but also to capture, understand and explain these commonalities and differences and to use the findings in a discussion on today's relevance of radical popular education approaches. The idea of a comparative dialogue ties in with Mason's (2016) argument that 'comparative education is best conceptualised as a critical social science, incorporating an emancipatory interest focused on the distribution of power and its associated attributes' (p. 253).

Against this background, we elaborate on the landmark contributions of Paulo Freire and Julius K. Nyerere.

Freire and Nyerere: A comparative dialogue

Introducing Freire and Nyerere

Whereas Nyerere, in his position as the founding president of the United Republic of Tanzania (1961), placed strong emphasis on developing a postcolonial nation-state from the 1960s onwards under the challenging legacy of centuries of colonial rule, the historical situation to which Freire was exposed to was different. Although Brazil was also struggling with its colonial history at that time, the nation-state's formal independence had already been gained in the 1820s. However, Brazil was overtaken in 1964 by a military dictatorship that ruled from 1964–1985, forcing Freire to go into exile in Chile in 1964. Thus, Freire, on the one hand, experienced an ongoing discussion and struggle related to pedagogical questions, which were also political issues. Nyerere, on the other hand, had to overcome fundamental challenges as a political leader in Tanzania, including a defensive war. Strategies were needed for adopting an educational policy and for budget planning under the imperative of their transfer into practice for the good of the developing postcolonial nation-state.

Yet, as geographically far apart as both nation-states may be, and even though their historical situations at the beginning of the 1960s differed, the two educators shared the emergence of their reflections and pedagogical work in the wake of a local and global social-emancipatory movement at the time, criticising the excesses of capitalism and broadcasting the quest for social change through learning and education. Within this context, both educators 'admired each other's writings' and aimed to establish an environment of cooperation (Mayo & Vittoria, 2021, p. 128), having personally met, for example, at a conference on adult education in Dar es Salaam in 1975 (Hope, 2008).

Freire

Brazilian Paulo Freire (1921–1997) is considered one of the most influential educators of the 20th century as an advocate for emancipatory popular education. In his comprehensive

oeuvre, the ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ (written 1967–1968 in Chile, published in 1970) is recognised as a ‘masterpiece’ (Lima, 2022, p. 20) and a ‘world-historical event for counter hegemonic theorists and activists’ (West, 1993, p. xiii). Still today, it has a firm place in the ‘critical pedagogy’ collections and serves as a vital resource for liberating educational practice.

Freire’s ideas and concepts were informed by his educational practice experiences, gained as a researching educator in the field of political alphabetisation in Brazil and Chile, as well as in North America, Europe and Africa (see below). His particular concerns were the educational issues of subaltern population groups facing socio-structural oppression (such as peasants or urban workers). In this context, Freire cooperated with numerous international organisations worldwide, including UNESCO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Council of Churches. He was also the secretary in charge of municipal education in Sao Paulo for more than two years (1989–1991).

Tackling the Freirean approach means working at the heart of popular education, drawing upon a path of hope and aiming at a truly democratic society, including the economic sphere (Freire, 2004). Freire held a strong belief in the people and their self-reliance, potential and abilities, as well as their capability to act in solidarity. By this, he offered ‘a socialist approach to education which locates politic in education and education in politics’ (Allman, 1988, p. 92), rejecting the neoliberal ‘ideology of ideological death’ (Freire, 1998, p. 14). Key to his understanding is that ownership of the pedagogy of the oppressed belongs to the people and not to the teachers or educators (Freire, 1993, p. 22). This understanding is diametrically opposed to the prevailing understanding of a ‘banking education’ (p. 45), which is characterised by a subject (teacher/oppressor/active)–object (student/oppressed/passive) relationship (p. 46). Such a class-based organisation of education is defined by Freire as a ‘cultural invasion’ (p. 125). Lima (2022) asserted that the prevalent structures and practices in adult education in neoliberal societies should be interpreted accordingly: ‘In more general terms, the frequently depoliticised and socially atomised stress placed on the right skills, purportedly tailored to the job market presents an inherent risk of becoming an oppressive pedagogy’ (pp. 21, 25–28). In Freirean terms, this risk creates a ‘culture of silence’ on the side of the oppressed and nurtures a ‘fear of freedom’ (Freire, 1993, p. 9).

In contrast to the concept of oppressive banking education, Freire conceptualises education as a practice of freedom, being processed in a problem-posing and consciousness-raising way (named ‘conscientizaçao’ [Freire, 1993, pp. 9, 87]). It is committed to a radical dialogical, intersubjective practice, claiming a dialectical amalgamation of reflections for an incessant, ideology-critical deciphering of oppressive structures, mechanisms and individual actions in which people place themselves as intervening subjects.

In this sense, adult education is understood as a practice of ‘dialogical cultural action’ (Freire 1993, pp. 167). The relationship between educators and learners in the educational process is based on solidarity and the reflection of power. Educators are also learners, and learners are also educators (p. 53). This is based on Freire’s anthropological assumption that human beings are historical beings:

> When I think of history I think about possibility—that history is the time and space of possibility. Because of that, I reject a fatalistic or pessimistic understanding of history with a belief that what happens is what should happen” (Freire, 1989, as cited in Darder, 2002, p. x).

From the perspective of popular education, the principle of common-sense knowledge is a significant starting point for educational work. Antonio Gramsci similarly discussed the 'senso comune' (Gramsci, 1975, pp. Q1, 65). Jesson and Newman (2004) also emphasised that 'Learning radical education is learning to challenge accepted common sense to create social change' (p. 261). Key elements of Freire's 'conscientizacao' are, therefore, the so-called 'generative' themes (Freire, 1993, p. 75), meaning words and practices that play a vital role in people's everyday lives (unemployment, alcoholism, sexism, work contracts, etc.). Thus, the objects of the educational process must be developed collaboratively with learners following a dialogical problem-posing process. Freire's dialogical principle is often adopted exclusively as a method that neglects its socio-critical, popular education context. Organising learning as an investigative process, however, provides learners with a shared position that allows for the analysis and dismantling of the world.

Nyerere

Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922–1999), the former and founding president of the United Republic of Tanzania (1961), is well known as a teacher, an anti-colonial activist, a political leader and an educational philosopher. In Tanzania, he is often referred to as *mwalimu*, a Swahili name for 'teacher'. Despite leaving the teaching profession to pursue a political career in the 1950s, Nyerere retained the title *mwalimu* during and after his political leadership tenure. To attain equity and promote the development of the diversely uneducated population of the mid-20th century in Tanzania (Mulenga, 2001, p. 449), Nyerere crafted 'Education for Self-Reliance' (1967a) as a collaborative guiding education philosophy for Tanzania's nation-building in the 1960s. This work continues to reflect the status of the national education philosophy in Tanzania (URT, 2014) and, as part of the political ideology of *ujamaa* ('familyhood' in Swahili), of a national vision and ethics with the goals of egalitarianism and human-centred development (Nyerere, 1967b, p. 316; Mulenga, 2001, p. 450; Pacho, 2013, p. 11). Such a socialist society, connecting communalism and familyhood (ujamaa), as seen as 'the most fundamental element in traditional African society' (Mulenga, 2001, p. 450), should be based on three principles: 'equality and respect for human dignity; sharing of the resources which are produced by our efforts; work by everyone and exploitation by none' (Nyerere, 1967a, pp. 5–6).

Education for self-reliance philosophy is supported by several actions. The first is orienting the masses, especially young people, to a culture of learning by doing. School curricula are intended to integrate academics with economic activities. According to Nyerere (1968):

> Each school should have, as an integral part of it, a farm or workshop which provides the food eaten by the community, and makes some contribution to the national income. […] This is not a suggestion that a school farm or workshop should be attached to every school for training purposes. It is a suggestion that every school should also be a farm. (p. 283)

Second, adult education as a form of lifelong learning is emphasised to ensure that the developing community and the nation-state become self-sustaining. Nyerere clarified that adult education must contribute to an enlargement of human being's ability in every way. More specifically, it must help individuals decide for themselves—in cooperation—what development is. Moreover, it must help them to think clearly, it must enable them to examine possible alternative courses of action and to choose the option that best keeps with their own purposes and it must equip them with the ability to translate their decisions

into reality (Nyerere, 1978, p. 28). Nyerere further proposed that the 'first function of adult education is to inspire both a desire for change, and an understanding that change is possible' (p. 29). The 'belief that poverty or suffering is 'the will of God'' and that a human's 'only task is to endure, is the most fundamental of all enemies of freedom,' he argued (p. 29). In this way, Nyerere (1968) inspired and influenced the establishment of an adult education system (pp. 85–90; Nyerere, 1971, pp. 92–97 as cited in Lema et al., 2006) to augment the efforts of the formal education system to increase the literacy rate, as well as productivity and efficiency in socioeconomic and political endeavours.

Third, as part of the education for self-reliance philosophy, the learning process must be contextualised to inspire youth not only to appreciate their experiences but also to share their local education in the process of enriching learning. This process empowers learners and citizens to creatively apply educational solutions to address local issues and sustain their development initiatives (Nyerere, 1967a).

Fourth, the demand to maximise learning activities, despite the limited teaching and learning resources, was paramount in Nyerere's philosophy: education stakeholders—that is, educators, parents and students—must work hand in hand to ensure the greatest outcome of a learning activity. Thus, curricula interpreters ought to be creative in designing interesting and meaningful learning activities to keep learners engaged in the entire learning process.

Despite Nyerere's appealing education theory for a post-colonial nation-state, the process and outcome of its implementation cannot be spared from criticism, pointing to an overly 'uncritical appeal to the African traditional past' and major implementation challenges (Mulenga, 2001, p. 451). Schools and colleges kept playing only a marginal 'part of the economic and community system' (TANU, 1974, p. 4, as cited in Mulenga, 2001, p. 460) and did not turn into drivers for nation-building as envisioned in the philosophy. Although a 'well-meaning, sincere and idealistic philosophy' (Mulenga, 2001, p. 461), and showing an enduring relevance for Africa today and contributions to social and economic prosperities in countries such as Botswana (Major & Mulvihill, 2009, p. 19), its implementation at that time, however, suffered from 'unfavourable macro-economic conditions, inadequate resources and lack of commitment among the key players in the implementation process' (Mulenga, 2001, p. 461). This was also due to the then profound societal shifts in direction to a post-colonial nation-state that was still experiencing a 'Tanzanian elite [who] had adopted capitalist ideas of individualism and survival for the fittest'. There were also remnants of teachers who had been groomed in the colonial system to appear for work in a neck tie and jacket; thus, they were 'not prepared to do manual work' as part of curriculum implementation (Major & Mulvihill, 2009, p. 21).

To summarize, the expected revolutionary achievements (Sanga, 2016) of 'education for self-reliance' are to be seen as exemplary outcomes of a radical popular education in the context of a people or society in dire need of redefining itself and determining its destiny. Education for self-reliance plays a liberation role, and its influence on education systems, at least in Africa, is of great significance in building an egalitarian society.

Entering the comparative dialogue

On this introductory basis, the analysis shifts the focus to a more in-depth discussion to identify commonalities and differences between the two landmark contributions under study.

Exploring commonalities

First, Freire and Nyerere shared a strong belief in the ability of the people to build a society characterised by freedom, equality, solidarity, social justice and, based on these values, sustainability. This belief is to be contextualised in socio-historical situations: Both authors shared the experience of being confronted with the socio-psychological impact of having lived in times of colonialism and capitalism and the ways in which such structures of oppression are incorporated in people. Both referred to the socio-psychological works by Frantz Fanon ('Black skin, white mask', [1952]/1986; 'The wretched of the earth', [1961]/2001), another highly influential Pan-African thinker of that time in the field of postcolonial studies, critical theory and Marxism. However, neither Freire nor Nyerere systematically elaborated on the foundations of theories of socialisation. More important were the conclusions drawn from these theoretical considerations regarding the objective of restoring 'the African traditional value system that was despised by the colonizers' (Major & Mulvihill, 2009, p. 16) and developing a postcolonial nation-state on its own characteristics and worth, rather than perpetuating its legacies by heading for visions of now 'Black Europeans'. These considerations have been highly influential—to the present day and surely beyond these geographical contexts—in the sphere of education and the decisions made when establishing an educational system: Which authors are part of a curriculum? What value is given to what kind of knowledge? Which symbolic practices and structural features are perpetuated in the future? In an ideal picture of equality, educational institutions are often awarded with a too neutral role while neglecting their powerful impact on fuelling what Lima (2022) has called a 'cultural invasion', thereby, risking reproducing or even consolidating social, political and economic barriers across categories like class/milieu, gender and migration. Freire and Nyerere shared in this sense the opinion that capitalism is an intolerable system, characterised by 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham' (Marx, 1962, p. 189). However, pursuant to their experiences with colonial history, they regretted the idea brought forward by some Marxists that capitalism would be necessary as a historical phase (Mayo & Vittoria, 2021, p. 120).

A core component of this strong belief in the people is the significance given to education for planting the desire and ability to participate in transformation and social change and, thus, to fostering (adult) learners as change agents. Although Freire experienced the rise of neoliberalism and, by this, a new quality of aggression directed at the people, he, nevertheless, insisted on the element of hope and on the vision that people will fight these forms of governance, dominance and discrimination and will again take charge of social change and create a different history. In this sense, Lima argued that the Freirean approach of 'education for humanisation' even gained significance in the wake of 'cultural invasion, accommodation and deproblematisation of the future' (2022, p. 25). Thus, from Freire's and Nyerere's points of view, education is key to developing all social spheres and human beings. Both understood education for freedom as a means of raising consciousness on the structures of oppression and the ambivalences of society: 'Only free people conscious of their worth and their equality can build a free society', as Nyerere (1967a, p. 9) pointed out, referring to the denial of equality as the core of colonialism. This was achieved by learning in educational settings and reading texts, but even more importantly, by doing and working practically on issues of everyday life—the dialectics of action and reflection.

Second, we refer to their joint anthropological understanding of human beings as interdependent and interrelated social beings. Due to this, the relevance given to social practices in the sense of the everyday practices of the people in their communities

(families, villages/quarters, companies, religious communities, worker unions and so on) is paramount for the aim of developing and acting as a change agent. This is mirrored by the idea of learning and education as a dialectic of the individual and the community with concrete settings and features. From this context, the Freirean generative themes emerged in a dialogical manner. These themes focus on and dismantle the 'limit-situations' while developing and reflecting on the tasks for the 'limit-acts' (Freire, 1993, pp. 72–73), overcoming the existing boundaries by, again, action and reflection. Nyerere described education as a means of addressing socioeconomic and political woes that led the masses to abject poverty and suffering. In a similar sense, Freire was convinced that oppressive socioeconomic and political structures should be overcome by developing critical consciousness and fighting against the banking system of education. Thus, Nyerere's vision of self-reliant people and Freire's vision of critically conscious people both rely on an understanding of humans as equal subjects in all spheres of life. Although Nyerere did not use the Freirean wording of 'limit-situations' and 'limit-acts', he followed the same track. Both shared the belief that learners, in the context of their relationships and social settings, should be seen as the focus of educational endeavours in the classroom and beyond. This focus on such learning settings inspired Nyerere to advocate placing much less emphasis on examinations in favour of learning activities in a practical context. In Freire's 'Education as a practice of freedom', the educator addresses a joint problem from the learner's everyday context to resolve the matter and raise the individual's as well as the collective consciousness in favour of taking choices and making decisions.

As a third commonality, we point to their enormous influence on mass adult education in the form of literacy programmes to provide the basic foundations for being an (adult) change agent, both conceptualising and working successfully in literacy campaigns. Freire's approach continues to inspire educators (in literacy campaigns and beyond) across the world and has been transferred to international and transnational contexts. Nyerere's contribution to this issue was of the same significance, manifested in the impact of his presidency in Tanzania: In 1961, the literacy rate in Tanzania was barely 20%, whereas by 1985, when Nyerere retired from the presidency, the literacy rate had increased tremendously to over 85% (Hall, 1974, p. 199; Heisel, 1979; Kassam, 1983, pp. 65-66; Mulenga, 2001, p. 449; Yahl, 2015).

Exploring differences

In addition to the commonalities identified, the analysis also highlighted (much fewer) differences between the two educators. The differences originated from the respective geographical contexts in which both landmark contributions were conceptualised. These contexts are each embedded at a particular time in history, in a certain version of a capitalist economy and in a specific political situation and cultural framing.

A core difference between the two works lies in the political dimension and the direction given to the activities of each author. The political economy aspect was crucial for Nyerere, who focused on the model of a subsistent economy due to the situation and existing structures in Tanzania at that time. Prioritising the development of the industrial sector would have been possible only by relying on foreign investments from international capital owners. In a different manner and in accordance with his pedagogical beliefs, Nyerere focused on installing the concept of a political economy for the development of a postcolonial nation-state for the masses, not for the elite:

> If we use these resources [land in abundance and people willing to work hard; the authors] in a spirit of self-reliance as the basis for development, then we shall make progress slowly but surely. And it will then be real progress, affecting the lives of masses, not just having

> spectacular show-pieces in the towns while the rest of the people of Tanzania live in their present poverty" (Nyerere, 1967a, p. 6).

However, this vision relied on educating appropriate leaders. In this sense, Nyerere, as president of the Republic, was privileged to possess the power and influence to transfer his pedagogical visions and values to Tanzania's emerging educational system. A range of policies and programmes were adopted during his presidency to realise the education for self-reliance philosophy (Lema et al., 2006)—even if, at the end, many leaders and institutions did not turn to be the envisioned change agents (see Section *Nyerere*). Freire, by contrast, prioritised counter-hegemonic social movements as agents for change, keeping his focus on the people's potential for empowerment. His concept was intended to bring social movements, political parties and state representatives together to let the political parties and state representatives learn from the progressive subaltern activists (Mayo & Vittoria, 2021, pp. 71–72).

Against this backdrop of commonalities and differences, we complement our analysis with a brief glance at contemporary initiatives aimed at transferring the conceptual rhetoric to an educational practice with (young) adults. Although the Freirean approach is echoed in projects run in numerous countries and by diverse groups (see for example, da Silva, 2021), the transfer of the education for self-reliance concept into educational practice still receives less attention in the Global North's academic body of knowledge, which prompted us to select the following example.

Education for self-reliance: An example of the Service-Learning Initiative Tanzania

According to the American Corporation for National Community Service, or CNCS (2002) and Pacho (2017), service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instructions and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities. The background of service learning as an approach to education traces back to the US-American tradition of pragmatism and the philosophical ideas of Dewey (1938) on experiential education. These entail the components of progressive education, learning from experience, the democratic approach to education and linking the school to the community for mutual benefits. As described by Bringle and Hatcher (2009), service learning is:

> a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility (p. 38).

The main goal of service learning in the context of education is to connect learning objectives to service objectives so education stakeholders as change agents can attain knowledge, life skills and values, shape a positive attitude towards creative hard work and inspire collective approaches to addressing community needs—and, thus, inspire others to be change agents as well. Education stakeholders include students, teachers, support staff and members of the surrounding community within which the school or higher education institution exists. The assumption that stakeholders learn from each other is vital because it is the active and creative involvement of everyone involved that makes service learning complete and impactful for the individual and, thus, the

community. This concept is in line with Freire's essence of education as a means of liberation and Nyerere's emphasis on a sustainable livelihood approach that requires an individual to commit to and through the collective for the benefit of the individual and the common good of the group. This allows following the sustainability agenda (on protecting natural resources, fostering food security, sanitation, justice, etc.) as well as informing 'both policy and provision of an adult education that helps people make their own decisions and act on them' (von Kotze, 2010, p. 135).

This example of the St. Augustine University of Tanzania Service-Learning Programme (SS-LP) provides insight into a particular curriculum and pedagogy highly inspired by the ideas of radical popular education and, thus, attempts (Martin et al., 1999, p. 9) to foster collective learning and social change.

Freire's idea that the liberation of the individual is similarly a liberation of the collective had a significant influence on SS-LP development. Along those lines, the SS-LP is dedicated to exposing youth to the essence of liberation through a partnership with Fr. Ramon Boys Secondary School (FRBSS). FRBSS is a private school owned and managed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Mwanza, Tanzania. Similar to other private schools in Tanzania, it does not receive government capitation, so the school mobilises various sources of income to meet its operating costs. The contribution of the SS-LP to the school's efforts towards economic self-sustenance and promoting sustainability awareness are greatly appreciated at FRBSS. Since 2016, the SS-LP has implemented a voluntary initiative that involves some faculty members and university students, mostly from the Faculty of Education, who interpret education for liberation and foster sustainability activities at FRBSS.

The SS-LP focuses on sharing theories and related information ranging from environmental sustainability, global citizenship and democracy to leadership, economic sustainability and information and communication technology, among other pertinent themes. Seminars and workshops on selected topics are run prior to SS-LP activities at FRBSS in particular. For instance, the annual tree planting activity that takes place on (and in the future will expand beyond) school premises is preceded by an environmental sustainability seminar. This sustainability initiative, which represents the SS-LP's response to climate change, engages SS-LP mentors to serve as prompters, while SS-LP students conceptualise ideas and select and share a theme that resonates with the current needs of the surrounding community. Afterwards, SS-LP students share the idea with the FRBSS community for further brainstorming, reflection and, finally, decision-making. According to this approach, stakeholders' involvement serves as an empowerment building endeavour, as the stakeholders contribute constructive ideas and oversee the implementation of those ideas. The level of project ownership is usually beyond measure.

Over time, service learning at FRBSS nurtures committed, active and creative individuals, both youth and adults, who maintain a collective and collaborative attitude and values, as well as knowledge for dealing with socioeconomic and political issues. In light of Freire's commitment to social justice, the SS-LP has immortalised the centenarian's thoughts in various honourable ways, such as dialogues on sociopolitical sustainability themes between SS-LP and FRBSS students and between students and staff, with the aim of developing individuals with a sense of decency and responsibility for the common good. Specifically, students engage in discussions on universal human rights, global citizenship, healthy living and building healthy communities, in addition to addressing the place of democracy in nurturing leadership and inspiring sustainable development in communities. The transformation of individuals, seemingly, is key to the SS-LP's commitment to empowering communities. The practical component of these themes involves activities such as the composition of short stories and poems for public

consumption or can be realised by inspiring some participants to assume leadership roles in student associations and government organisations.

In summary, the SS-LP successfully interprets Freire's thoughts and partly engages Nyerere's ideas on education for self-reliance and ALE as necessary elements of popular education for 21st-century developing society. Extension of this initiative beyond FRBSS would mean an increase in the number of critically conscious individuals in the community and, hence, assurance that socioeconomic and political predicaments will be addressed. It is a noble commitment for the SS-LP to be part of an effort to immortalise Freire's thoughts in Mwanza, Tanzania. His ideas are so relevant and fitting in the present Tanzania with its youthful population that they need awakening of their critical consciousness to 'name the world' (Freire, 1993, p. 88) and enjoy education as 'the practice of freedom' (p. 81).

Discussion and concluding remarks

In this conceptual paper, encountering works by Nyerere and Freire invites a comparative dialogue, unfolding commonalities and differences in a systematic manner while respecting each scholar's work context of origin and embeddedness. The limitations of this methodological approach can be seen in its exclusively conceptual, not empirical, objectives. However, in our view, such a comparative dialogue in the field of transnational ALE helps to establish a discourse that does not prioritise the logic of installing better–worse hierarchies, as it is widely used in, for example, the ranking of countries or the identification of best practice models. The African continent has been subject to this bias in comparisons, as Ahluwalia (2001) revealed in discussing African inflections of politics and postcolonial theory:

> For too long, Africa has been subjected to a history of analogy, in which it is compared to other parts of the world, notably Europe. By taking into account the specificity of the African case, it is possible to move beyond such analyses. (p. 72)

Considering this, the debate on the concept of solidarity may benefit from the influence of the rich tradition of the philosophical concept of *ubuntu* (humanness) in African societies, aiming at cultivating a culture of humanity and responsibility and fostering the virtues of respect, caring, communal sharing and trust (Waghid, 2014, p. 57). Lessenich (2019, p. 99) argued that solidarity is both a social norm and a social practice, being cooperative (a shared commitment for concerns mutually agreed upon, despite possible dissensus), performative (to be achieved only by performing the act of mutual commitment) and transformative (not maintaining but radically changing social inequalities and living conditions). By ubuntu, the understanding of human beings as interdependent and interrelated social beings (see Section *Exploring commonalities*) is even more strongly emphasised in the collective dimension of a community. Ubuntu stands out as a contrast to Western liberal and neo-liberal paradigms and as an example that illustrates the central role of humanity in the culturing process of a person from the African perspective. Ubuntu, as humanness, defines the individual. If well translated, ubuntu is a bedrock for community building, as in ubuntu there is social justice, freedom with responsibility and care and support for individual and collective actualisation. Ubuntu also inspired the SS-LP, which grounded itself on its values with the intention of strengthening individuals for their good and for the betterment of their communities. In ubuntu, the individual is equally important and responsible to the community, just as the community is to the individual. Supporting an individual in becoming liberated or self-

reliant means liberating the family and the community and, thus, the nation-state and the world at large. Thus, Mbiti would say, 'I am because we are; and because we are, therefore I am' (Eze, 2011).

In this sense, the concept of education for self-reliance provides a pivotal connection between the paper's guiding categories of solidarity and sustainability as social practices. *Doing solidarity* needs to be complemented, as argued previously, by *doing sustainability* by radically questioning the temporal durability and glo-cal (re)production and distribution of resources in their widest sense for the good of the survival of humankind and the earth. Transferring this to the pedagogy and curriculum of radical popular education, service-learning offers a concrete example from the field of higher education and its embeddedness in the glo-cal community as well as its facilitation of adult learners' 'action and reflection' (Freire). This may be well addressed by service-learning concepts, considering the high priority that the European higher education sector currently gives to the university's so-called third mission (research and teaching comprising the other two), which is the transfer of academic knowledge to further education settings under the auspices of social engagement and in response to modern society's key agenda items (such as sustainability, inclusion and the like).

However, as noted previously, discussing these concepts also emphasises the quest to continuously review their compatibility with the features of modern societies and the contexts of nation-states that differ from their countries of origin. Freire had been aware of this and emphasised the need for an ongoing rethinking and reworking, as Mayo and Vittoria (2022) indicated, in which 'a philosophy of learning in which praxis is a central concept that has to be 'reinvented' time and time again, depending on situation and context' (p. 73). Revisiting the concept of education for self-reliance from the current neoliberal architecture of many modern Western societies, the quest for self-reliance can, in turn, involve the risk of fuelling the individualisation of responsibilities (for instance, for successful learning careers or the provision of comprehensive ALE infrastructures). It might be launched under the utilitarian ideology of seeing self-reliance as a means to an end (shifting state responsibilities to communities and the individual) and not as an end in itself. This would reverse the concept's original meaning to its opposite. Similarly, Freire's dialogical approach to education for freedom can also be given a hollowing twist by reducing its method to a narrow didactical tool, serving, instead, the aims of soft governance and thus representing a technique for oppression in learning and education. Moreover, in the debate on the concept of education for self-reliance, the context of origin needs to be considered. This philosophy was grounded in the urgent quest for nation building, acquiring independence, and tackling colonial legacies. Although nationalism on the African continent, according to Ahluwalia (2001), needs to be considered a 'European construction that had been exported to the colonies' (p. 68), in African countries, while gaining independence, it served 'as an important means to attain unity'(p. 68) and also modernise the education systems. This impetus of nation-building on the given basis of an economy of subsistence provides the necessary context for understanding the conceptual frame—and for rethinking and reinventing its highly relevant key ideas.

The pedagogical purposes and needs connected to both Freire's and Nyerere's concepts have not lost their worldwide relevance despite possible geographical differences, which Nyerere observed in 1967:

> The content of education is somewhat different from that of Western countries, but the purpose is the same—to prepare young people to live and to serve the society, and to transmit the knowledge, skills, and values and attitudes of the society. Wherever education fails in any of these fields, then the society falters in its progress, or there is social unrest as

> people find that their education has prepared them for a future which is not open to them. (1967a, p. 2)

This again focuses on radical popular education in general and its contemporary tasks in the field of ALE. As stated previously, Evans et al. (2022) diagnosed ALE's lack of response to today's great social problems and pointed to communities as one of the core topics. In general, adult education academia seems to have long neglected the debate and conceptual work on socio-critical, emancipatory issues, such as solidarity (see for example, Eble, 2022). This led to reducing their conceptual impact and power to the level of didactical tools and to their usage as buzzwords and not 'contested concepts' (Gallie, 1956, p. 169)—losing their potential as leitmotifs for pedagogical work and debate in the field of ALE and radical popular education. Nyerere (1978) was highly aware of this potential: 'Adult education is a […] highly political activity. Politicians are sometimes more aware of this fact than educators and therefore they do not always welcome real adult education' (p. 31). Yet, this incorporates not only the political, theoretical and conceptual level but also the level of methodology and research. An urgent need exists to explore the 'links between research, pedagogy and creative forms of transformative social, cultural and political agency and address how creative research can support meaningful learning in education institutions as well as non-formal settings' (Grummell & Finnegan, 2021, p. 1; see also Díaz-Arévalo, 2022; Evans et al., 2022; von Kotze, 2010). As we had elaborated on in earlier works (Curdt & Schreiber-Barsch, 2020; Schreiber-Barsch & Rule, 2021), acknowledging and negotiating power and control in research designs broadcasts a different ethos that strives for learners' capacity building and empowerment as change agents *through* research and, thus, also contributes to the collective transformation of social reality.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship or publication of this article.

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Radical popular education today: Popular education in populist times

Marjorie Mayo
Emeritus professor, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK (m.mayo@gold.ac.uk)

Fiona Ranford
(f.j.ranford@gmail.com)

Abstract

Popular education is more needed than ever. The Covid 19 pandemic has been highlighting the challenges of widening inequalities, increasing exploitation and oppression, along with persistent xenophobia and violence against women and minority communities. Yet popular education faces threats of its own, and resources have been on the decline, precisely when they have become so urgently required in the contemporary context. Whilst acknowledging these threats, the article goes on to focus on some of the ways in which popular education initiatives have continued to be promoted despite these wider challenges. 'The World Transformed' (TWT) has provided evidence of just such initiatives in Britain.The conclusions of TWT's research resonate with Paulo Freire's own reflections in the final section of 'The Pedagogy of Hope'. Despite the challenges he continued to look forward to the future with hope.

Keywords: popular education, populism, Freire, The World Transformed

Introduction

Popular education is more needed than ever. The Covid 19 pandemic has been exacerbating the challenges of widening inequalities, increasing exploitation and oppression, along with persistent xenophobia and violence against women and minority communities. Too many people have been coming to accept these growing inequalities, weighed down by feelings of hopelessness and fear - including fears of 'the other', the outsiders who are too often held to blame for the impacts of austerity (Bhattacharyya,

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2015). Populist politicians play on such fears, feelings that are too often exacerbated by the social media.

Popular education has the potential to engage people in processes of critical dialogue, exploring alternative understandings of the causes of their problems, building solidarity for more progressive futures. The writings of Paulo Freire have particular relevance here, exploring the possibilities of learning for liberation, 'educational dialogue and social action, or praxis, with the oppressed in order to understand and act upon the causes of their oppression' (Crowther & Martin, 2018, p. 11). Yet popular education faces threats of its own, and resources have been on the decline, precisely when they have become so urgently required.

Whilst acknowledging these threats, the article goes on to focus on some of the ways in which popular education initiatives have continued to be promoted *despite* these wider challenges. More specifically 'The World Transformed' (TWT) has provided evidence of the continuing relevance of just such approaches, carrying out original research to map a wide range of projects - with a view to promoting collaboration and mutual support for the future.

The conclusions of this research resonate with Paulo Freire's own reflections in the final section of 'The Pedagogy of Hope', spaces for the Left had been shrinking (Freire, 1996) and there were no guarantees for the future, in his view. But he remained committed to the significance of dialogical learning - and he continued to look forward to the future with hope.

Challenges for popular education today

Despite being more necessary than ever in the contemporary context, popular education is facing existential challenges of its own. Popular education goes against the grain of mainstream discourses of adult education and learning today (Evans et al., 2022). All too often, Evans et al. (2022) argue, the emphasis has become education and skills for the labour market, at the expense of learning for emancipation and personal and social development, as developed by Paulo Freire as well as by Raymond Williams and others over the past century.

Education has been and continues to be a contested field, as Freire and others have so powerfully argued – education for domestication or education for transformation (Freire, 1972). These debates have long histories of their own. The point that is being suggested here is simply this, that the balance has been shifting in recent times, with greater emphasis upon learning for the former, leaving significantly less scope for learning for the latter.

This has clearly been the case in Britain, for example, where resources have been shifting across the spectrum of adult learning in parallel, in recent decades. University departments of extra-mural studies have been affected and so has the Workers Educational Association, for example. State funding for trade union courses has been similarly affected (Seal, 2017), focusing upon training to equip learners to perform specific functions such as health and safety functions, for example, rather than on using political education *per se* (Fisher, 2005). There has been less funding overall anyway, in recent times. The establishment of the Centenary Commission on Adult Education, with its call for a national strategy for adult education and lifelong learning, has emerged as the result of adult educators' concerns to address these yawning gaps. As the chair of that commission reflected in her foreword to the report:

> [We] have been struck by the strength of feeling across the country, and from the full range of organisations, that it is now vital and urgent to invest in adult education and lifelong learning – for the good of our democracy, society, and economy, and for the wellbeing of our citizens (The Centenary Commission on Adult Education, 2019, p. 3).

Building on the works of Paulo Freire: popular but not populist responses to contemporary challenges

The writings of Paulo Freire have particular resonance in this context (Lima, 2022; Lucio-Villegas, 2022) as it has already been suggested. Popular education initiatives based upon these principles promote 'educational dialogue and social action, or praxis, with the oppressed in order to understand and act upon the causes of their oppression' (Crowther & Martin, 2018, p. 11). This is about learning for liberation.

Addressing these contemporary challenges involves questioning some of the ways in which Freire's writings have been (mis)interpreted, however, 'the sanitisation and domestication of Freire's pedagogy' as Crowther and Martin have also pointed out (2018, p.12). Paulo Freire himself reflected on the differences between his approach and populist understandings, differences of theoretical underpinnings along with their pedagogical implications, in practice. Most significantly, Freire's 'eclectic and idiosyncratic brand of Marxism, Christianity and humanism' (Crowther & Martin, 2018, p. 8) included recognition of the centrality of class and class struggle. Having experienced poverty and hunger during the depression years in Brazil, he was only too well aware of the links between poverty, social class and knowledge/ lack of knowledge and widespread illiteracy, structural factors that needed to be addressed. He was committed to ensuring that the oppressed developed critical consciousness to enable them to work towards social transformation, just as he was committed to enabling the oppressors to recover their lost humanity.

This stands in strong contrast with populist understandings, focusing on 'the people' as against the 'elite' (Lazaridis et al., 2016), frequently associated with emotional appeals to notions of identity, such as national, ethnic or religious identities (including white supremacist identities) – 'us' versus 'the other' (Panizza, 2005). Rather than promoting such unproblematised notions of 'the people' and popular cultures, Freire drew upon Gramscian understandings, including Gramscian understandings of the importance of challenging the 'common sense' of hegemonic ideas. Popular education needed to start from people's own everyday experiences and understandings, for sure. Yet this was to be the start, not the end of the road. Popular education was to be about engaging people in processes of critical dialogue, based on relationships of trust. 'I have never said, as it has sometimes been suggested that I have said, that we ought to flutter spellbound around the knowledge of the educands like moths around a lamp bulb' he emphasised in his final book, the 'Pedagogy of Hope' (Freire, 1996).

In summary then, populism needs to be addressed by popular education whether this is populism from the Right or indeed from the Left of the political spectrum – via education that is popular but most definitely not populist in its turn. From a popular education perspective, the 'people' are not to be defined as some undifferentiated mass, faced with varying forms of oppression from ill-defined elites, let alone to be defined as being in need of a strong leader, to resolve their problems for them. There have been advocates for Left-wing versions of populism (Mouffe, 2018), as well as Right-wing versions of populism, with historical examples from a number of countries in Latin America for instance (Laclau, 2005). Whatever their political orientation, though, there are distinctions to be drawn between populist approaches and Freirean approaches. For

Freireans, popular education is about enabling people to develop their own critical analyses of their problems in contemporary contexts in order to work towards social transformation.

So, from a Freirean perspective, the sources of exploitation and oppression need to be understood in terms of conflicting class interests. And issues of identity need to be understood within the framework of the concept of intersectionality – the ways in which social class intersects with other forms of exploitation and oppression, including gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, disability and religious identity (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Rather than addressing any one of these potential sources of disadvantage on its own, possibly at the expense of the rights of others – or in the context of some hierarchy of oppression - this approach starts from an analysis of the links between social class, social status, knowledge, power and (relative) powerlessness (Fraser, 2008).

Such understandings enable communities to move forward 'Beyond the fragments' - to refer back to the title of an earlier – and widely influential - publication about the need to bring different sections of the Left together (Rowbottom et al., 1979). Inspired by the activism of the 1970s that surrounded the triumph of the Right under Margaret Thatcher in U.K., 'Beyond the Fragments' was written to create stronger bonds of solidarity in a New Left movement that incorporated feminist experiences and perspectives. Since then, updated versions return to the question of how to bring divergent strands of social and political action to build effective, open, democratic coalitions in the face of deepening recession, environmental pollution, falling wages and severe welfare cuts (Rowbottom et al., 2013). This requires popular education accompanied by deep organising, it has been argued, taking account of people's varying needs in the community at the point of consumption as well as in the workplace, at the point of production (for those who still have regular workplaces, despite the prevalence of precarity in the gig economy) (Holgate, 2021).

Popular education initiatives can strengthen people's agency, drawing on these traditions, enabling people to challenge the threats that Far Right populism, in particular, poses to the very basis of democracy itself. As Giroux has argued, Freire's approach to critical pedagogy has continuing relevance here as a way of promoting effective citizen participation, active citizenship being essential to the very survival of democracy itself (Giroux, 2010).

Popular education initiatives have continued to contribute in such ways too, despite the contemporary challenges. These have included university-based projects to enable communities to explore their contested histories for example (Lucio-Villegas, 2022). Community-university partnerships have been developed across national boundaries, to support communities in undertaking their own research as the basis for developing their own strategies for change (Lepore et al., 2022). The arts have their own histories of adult education for social justice more generally too, histories of relevance for women and minority communities, in particular (English & Irving, 2015; Clover & Stalker, 2017), including the relevance of women's and gender museums (Clover, 2022).

Popular political education in Britain: The World Transformed (TWT): communities and social movement activists doing it for themselves

The growth of Right-wing populism in Britain has had some parallels with experiences elsewhere with politicians fanning xenophobic fears as part of their campaign to persuade British electors to vote to leave the Europe Union during the 2016 'Brexit' referendum. There here have been considerable differences too, however. It was the prospect of what have been described as 'alternatives of hope' that stimulated a number of responses

amongst popular educators from universities and colleges through to adult educators involved in social movements and political parties. The World Transformed (TWT) provides a particular example, developed by community and social movement activists to promote popular education initiatives, engaging with politics without being aligned with any particular political party.

TWT has explained this surge of interest in popular political education as follows;

> there was a lot of hope that the unexpected rise of the left within the Labour Party (with the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader in 2015), spurred on by a new generation of socialist-minded activists accompanied by emboldened feminist, anti-racist, decolonial and environmental social movements presented a moment of possibility for the prising open of the neoliberal consensus (Ranford, forthcoming).

This could represent a radical rupture with the status quo, it was argued, presenting new opportunities for the development of progressive alternatives.

For some, 'the purpose of political education in this context was to ensure that a left-wing Labour government could be elected, sustained and held to account' (Ranford, forthcoming). There was energy and enthusiasm behind the campaigns that inspired tens of thousands to join the Labour Party, it has been argued, but these campaigns needed to come together, and they needed political education if they were to take the momentum forward. 'The world cannot be transformed flying blind' it has been argued by supporters of the Corbyn project (Murray, 2019). Critical understandings of economics and international relations were required along with 'the dynamics of political and social change and so much more' (Murray, 2019, p. 163). 'No understanding of British politics can proceed without first making an assessment of the class and national struggles on the world level, looking at Britain's place within these, and taking that as the political point of departure' (Murray, 2019, p. 164). There needed to be critical reflections on Britain's imperial history as well, exploring the links with British policies, both internationally and domestically, including racist immigration policies. This was about moving beyond populist understandings, whether these were populisms of the Right or indeed populisms of the Left, focussing on the leader and 'The Many not the few' (to use the terminology of the Labour Manifesto in 2017) without such wider understandings.

Although this was a period of considerable optimism on the Left then, there was also evidence of realism amongst those who saw the role of popular political education as being at the heart of a longer-term project, building critically informed support amongst social movements for change. This was a view that was confirmed with Labour's electoral defeat in 2019. There were no quick fixes to be had, however charismatic the leader was – or was not. Since then, it has been argued, 'a sobered Labour left has returned even more vociferously to the question of popular political education, which is now understood as an essential yet sorely neglected part of the socialist movement' (Ranford, forthcoming) both within and outside the confines of the Labour Party. Given the policy directions of the Labour Party, the need for such popular political education would seem more relevant than ever.

TWT's own initiatives began in 2016, launched as a festival of political discussions and cultural events, alongside the Labour Party's annual conference. Jeremy Corbyn's election as leader of the Labour Party, the previous year, had been attracting an influx of new members, young people becoming engaged for the first time, along with older people, previously politically disenchanted but hopeful that the Labour Party could become the vehicle for transformative social change. Labour Party membership surged towards just over half a million (523,332), the largest social democratic party in Europe at the time - although membership has fallen dramatically since then, as the result of

subsequent changes, following the Labour Party's electoral defeat in 2019, and the election of a new leader with different political priorities. (Figures for July 2022 show just a figure of just over 382,000 fully paid-up members).

TWT set out to support this upsurge through political education initiatives. These were organised around the Labour Party's annual conferences, as parallel events. The aim was to contribute to the construction of a broad movement, working 'for the Many not the Few', although TWT was definitely not a Labour Party organ *per se*, being committed to engaging people and groups across the spectrum of transformative politics.

TWT's festivals have attracted impressive numbers of participants. Over 5,000 attended the 2017 festival, with even higher numbers in subsequent years, over 6,000 in 2018 and over 7,000 in 2019. This was popular political education on a massive scale. The festivals included political discussions, debates, workshops, training sessions, exhibitions, performance, guided historic walks, music and sports, all spread over a number of days. There were sessions on capitalism and the economy and there were sessions on neo-colonialism and decolonisation, sessions on international movements and sessions on movements for equalities. There were sessions engaging with critical theories and there were sessions linking these with contemporary struggles, with a wide variety of speakers, including international speakers, sharing their theoretical analyses and their experiences in practice.

TWT festivals have been heterogenous and this has been a continuing feature of the organisers' ambitions for the coming period. This in no way to suggest that every session achieved its aims in uniquely successful ways. The offerings have been varied in every sense of the term, and these have included highly controversial topics, arousing strong feelings in the process. Popular political education can – and does – appeal to diverse audiences in different ways, starting from where they were at and what attracted their interest, taking account of people's feelings, although aiming to move audiences on from their starting points to engage them in processes of critical debate. There are resonances with Freirean principles of dialogical learning here, whether these principles were being explicitly acknowledged or even recognised – or not. There is evidence of such resonances from TWT's own research, as the following section goes on to demonstrate.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic impacted from 2020, TWT has still managed to organise festivals, along with other, more local, educational events. TWT has also been developing other initiatives too, beyond the annual festivals, including initiatives to support popular political education at more local levels. The 2018 festival had included a stream on popular political education *per se*, concluding with a session entitled 'Popular Education Forum: Let's Build a Network', a session that demonstrated the variety of ways in which educational initiatives were being developed. This session evidenced interest in developing collaborative networks, as an outcome, providing opportunities for sharing learning materials for example, along with sharing information about how to contact facilitators and speakers with expertise in particular subjects.

This was the background for TWT's own research, 'Towards an Understanding of Contemporary Practices of Transformative Political Education in UK' (Ranford, forthcoming), funded by the Barry Amiel and Norman Melburn Trust, a charity which had a track record of supporting progressive – although *not party political* - educational initiatives. This particular project set out to map the field as inclusively as possible, with a view to identifying opportunities for mutual support in order to strengthen the culture of transformative political education in the UK. The survey was followed up by case studies, including a case study of political economy education in Belfast.

TWT's research: overview and methodology

This was effectively an action research project. The aim was to explore the extent and distribution of different forms of popular political education in UK and to identify ways in which such forms of political education might be supported for the future. The fieldwork began in 2019 with a survey designed to explore the following questions:

1. Who is organising political education in the UK, and where is it taking place?
2. What are the objectives of transformative political education projects in the UK, and to what extent are they meeting them? What are the obstacles they are facing?
3. What is the content/curricula of this education and what pedagogical approaches are they using?
4. What are their funding sources?
5. What do these projects want or need from organisations like TWT?

The research began by identifying lists of projects, including a list that had been compiled through a survey completed by 600 Momentum members in 2018. These lists were then broadened with additions from feminist movements, radical faith-based organisations and pedagogical arts projects, for example, as well as via informal consultations with educators and organisers across the UK. The survey questions were then developed from the research questions and piloted. The final version of the questionnaire was distributed in late December 2019.

Despite best efforts, the research still faced challenges in obtaining responses to the survey. There seemed to be some specific reasons for this, over and above the normal challenges involved in obtaining responses to surveys more generally. Some arts-based projects were reluctant to describe their work as educational, for instance, although there clearly were educational elements to their creative practices. And some organisations were reluctant to describe their work as popular 'political education', even in the broadest 'non-party political' sense of the term, having on eye to funders and possible funding opportunities for the future. Despite these challenges a broad range of initiatives were eventually included, all the same, drawing upon 105 responses from 87 organisations (some organisations providing responses about more than one project). NVivo software was then used to analyse responses to the open questions.

The survey was initially planned to be followed up with four case studies. These were to be selected to include different nations and regions as well as covering different audiences and varying pedagogical approaches. These were to include a project with young people in London, a trade union-based project in Northern Ireland, an arts-based project in Wales and a more directly party-political project in the Midlands. The intention was that each case study would include observations of sessions as well as semi-structured interviews, a focus group and a reflection session. In the event however, the Covid-19 pandemic intervened. Only two case studies could be completed, and the research methods had to be adapted as face-to-face events were cancelled. Although some information was gathered from the other case study areas, the research was more limited than originally planned, as a result, owing to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

TWT's research findings

Whilst there was understandable variation in terms of these different projects' aims and objectives, common threads were also identified. There was widespread emphasis on the need for greater critical understanding the present moment, including the specifics of

neoliberal capitalism and austerity. And there was widespread emphasis on the need for greater understanding of the connections between specific issues and campaigns, building solidarity in the process. There were concerns about how to address particular injustices or claim rights, such as migrants' rights, for instance, in the context of Britain's hostile environment, with specific references to Brexit and the need to:

> Increase an understanding of the role migration has played in the wealth and health of the city. It is as a reaction against the 2016 EU referendum result and some of the open xenophobia then displayed.

Projects also demonstrated their interest in enabling people to become more active in organisations, including becoming more effectively active in political organisations, trade unions and social movements, more generally. This needed to involve challenging exclusive cultures within progressive organisations themselves as well as within the wider society, including challenging racism and anti-Semitism, along with other forms of marginalisation for oppressed groups. And several respondents went on to explain that they aimed to build or articulate a socialist vision, with the election of Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party opening opportunities for political education around socialist ideals.

As to outcomes, projects were typically reluctant to make ambitious claims about the extent to which they could evidence their achievements. Some described the ways in which their initiatives had engaged participants though, enabling them to go on to organise their own events and campaigns. Organisations had been democratised and strengthened, with enhanced participation from their membership, in some cases. And safe spaces had been provided, facilitating difficult conversations (including difficult conversations about racism including Anti-Semitism, for example). These initiatives shared concerns with promoting critical consciousness in order to facilitate collective action more effectively, then – Freirean approaches in practice, in other words. 'Freirean' was not the term that projects necessarily used themselves to describe their underlying educational principles, however, although some did precisely this. There were references to the influences of Saul Alinsky as well as to Paulo Freire himself, along with references to Augusto Boal's Freirean based theatre of the oppressed.

Others made more general comments about their pedagogical approaches, starting with criticisms of lecture-based forms of learning rather than more learner-centred, discussion-based approaches. 'We try to maintain a pedagogically rigorous approach with minimal didactic "telling" and lots of learning through doing and discussion'. This was not about fetishizing any one particular method however, with recognition that participatory methods could be applied in non-transformative ways, without posing any fundamental challenges to the status quo, in other words. There was much evidence of reflective approaches and practices then.

The survey and the case studies did identify some significant obstacles too, though. A number referred to the challenges involved in reaching their target audiences, for instance, audiences such as: working class communities, people of colour, young people more generally and those not already actively engaged. A number raised questions about how to reach out beyond the usual (white middle class) audiences?

Lack of time, capacity and/ or resources emerged as significant challenges too. Very few projects benefited from any form of public funding. The most common sources of support were individual donations (cited by nearly a third of those who responded), contributions from members and fees from charging for courses/ events. Some 15% also benefited from funding via trade unions and six projects benefited from funding political parties (although there were accounts of bureaucratic blockages and inertia within these organisations, too). There were, in addition, instances of projects acquiring funding from

foundations and trusts, although grant funding posed its own challenges. Groups needed to be creative in the ways in which they presented - and re-presented - their projects in order to comply with funders' own priorities and constraints. The situation was typically precarious, then, living from hand to mouth within these wider limitations.

The most frequently mentioned challenge wasn't funding though; it was the need for opportunities to share information and ideas with others doing similar work. How to develop participatory pedagogies, for example, and how to reach target audiences most effectively? Such exchanges could open up possibilities for collaboration, in addition, pooling scarce resources to maximise projects' impacts. There was interest in getting support with identifying suitable speakers and facilitators for example, along with support in accessing – and creating – learning resources, including resources for online learning. These findings raise important questions for further consideration, identifying, as they do, the need for the development of mutual support systems and networks, moving beyond the fragments in other words.

From previous discussions within TWT, it had already become clear that there were significant geographical differences too. Cities and university towns were better provided in comparison with rural areas and small towns, in particular. Peer support networks could be especially beneficial for initiatives based in such areas, addressing feelings of isolation and fragmentation, more generally. TWT has been organising a number of responses to these challenges. But the overall situation has become increasingly problematic all the same.

In summary, popular political education has been alive then, if not entirely flourishing in Britain in recent years. The election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party led to an upsurge of activity, as organisations and groups set about exploring more hopeful alternatives to neoliberal austerity. Labour's electoral defeat in 2019 might have simply resulted in widespread demoralisation. Yet there has also been evidence of renewed interest in popular political education, widely understood as an essential yet sorely neglected prerequisite for building effective movements for social change for the longer term.

Universities and colleges played significant roles in some contexts in the past, providing anchors of support, through university-community and trade union partnerships. Some such partnerships survive, including participatory research partnerships, such as those supported by Unite the Union, for example (Davis & Foster, 2021). Unite the Union has also participated in the cross national 'Knowledge for Change' (K4C) programme to promote training in participatory community-based action research (Knowledge for Change, n.d.). There are some twenty-one hubs within this programme, bringing higher education organisations together with civil society organisations to provide accredited training in eleven countries across the globe. These represent such promising developments (Lepore et al., 2022).

Meanwhile TWT has continued to promote popular political education through its own initiatives. The research report will be launched at the 2022 TWT Festival in Liverpool. The research working group which was established to support the research has also continued, becoming a fully functioning working group. This is to take forward a series of projects, influenced by the research findings, including a project focussed on political education with young people including young trade unionists.

The overall trend has been in the opposite direction, however. Processes of marketisation continue apace, including marketisation within Higher Education, with diminishing support for adult education, let alone popular political education or participatory action research (Crowther & Martin, 2018). These processes have been particularly marked in but by no means confined to Britain (Evans et al., 2022). All too

often, the emphasis has become education and skills for the labour market, at the expense of learning for emancipation and personal and social development, as it has already been suggested. Nor are mainstream discourses providing adequate responses to the great problems of our time, according to Evans et al. (2022), 'environmental issues, populism and the return of authoritarian practices, racism, gender inequality, xenophobia, precariousness and so on' (Evans et al., 2022, p. 1), not to forget the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic or indeed the war in Ukraine.

Despite international and supranational organisations' references to the connections between adult learning and human rights, democracy, citizenship and social inclusion, Lima (2022) reflects in similar vein, 'business has increasingly encroached on the world of education, calling for "entrepreneurial spirit" and "managerialist approaches", human resource management and policies that focus on the qualification of human capital' (Lima, 2022, p. 20). In the European Union, he continues, competitiveness and rivalry between citizens become stressed rather than the values of social transformation, solidarity, dialogue and cooperation, values that underpin Freirean approaches to adult learning. These are precisely the values that are needed, if citizens are to participate in processes of cultural and educational transformation, to coexist peacefully in diverse and pluralistic communities, in his view.

Ways forward for popular education: the continuing relevance of Paulo Freire's thought

This takes the discussion back to the continuing relevance of Paulo Freire's vital contributions. This is not to suggest that his work is beyond criticism, of course, on the contrary. His work has been criticised from a number of perspectives, including feminist perspectives (Tett, 2018) and there has been the development of feminist popular education (Walters & Manicom, 1996). Rather, the point to be made here is that aspects of his writings have particular relevance in the contemporary context.

Paulo Freire's writings were not explicitly referenced by many of the initiatives that responded to the TWT study, although some projects did make such references. There were more general resonances with his approach though, along with some evidence of influences from Boal and others, within a Freirean framework. The projects typically started from people's own concerns, for example, drawing on a wide repertoire of methodologies. Most importantly, in addition, the survey identified projects' commitments to processes of critical dialogue, developing critical understanding, learning from each other in pursuit of agendas for social transformation. The emphasis was also non-sectarian, as illustrated by TWT's interest in promoting mutual support across diverse social and political movements.

Popular political education can benefit by starting from Paulo Freire's own eclectic blend of Marxism, humanism and Christianity then, approaches that are popular but most definitely not populist, in other words. The underlying causes of exploitation and oppression need to be understood in terms of the different class interests involved, just as they need to take account of the accompanying social, political and cultural contexts and constraints. Most importantly, in addition, class needs to be understood in relation to the ways in which class intersects with race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, age and faith.

As Paulo Freire's last writings also emphasise, popular educators need to go beyond starting from where people are at, crucial though this most certainly is. Rather than fluttering around learners, like moths around a candle, they need to be actively engaging learners in processes of dialogue, firmly rooted in relationships of trust. Previous

'common sense' understandings needed to be questioned in the process, along with previous stereotypes about 'the other', similarly disadvantaged and oppressed groups, too often misrepresented as being, themselves, the source of contemporary social ills. Lived experience is most certainly central to the processes of popular education – but this represents no more than the starting point. It takes critical conversations to identify ways of moving forwards, beyond the fragments, mapping common interests as the basis for developing strategic alliances for transformative change.

These are particularly challenging times, as the previous section has already illustrated. Resources to support popular – but NOT populist – political education have been on the decline precisely when they have become so urgently required. As Paulo Freire reflected in the final section of 'The Pedagogy of Hope', spaces for the Left had shrunk, at least for the short term (Freire, 1996). And there were no guarantees for the future. Yet he remained committed to the significance of dialogical learning and he continued to look forward with hope – the 'hope with which I bring to conclusion this *Pedagogy of Hope'* (Freire, 1996, p. 188).

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Is there a place for popular adult education in the managerial university? A finnish case

Juha Suoranta
Tampere University, Finland (juha.suoranta@tuni.fi)

Abstract

This article studies the possibilities of reclaiming and revitalising popular adult education in Finland's neoliberally driven managerial university and addresses the place for popular adult education in it. In Finland, popular adult education has been taught at a university level since the 1920s. Currently, it has a marginal position in academia. This descriptive case study ponders the role of teaching popular adult education in Finnish universities and describes the pilot program on popular adult education organised at Tampere University in 2020. The study suggests that popular adult education, even in managerial universities, can provide students and practitioners with meaningful knowledge and the means to build global humanity and a sustainable future. In conclusion, the article discusses the future of popular adult education and its role in the university.

Keywords: Finland, managerial university, popular adult education, radical adult education, Tampere university

Introduction

In this article, I study the possibilities of reclaiming and revitalising popular adult education at the university level in Finland. Furthermore, the article addresses the place for popular adult education within the neoliberal managerial university. This is important for, as researchers on popular education have argued, neoliberalism has narrowed the possibilities of teaching and studying popular education and related fields in universities around the world in recent decades (see Crowther et al., 2005; Crowther et al., 2006; Crowther 2013; Scandrett, 2017; Sinwell, 2022).

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Following Crowther, it is possible to claim that scholars 'still enjoy a high degree of relative autonomy' (Crowther, 2013, para. 2) (for less optimistic views of the university, see Fleming, 2021; Hall, 2021; Santos, 2017). It is the researchers' task 'to support popular struggles for greater democracy, equality and social justice – at a time when all the demands being made upon them are, seemingly, towards institutional disengagement from social and political action' (Crowther, 2013, para. 2). In this article, I wish to explore how this 'relative autonomy' can be used to advance university-based popular adult education in Finland.

Popular adult education forms a rich tradition worldwide. As is well-known, its roots are in the European Enlightenment (Aufklärung), the industrial revolution, and the birth of the bourgeois public sphere (Steele, 2007; Habermas, 1991; Ferrer, 2011; see also Thomas, 1982). Forms of popular education have existed in European countries since the 19th century (see Flowers, 2009) and become visible in other continents such as Africa and Latin America, especially during the 1960s '[m]ostly in response to social and economic inequalities and in resistance to authoritarian regimes' (Gajardo, 2019, p. 100).

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden—Nordic countries share a rich historical tradition of non-formal, popular adult education. Its origins are in the late 19th-century social movements, such as the women's, workers, and youth associations. In Finland, the pro-independence Fennoman movement's impact was also essential. The grand narrative of Finnish popular education and the ethos of free non-formal education, in general, has stressed every person's right, regardless of their social status, to participate in an open, unlimited process of cultivating their whole being and personality to the fullest.

Nowadays, Finnish popular adult education is extensive, with 1.1 million participants per year and thousands of part-time teachers teaching and facilitating their studies in about 300 adult education institutions (181 municipal adult education centres, part of them also known as 'workers institutes,' 77 folk high schools, 12 study centres, 20 summer universities, and 14 physical education centres). The field covers at least the following studies:

a) adult basic education and training (including immigrants' basic literary education)
b) vocational training (youth and social sector, physical education, trade union education)
c) civic colleges' short courses, and two-semester long courses, and adolescents' national curriculum-based training for their secondary education and general life skills
d) regional civic centres' and national study centres' short courses, especially in arts, crafts, and languages
e) open and summer university's courses in languages and academic subjects (EAEA, 2011; Harju et al., 2019)

As the above list presents, popular adult education practices are vast in Finland.

In this respect, one could assume that popular adult education has a strong foothold in Finnish academia, but as it turns out, it has not. All these forms of organisational popular adult education that receive funding from the state (see Edquist, 2015) serve different pedagogical and ideological purposes in Finnish popular adult education depending on the representative organization (political, religious, or some other). Despite the ideological differences, the overall picture of Finnish popular adult education is humanistic-liberal, reflecting the official politics of the Finnish welfare state.

Thus, Finland's 'official' map of popular adult education represents organisational popular education compared to forms of popular education stemming from and linked to

various grassroots social movements working independently of the state typical to Southern, Freirean-spirited traditions of popular education (Santos, 2018). However, Finnish popular education is not confined to organisational activities but expands to informal social movements and organizations (such as Extinction Rebellion Finland). Their work represents the fundamental characteristics of popular education (such as interest in people's experiences and learning goals, self-organised and transformative learning, shared leadership, and collective action for social change (Kerka, 1997) and connects with international campaigns against global warming and climate change.

Although the grand narrative of the Finnish welfare state has historically been based on consensus and coalition governments' reformist politics, there have still been ideological and political dissensus, and this is reflected in the theories and practices of popular adult education. Leftist, radical popular education is a case in point. Alongside the rest of popular education, it has contributed to the general education of the workers and developed them as critically reflexive actors who are capable of shaking societal inequalities, moving towards social justice, and advancing everyone's equal economic, political, social, cultural, and educational rights (Steele, 2007).[1]

Throughout the history of Finnish leftist popular education, critical literacy has been the key to personal development and social transformation. Literate workers could act as agents of history, possess their own words, and participate in cultural and political activities to change the world as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had urged[2].

In the first half of the 20th century, the emphasis was on developing workers' mental capacity and critical consciousness to win political power. In the 1950s, the societal role of workers' cultural activities, democratisation and self-regulation of workers' education based on mutual respect and solidarity, and equality in learning in dialogue with others were stressed. (Oittinen, 1954; Hakoniemi, 2018; Hakoniemi, 2021)

In the second half of the 20th century, radical popular educators in Finland and elsewhere increasingly collaborated with social movements (e.g., civil rights, ecology, folk art, development, identity, race, peace, gender, sexual diversity, and multiculturalism, see Borg & Mayo, 2007; Brookfield & Holst, 2011; Foley, 1999; Hall, 2009; Heaney & Horton, 1990; Holst, 2002; Holst 2018; Wallén, 2021) and concentrated on planetary questions and human beings' position in the world amid the multiple crises (see Harju & Heikkinen, 2016; Mojab, 2011; Aedo et al., 2019).

Changing Trends of University-based Popular Adult Education: The Case of Tampere University

Popular adult education has been taught at universities in Finland since the 1920s (Steele, 2007). Since the 1970s, its status has gradually been sidelined because of other research and study interests in adult education. It has only a marginal position in adult education studies in Finnish universities. Tampere University (former University of Tampere) has pioneered offering university degrees in adult education and popular education in Finland. The first professorship in popular adult education was founded at the University of Tampere in 1946 (Heikkinen et al., 2019; Filander, 2012). This post was retitled as a professorship in adult education in the 1960s. It was not until the 1980s that a second professorship was established in adult education at the University of Helsinki. Nowadays, there are five professorships in adult education in Finland in total.

At Tampere University from the 1950s to the mid-1970s, university-level teaching and research mainly focused on liberal and humanistic popular education. Since the late 1970s, work-life-related adult training and human resource development have gained

popularity at the expense of popular adult education. The trend strengthened in the 1990s, and popular adult education as a university subject was gradually sidelined.[3] The training of adult education teachers was integrated into large-scale teacher education in 1990, and adult education study programs were buried (Tuomisto, 2002). In the same decade, professorships in lifelong learning and continuing education were founded (Jokinen, 2017, 2018).

Salo (2012) points out that popular adult education has gradually merged into adult training. It has sought its role as a substitute and complement but hardly as a challenge or questioner of the status quo (see Gustavsson, 2005). Practitioners had to define the specific outcomes of popular adult education in line with the state's adult education policy and the serving personnel and on-the-job training market.

Simultaneously, popular adult education has lost its central position in the research and teaching agenda. The investments in adult education research in the mid-1990s (several new professorships in different universities) did not improve the situation (Salo, 2012; Tuomisto, 2002). At Tampere University, the Faculty of Education combined the candidate degree programs in education and adult education in 1994. Adult education was integrated and conceptualised within educational sciences and lifelong learning (Tuomisto, 2002). At the same time, adult educational themes gained interest in health sciences, gerontology, administrative sciences, practical philosophy, and political sciences. This corroborates Brookfield's (1996) assessment that adult education themes are no longer limited to adult education research alone.

Tampere University reformed its structures several times in the first two decades of the 2000s. A major structural reform occurred in 2010 when the university changed its administrative systems and degree programs. As part of the structural changes, the then-only professorship of adult education was transferred from the Faculty of Education to the Faculty of Social Sciences (the original location of the professorship from 1945 to 1974). The structural reform and the transfer of professorship were a loss to many (Jokinen, 2017). Many critics claimed that the reform turned the university into a managerial institution and noticed that the change was possible because the Finnish higher education policy (especially after the new law in 2010) followed the global neoliberal trends (see Kuusela, 2021).

> Changed structures and practices of power have created new conflicts while leaving many old problems unresolved. Most of the issues relating to well- or ill-being and work and the precarity of academic employment are in the hands of the university leadership. (Kuusela et al., 2019, p. 27)

The concept of a managerial university as part of the global 'prestige economy' (Olsson & Slaughter, 2016) has the following main characteristics: marketisation and profit-orientation of the university research (piling external funding) and teaching (rising student fees), in-equalization of the academic community, precarisation of academic work, and de-democratization of university governance (in the name of neoliberal management system known as New Public Management) (e.g., Anderson, 2008; Lea, 2011; Poutanen et al., 2020; Zuidhof, 2015; Jessop, 2018).

Research Question and Methodology

These changes raised the question of the status and role of popular adult education in the new university structure: does a popular adult education have a place in a current managerial university structure? The question arose as key area of concern in the spring of 2019 when I met with a group of adult education practitioners who worried about the

lack of university-based popular adult education. As we discussed the status and future of popular adult education in Finnish universities, we concluded that popular adult education–including radical strands–had a marginal position in adult education studies in Finnish universities.

Thus, education students were at risk of missing essential knowledge on, e.g., popular adult education's history, its current organisations, dialogical pedagogy (or andragogy) elemental to popular adult education, and recent and future developments in the field. We agreed that there were too few options to study popular adult education at the university level, and something had to be done. Our conclusion was not particularly original and reflected a long-standing trend noted by others (see Tuomisto, 2002).

At about the same time we met as a group, Tampere University launched a two-million-euro project to develop continuous learning in different disciplines. We decided to seize the moment by forming a planning group[4] that wrote a proposal to establish a pilot program on popular adult education, and the funding was granted. The title of our proposal (and eventually the name of the study program) was Current Tides of Popular Adult Education (CTPA). Its objective was to give university students and persons working full-time or part-time in popular adult education a comprehensive picture of the field and bring about the newest and most urgent themes about popular adult education.

While participating in the planning and implementation of the CTPA study program, I decided to reflect on it by applying the methodology known as 'at-home ethnography.' Its basic idea is to learn a person's lived reality, 'a cultural setting to which s/he has a 'natural access' and in which s/he is an active participant' (Alvesson, 2009, p. 159; see also Vickers, 2019).

The at-home approach thus means that a person puts themselves and their experiences at the center of the analysis and connects them with more significant sociopolitical issues and themes in each context. In this respect, at-home ethnography has a strong family resemblance, e.g., with such methodologies as teachers as researchers (Kincheloe, 2012), the 'dig where you stand' approach (Lindqvist, 1979)[5], and with autoethnography (Mc Cormack et al., 2020; Ellis et al., 2010).

At-home ethnography suited my purpose since I had worked as a professor at Tampere University since 2006 and held administrative positions (I acted as Vice Dean and Dean from 2007–2013). I was involved in the structural reforms and thus gained practical first-hand knowledge of their consequences. When I next turn to view the training program, my approach will be descriptive, based on the planning team's discussions and reflections during and after the study program. Therefore, I will focus on the planning and implementation of the study program from the planning group's point of view.[6]

Popular Adult Education in the Managerial University

Current Tides of Popular Adult Education study program grew from our planning group's observations and popular educators' complaints that popular adult education was underrepresented in Finnish universities. Thus, we were genuinely interested in developing and refreshing the academic field of popular adult education in Finland[7]. But what did we mean by popular education? We acknowledged from the outset that there are many traditions and interpretations of the field (Flowers, 2009; Ferrer, 2011); scholars have used the concept 'in divergent senses' (Ferrer, 2011, p. 25), arguing that it is a messy concept (Manninen, 2017) which has led some commentators to conclude it should not be used as an analytical concept (Edquist, 2015)[8].

In the planning group, we were aware that although Finnish popular education stems from different ideological traditions (such as workers', religious, agrarian, women's rights, and even conservative movements), there were some common characteristics uniting the field: emphasis on adult persons' dignity and self-determination, attention to and appreciation of the unique local and communal social situations and contexts, and support for social and political participation (Koski, 2011; Pätäri et al., 2019; Sihvonen, 1996).

Thus, the study program was an act to provide students with a comprehensive introduction to the current Finnish field of popular adult education. A more political aim was to make a civic society's intervention in the managerial university by designing a program against the grain of neoliberal educational policy tendencies. However, since it was a pilot program, we had no previous experience or guidelines, and we needed to define the process as emergent – or we had to make the road as we walked it.

Planning

We decided that the Current Tides of Popular Adult Education study program's planning and implementation should be based on popular education's Nordic tradition. Our planning group representing a mixture of radical adult education, critical pedagogy, Nordic popular education tradition, and humanistic-dialogical perspectives on adult learning, brainstormed the most vital topics a student, whether a beginner or a senior, would need to know about Finnish popular education. In addition, we wanted the studies to be as up to date as possible and thus pondered the most urgent themes in popular adult education worldwide.

On one hand, the planning group's discussion concerned the functions and tasks of popular adult education in the face of global problems such as climate change, people's mobility, immigration, populism, the crisis of democracy, pandemics, famines, and war and peace. On the other hand, the planning group pondered how popular adult education should respond to domestic issues the government and economic elite emphasise, such as the need for new skills and competencies to run even faster in the global economic competition. These themes have also been on the top of the list in global interactions between popular educators and social movements under the umbrella concept of social movement learning and collective learning (see, e.g., Kuk & Tarlau, 2020; Holst, 2011; Zielińska et al., 2011).

Because of today's Finnish education policy's heavy emphasis on instrumental rationality, work-related competencies, and innovation also in popular adult education, the planning group wanted the program to stress that popular adult education is 'rooted in the interest and struggles of ordinary people, overtly political and critical of the status quo, and committed to progressive social and political change' (Crowther et al., 2006, p. 54).

As a planning group, we discussed these themes in-depth and decided to include them in the study program. Because of the university's study structure and timetables, the program needed to be restricted to 10 ECTS and implemented in a semester, contrary to our initial two-semester plan. Thus, the CTPA study program consisted of the following five (2 ECTS) core modules in the program: 'Popular Adult Education in the Finnish Society,' 'Popular Adult Education Institutions as Work and Study Places,' and 'Bildung pedagogy (sivistyspedagogiikka in Finnish), Ecosocial Bildung, and civic adult education,' 'Dialogue and Radical Popular Adult Education,' and 'Basic Skills and Integration of Immigration' (Virtauksia, 2020). The latter three courses highlighted Finnish popular education's radical and dialogical dimensions. The planning group

thought these contents would be essential and timely and facilitate debate and discussion among the students and the teachers.

Because the contents were rich and varied, the program needed experienced teachers. The pilot funding allowed us to recruit practitioners from different fields of popular adult education. Finally, 16 of them participated in preparing learning material and teaching.

In addition to the contents, the question of appropriate pedagogy was also crucial. From the beginning, the obvious answer was to utilise study circles and peer learning so that students become acquainted with these approaches common in popular education. Thus, the Nordic popular education tradition underlining interaction, cooperation, discussion, and dialogue in teaching and learning was respected (Korsgaard, 2002).

Recruiting students from the university and popular education practices were necessary to have a heterogeneous populace for successful peer-to-peer learning. Finally, nine university students (two from the social sciences and seven from the educational sciences) and 15 work-life participants enrolled in the course. The study's guiding principle was to avoid the distinction between the students and the teachers. Although there would also be lecturing during the studies, the group took Freire's (2005) words into the heart: 'education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students' (p. 72).

Implementation

The Covid-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 forced the program online. Thus, every course module needed to be planned and organised in Moodle. Eventually, the online platform contained all the information and materials required for the course: guidelines, learning objectives, assessment criteria, assignments, study materials, lecture materials, Zoom links, and folders for the group discussions and learning diaries. Joint communication with students also took place mainly through Moodle newsletters. Module 'Popular Adult Education Institutions as Work and Study Places' included students' study visits to an adult education institution as an individual or pair assignment. Under the circumstances, these visits were also organised via the Internet.

The course coordinator guided the students via personal emails. Especially at the beginning of the program, many students and work-life participants needed specific guidance, e.g., what was expected in the Moodle discussions to be accepted. Some also contacted the coordinator directly to ask for clarification on one of the assignments, request additional time, or find alternative ways to complete the assignments. Coordinating the program was demanding as the online environment was unfamiliar to all students, and study assignments required additional guidance.

Although the study schedule was tight and the framework for the work was relatively rigid, the coordinator tried to guide and advise everyone to complete the assignments. The course was completed successfully by eight students and ten working-life participants. In total, they completed 178 ETCS credits. Participants visited 14 adult education institutions. Five work-life participants and one student had to drop out because of work- or study-related issues and the overall workload of the study program. One participant could not be reached after the semester had started.

Critical Reflection on the Study Program

As a planning group, we critically reflected on the Current Tides of Popular Adult Education study program during and after every module and observed a few drawbacks in implementing the course. The most significant challenge experienced by teachers and students was the course's tight schedule and rigid deadlines for the assignments. Especially for work-life participants, 8–10 ETCS credits proved to be too much to study in a semester (in about three and a half months) in addition to full-time work. The original plan was to begin in the spring term, which would have eased the pressures in the autumn.

The mixed groups were an ideal that did not come to fruition. The overly tight study schedule and the different study (and life) rhythms of university students and work-life participants hampered the work of the groups, and the joint discussion could have been better. It wasn't easy to reconcile the two student groups' different goals, expectations, and skill levels. Despite the differences, everyone had the same assignments to be assessed according to uniform criteria. Thus, some tasks fit work-life participants, and some are for graduate students.

The idea of peer learning connecting students and work-life participants failed as planned mainly because of the online mode. Moodle's group discussions were among the most criticised parts of the program. Learning groups did not work ideally online because communicating in Moodle's discussion areas was seen as a slow and clumsy way of having a conversation, not to mention entering a dialogue. Besides, work-life participants usually dominated the discussion during the live online meetings.

An additional obstacle was the Covid-19 pandemic which took all involved into survival mode, increased the sense of urgency, and forced them to re-evaluate learning or other habits. Also, going online due to Covid-19 made it somewhat difficult for students to group and collaborate. On the other hand, it also forced us coordinators, teachers, and practitioners to reflect on our pedagogical models in popular education and university. Because the Covid-19 pandemic changed the course's teaching and learning circumstances, the planning group and teachers should have listened more closely to the student's experiences and ideas and gathered them systematically, for example, through the critical incident questionnaire (see Brookfield, 1995; Samuel & Conceição, 2022).

The current managerial university's time frame restricted work-life students' opportunities to study freely and at their own pace. Thus 'managerial university time' posed a significant challenge for the popular educators' participation in regular university studies. There were also some difficulties with the university's educational administration in getting the pilot program into the online system and having access to work-life participants.

At the beginning of the CTPA study program's planning, it was unclear how popular adult education would fit in the managerial for-profit-oriented university. The external funding helped us launch the pilot. Otherwise, it might have been challenging to launch the program at all. The managerial ethos respected our academic freedom, perhaps only because we had the needed external funding for the pilot.

The greatest strength in implementing the program was the seamless collaboration between academic and practical fields of adult education. We needed experienced practitioners to plan and execute the program. Their contribution to teaching the program's core modules was essential, for they brought the latest experience and knowledge from the field to the course.

As a result of the program, work-life participants could broaden their understanding of popular adult education and their institutional role. On the other hand, graduate students gained direct contact with popular adult education and understood its

significance as part of the Finnish education system. Some of them said in online discussions that they are seriously considering applying for a job at a popular educational institution. They also hoped that the CTPA study program would be offered permanently in educational and social sciences studies.

The Future of the Current Tides of Popular Adult Education Program: Four Questions

The study group located the following four issues regarding the Current Tides of Popular Adult Education program and its future. Monetarily, it was possible to develop the program with external funding, but without it, the program's future is unclear. The grant made it possible to hire a course coordinator, a luxury in today's universities. In the fall of 2021, Tampere University laid off every fifth of the administrative staff as part of its managerial policy. Thus, getting organisational resources in the future is difficult, if not impossible. In addition, hiring external experts is more difficult due to a lack of money.

Organisationally, it is still being determined whether such a program as CTPA has a place in the current neoliberal curriculum. The course requires more time to teach and study than the current teaching framework allows. Another question is whether enough qualified faculty members are interested in teaching in the program and contributing to its development. Moreover, it is difficult to know how adults who participate and work simultaneously could fit in the 'managerial university time' emphasizing speedy studies and fast degrees.

Pedagogically, it is vital to ponder how to solve the experienced contradiction between a managerial university's top-down teaching mode and the Freirean egalitarian ideal of the teacher-student relationship. This question relates to the question of how can we cope in the future – in practice and theory – with such a 'hyperobject' as Covid-19 (Bengtsson & Van Poeck, 2021) and develop new forms of 'hybrid pedagogies' and 'hybrid andragogies' to guarantee peer-to-peer learning and dialogue vital in popular education practice?

Academically, or from the point of view of the research paradigms, there is always the question of whether there is a place for popular adult education teaching and studies in the current culture of grant hunting and the destructive ideology of 'publish or perish.'

The program showed a path to reclaim and revitalise popular adult education in the current context of managerial university's opportunities and contradictions. As Crowther et al. (2006, p. 63) has put it, popular education often operates dialectically in these contexts where 'there are always new spaces to be opened up and new connections to be made.' However, the pilot program did not solve the general problem of the lack of teaching popular (and radical) adult education in Finnish universities.

Nevertheless, it may have shown some possible modes to organise such teaching. The real question is how to get popular adult education study contents inside the ordinary course structure in the faculty of education at Tampere University and elsewhere and maintain their originality and core ideas of dialogue and collaboration. Another critical question is how to plan courses and programs that consider adult students' and work-life participants' different learning needs (and timetables). Particular attention should be given to adult learners' learning needs.

Conclusion: The Future of Popular Adult Education in the Managerial University

It has been noted that popular education's engagement in and placement with the academy is a difficult task (Crowther et al., 2006, p. 63). Popular adult education (along with adult education at large) has long struggled with its academic legitimacy and faced the charges of being too sporadic and 'not defined and delimited in a very clear way' (Larsson, 2010, p. 103). Some scholars have assessed that the research paradigm is still vague and immature and lacks theoretical and methodological rigor (Malewski, 2010). Partly, this debate on the disciplinary status and appropriate paradigm has been hegemonic and concerned those who seek power to define what is an essential adult education research and teaching and what is not.

At times popular adult education has perhaps been defined as too pragmatic and practice-oriented in the disciplinary debates. It has not had power or voice in the struggle for academic prestige. Besides, popular adult education has been considered expressive action, not contributing to economic development like work-life-related research and teaching areas such as adult training, human resource, and competence building.

Popular adult education would benefit from a stronger foothold in the managerial university to bring the students critical views from non-formal and informal areas of learning and the civil society where people 'unionize, create revolutionary parties, build social movements, take to the streets, and develop community organizations' (Brookfield, 2016, p. 28). Based on lessons from Tampere University's pilot, the planning group also sketched an 'ecumenical' approach or a synthesis of adult education research and teaching. A comprehensive study program would consist of lifelong learning, continuum education, popular adult education, and vocational adult education. Higher education institutions in Nordic countries, Europe, and other parts of the world could eventually contribute to the study program.

This study program would be a place for popular adult education because it is flexible enough to identify societal changes and invent the needed responses, perhaps better than the formal education system. Besides, popular adult education unites the university and the students to global civil society and the life worlds of everyday learning outside the capitalist knowledge economy and paid labour. It brings forth 'the realm of freedom' which, according to Marx (1894, p. 593), 'actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus, in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production.' It is hard to imagine that popular adult education would serve capitalism's 'new growth economy' (Jesson & Newman, 2004). It is easier to think it stands on the side of humanistic ideals and can reclaim its radical roots.

As Scandrett has noted, the current neoliberalist managerial university is a site 'for pedagogical and political contestation. Democratic learning and knowledge production is not a fixed institutional state but is always contingent and borne of struggle' (Scandrett, 2017, p. 94). In participating in these struggles and in building popular adult education programs in the sometimes 'hostile' and 'cognitively unjust' (Santos, 2017) environments, the following question, among others, deserves critical attention: as managerial university often favors top-down approaches to program planning, development, and evaluation as well as evidence-based programs, in which rational and quantitative assessments are applied, there is a danger that accepting and following these guidelines steer the field in the wrong direction for they do not easily allow a dialogical approach, not to mention critical views on education and society. The current study

pipeline does not give enough time for reflection and does not consider adult learners' learning conditions, work, and other life.

If there is any future hope in the university (cf. Hall, 2021; Fleming, 2021) and university-based popular adult education as part of it, they need to join forces with global civil society's dialogical and activist practices. They need to find ecological movements, social justice activism, artivism (art plus activism), and other pockets of resistance. In doing so, university-based popular adult education could provide for students and practitioners alike socially, culturally, and collectively meaningful knowledge, means to build global humanity and a sustainable world (see also Scandrett, 2014, 2017) and increase possibilities for cognitive justice, that is, the recognition of the plurality of knowledge and paradigms of both studying and learning and living and knowing (Santos, 2017). In these tasks, it can be helpful for popular adult education to develop new alliances with different disciplines and fields of studies despite the experienced difficulties.

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Notes

1 These efforts conflicted between the Reds and the Whites in the Civil War of 1918. The war broke the unity of the workers' movement and its educational project into two, reformist and revolutionary camps. As a result of the war, the Finnish government banned revolutionary education for 30 years; the tasks of workers' education fell on the reformist. (Kantasalmi & Hake, 1997; Saarela, 2015)

2 Marx and Engels pointed to the power of the ruling class in 1846: 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force' (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 67).

3 In all decades of Finnish university-based adult education, teaching and research on radical adult and popular education have been marginal. In the 1950s, a study *Työväen omaehtoinen sivistystyö* [Workers' Self-Governed Popular Education] (Harva et al., 1954) on workers' study activities was carried out at the University of Tampere. In the 1970s, some adult education students and academics became interested in Paulo Freire's thinking (Freire, 2005). In the 2000s, a bunch of critical scholars revived Freirean ideas (see Suoranta & Tomperi, 2021).

4 The group consisted of Björn Wallén (Secretary-General of the Finnish Adult Education Association, FAEA), Anneliina Wevelsiep (Secretary-General of the Citizens' Forum, one of 12 study centres in Finland), Mari Tapio (an educational planner of the Citizens' Forum), and me.

5 Sven Lindqvist's book *Gräv där du står* (1978) gave birth to the adult educational Dig Where You Stand movement. It generated thousands of study circles and 'barefoot' research groups in Europe and North America. 'Their results were published in hundreds of exhibitions, books, pamphlets, and theatrical plays. […] The idea of "digging" for truth close to home can be traced back to Friedrich Nietzsche, who wrote, "Wo du stehst, grab tiefhinein!" ('Where you stand, dig in deeply!', Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft, Poem 3).' (Lindqvist, 2014, p. 265)

6 The program produced rich data. In addition to my field notes and planning meeting minutes, students' assignments, learning diaries, and Moodle discussions were stored on the course's Moodle. However, I could not use the data produced by the students because of the research ethics: it was not gathered for research. Instead, I used my field notes, the group's memoranda, and our general discussions to ensure students' anonymity.

7 As one of the reviewers kindly informed me (anonymously), this study program is not unique in the Nordic context. There are folk high school teacher training programs and individual courses on popular education at the university level (e.g., at Linköping University since the 1970s and more recently at the University of South-Eastern Norway).

[8] In this question, I am inclined to refer to Wittgenstein, who wrote, 'The meaning of a word is its use in the language' (Wittgenstein 1967, para. 43). And more importantly: 'What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use' (para. 116). In the context of popular adult education, it is crucial to do rigorous conceptual work. It is also vital to study adult learning practices, develop theory from the ground up, and ask how to understand those practices better.

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The humiliated began to sing: How teachers on strike tried to teach society

Piotr Kowzan
University of Gdańsk, Poland (piotr.kowzan@ug.edu.pl)

Abstract

In this article, the protest songs of teachers on strike were analysed as a traditional pedagogical tool of popular education, social movements, and trade unions. An important context for this was the commodification of the entertainment market, expectations towards the teaching profession, and the state of musical competencies in the population. By identifying what the essence of teaching in the teachers' protest songs was, recommendations for making these activities more educational and politically more effective have been presented. The songs might have played a role in the demise of the strike, in the specific political context, described in the paper. Using the comparisons of teachers to animals by the teachers themselves was a common, but risky tactic.

Keywords: protest songs, teachers' strike, social media pedagogy, popular education, radical education

Introduction

Songs and the acts of singing together are a traditional part of the union movement's struggles and popular education. In 2019, teachers in Poland stopped working and began to sing, and the recordings were made available to the public.

The largest teachers' strike in Polish history took place on April 8-27, 2019, after which it was suspended. Out of 20,403 schools, kindergartens, and school complexes, 15,179 institutions, that is, 74.29% participated in the strike (ZNP, 2019, April 10). The aim of the strike was to increase teachers' salaries (Smolińska-Theiss, 2019). But there were many more reasons for teachers' frustration, including the chaos caused by school reforms (Wagner, 2020). In Poland, trade unions exist only in a rudimentary way and are so financially weak that the teachers' union could not provide strike pay. The most

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vulnerable union members could count on some financial relief from their union, but the scale of the strikers' desperation is clear.

On April 6, just two days before the strike, the leader of the ruling party Law and Justice (PiS), Jarosław Kaczyński, announced that animal owners would get subsidies for their farm animals: 500 PLN for each cow and 100 PLN for each pig – which was arguably a part of the governmental strategy of playing teachers against farmers. The opposition quickly challenged this proposal, asking why the government wanted to give subsidies for animals, while they claim not to have money for teachers. The government's suggestion caused public outrage and started numerous critical memes, such as one where a teacher from a Polish comedy is asked by his son 'Dad, why the f... are you striking? Make a child, buy 10 pigs and a cow' – alluding also to the recently introduced social benefits for parents (Wprost.pl, 2019, April 9). The songs analysed here were influenced by this political context.

The protest songs came in the first few days of the strike. Not only could their songs not break through the media blockade to be broadcasted on the radio, but one could even get the impression that they had become counter-effective in making people feel solidarity with the strikers. Circulated on social media, the songs collected many negative comments. Therefore, some sites prohibited commenting. Teachers removed many videos from the internet after the strike.

In this paper, I broadly define the protest song as a song performed by protesters. I did not intend to reject any manifestation of a community's creativity, no matter if it related to the politics. Other researchers emphasized that protest songs must express objection or, at the very least, offer some debatable solutions if limited to bringing attention to social issues (Haynes, 2008).

This study aims at analysing the application of the 'tool' of the songs, in radical popular education. By radical I mean going to the roots, in terms of both fundamentals and essentials of education intertwined with socio-political struggles. I am interested in how and what the teachers tried to teach society and in the techniques and circumstances in which these acts took place. First, I will show how singing is rooted in radical popular education. Then I will show that the use of songs in the protests was a part of the realm of teaching. This is important because a more free use of the educators' competencies and the addition of instructions for the public were missing in this struggle. The analysis focuses on the lyrics of the songs, revealing the message of love and hate, and the details of an intense clash with power.

Teachers in Poland followed a pattern that had been used in social movements before: they used well-known melodies, changed the lyrics, sang together, and made public their common voice. Such creativity emerges spontaneously all over the world because it is intuitive and egalitarian - it uses basic skills. Understanding this case from Poland will reveal the limitations of the use of this traditional tool in the Polish context. It will also allow me to propose changes in the way such interventions are undertaken in the future.

Academics typically analyse protest songs that have already resonated effectively in society; that have become entrenched in social memory. The songs collected for this paper have not gained attention yet. Protesting teachers in Poland created many protest songs and performed some of them on the streets, without reaching the status of universal strike icon. The strike itself ended without achieving its goals.

Protest songs as educational tool

Time for writing songs and singing as an activity may come in moments of boredom when people feel free, both from work and family obligations. During workplace strikes in the 1980's Poland, workers sung to 'pass the time' (Bohlman, 2016, p. 245) because the strikers were waiting for the results of the talks. The 1960s were the golden period of protest songs when creativity accompanied the anti-war movement and many counterculture movements. Great social movements and large-scale protests are often identified with one iconic song. The Solidarity movement in Poland had the song 'Mury' performed by Jacek Kaczmarski (Bohlman, 2016), and mass protests in Hong Kong in 2019 had 'May Glory Be to Hong Kong' (Choi, 2020). During protests of a smaller scale and intensity, protest songs used to be an in-group activity for the needs of already mobilized people (Hurner, 2006). This changed with the rise of social media, where singing can be easily documented, shared and it can resonate beyond group, place, and time-boundaries.

Protest songs are a form of intentional, multi-layered, and artistically sophisticated communication.

> [They] are also channels of communication for activists - within movements, but also between different movements, and, indeed, between movement generations. Music enters what we have called the collective memory, and songs can conjure up long-lost movements from extinction as well as reawakening forgotten structures of feeling. In this respect, the songs of social movements affect the dynamics of cultural transformations, the historical relations between dominant, residual, and emergent cultural formations. (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998, p. 161)

Protest songs perform basic functions such as maintaining commitment and giving a sense of pride to the performers. They also have the potential to provoke dialogue by using aesthetics evoking previous social mobilizations (Everhart, 2012). The protest songs can be considered art and because of their complexity, humour, disguised in well-known melodies, their inclusion in the public debate is often subversive rather than simply dialogical (Eyerman, 2019).

There is controversy in the literature as to whether protest songs can be considered educational at all. The findings differ due to the different corpora of the analysed songs. Knupp argued they could not (1981) but in his examples the lyrical layer of the message was not significant, while Haynes believed that they were educational because in her study 'lyrics […] are quite explicit in their description of relatively current history from their critical perspectives' (2008, p. 254). They did not consider singing as such to be educational.

In the influential residential adult learning project of folk high schools inspired by Grundtvig, songs were so important that the repeatedly republished songbooks have always been present in these schools, even when everything else has been changed (Westerman, 2005). In folk high schools, songs are pre-educational, because people sing together at the beginning of the day. It is therefore a prerequisite for education. It places people in the community, and assembles individuals into the social (Kipnis, 2015). The content and form of the song may determine whether it will be a community of brave, critical, or ironic people.

Scandrett (2014) noted that 'It is argued that popular education should be regarded as a methodology which cannot be reduced to particular pedagogical methods' (p. 328). With protest songs, you can risk treating them as a popular education method that can function separately. Protest songs remain after social movements and as separate,

autonomous entities, they are portals to the roots of social struggles. They inspire to act for social liberation because they expand people's awareness from individual to collective. Listening to a protest song gives the impression that you are not alone, even if at a given time and place, you remain lonely. A song, especially a protest song, can serve as a comrade. Just by repeating itself, it turns people on standby, increasing their capacity for indignation. Eyerman and Jamison directly pointed to Highlander Folk School and its songs as the root of North American social movements, including civil rights movement (Bodene-Yost, 2013; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). Protest songs mobilise traditions, they allow you to feel and understand the continuity of social struggles and – according to the authors – you can follow these stories by looking at overlapping modifications to the original text, sometimes also to the melody. Combining the past, present and future, protest songs become a manifestation of culture, politics, and education because all these spaces overlap at moments of collective care for the common good.

The possibility of harmful use is a burden carried by every song, even at the level of the music arrangement itself, as shown by the songs of hate created during the Balkan war (Johnson & Cloonan, 2009). Some of what a song does to the audience will take place before the audience reaches the lyrics.

Teaching far afield with protest songs

The protest songs that I analyse in this paper can be educational not only because of the students (as the often addressed recipients of the message) but also simply because teachers performed them at school. Perhaps the students' absence made teaching even better. In an empty school, teaching is no longer related to having control over those who are taught. Physical distance does not rule out teaching, as evidenced by the popularity of unilaterally broadcasted online lectures. If there are people who are ready to listen, and they are in conditions that allow time to listen (Butterwick & Roy, 2020), the teachers' voices will be heard. To further think of protest songs as teaching, the intention behind the cry is important. No matter how far teachers wanted to reach and synchronise society around their 'love & hate' message, there is a general problem with teachers' activity in social movements. Knowledge diffusion and learning in social movements are often described in opposition to regular teachers' schoolwork. Popular education's radicalism comprises of these ideas: 1) learning from the world replaces curriculum; 2) the right of everyone to learn and the joy of learning replace compulsory schooling and subordination; 3) discovering tools of emancipation comes during social struggle instead of coming from knowledge transmission from those who are supposed to know (Hall, 2006). Thus, striking teachers who dream of a 'proper' school, and use revolutionary rhetoric are both the embodiment of a radical project and a threat which may limit radicalism to improving working conditions in an otherwise inadequate school institution. Knowing about the potential limitations of teachers' radicalism, in the text layer of their songs, I looked for fragments expressing love for specific topics and states of affairs as well as hatred, such as naming what they would like to remove from social life. I borrowed this idea from Vlieghe and Zamojski (2019).

Regardless of *ad hoc* intentions, people demanding social change transmit the content of their message to society. Eyerman and Jamison identified what social movements disseminate in society as new 'knowledge interests'. And they termed them as: 1) cosmological, or an idea of a good life; 2) technical, that is the skills required to join the movement; and 3) organisational, that is emergent types of relations within society (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991, 1998). In practice, such a socio-cosmological upheaval means that, for example, Raging Grannies from Canada, with their cheeky

protest songs, show older women in a new, active role of unstoppable peace activists (Roy, 2002). The unique technical dimension can be seen in the school strike songs from the 'Fridays For Future' movement because they required high digital skills and the ability to maintain intergenerational dialogue (Buckley & Bowman, 2021). And organisational issues are sometimes the whole strategically prepared pedagogy, as in the case of women from Ada Songor Salt Movement in Ghana who, in their songs, deliberately coded instructions how to find knowledge, connect with others and mobilise to collective action (Langdon et al., 2020). It is hard to expect that the short-term teachers' creativity during the strike would be a carrier of knowledge with a potential similar to the many years of efforts of mass social movements. Hopefully, the multitude of texts collected for the analysis will allow us to see some patterns in the field of knowledge interests. We will learn how the teachers used the possibilities of protest songs in this area. After all, even if the tools used by teachers on a daily basis differ from what they used *en masse* during the strike, teaching is what we can consider them experts at in general.

Materials and methods

I collected video recordings of 78 songs, published on YouTube and Facebook, all sung in Polish. I will use the words 'video' and 'song' interchangeably – as all the songs I analysed have both a musical and visual part (song and video). For 56 of them, I have determined the release date of the musical layer of the piece. The teachers most often used works written in 1981. Half of the identified music was published no later than 1985. These years are characteristic because it was the declining and hardest economic period of the so-called communism in Poland. In the years 1981-1983, there was martial law in Poland, introduced in response to the 'carnival of solidarity' of 1980-1981. The other 22 songs were based on traditional, original or simply unidentifiable melodies.

For 21 songs, it was not possible to establish what location the songs came from. For others, the name of the place appeared in the title of the video, and its description or in the comments.

Figure 1. Geographical distribution of songs' origin (N = 78, unidentified = 21). From *Contour map of Poland* [Image], by Halibutt, 2006, Wikipedia, (https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Polska_kontur_bialy.png). CC BY-SA 3.0

The geographic distribution shows greater activity in those provinces with strong urban centres, where resistance to the current government is articulated on various occasions. Particularly little activity of teachers is visible in the east of the country. Teachers negotiate their salary with the government. Thus, the strike was not a dispute at all with the municipalities as employers. Local authorities often supported teachers, and the government was a party to the dispute. The reason for the distribution of singing activity, could be the distribution of support for the ruling party, which is much higher in the eastern regions.

I transcribed and coded the lyrics, and most of the codes were descriptive. Only a few songs had a distinctive title, so the songs will be presented here with numbers. The song fragments mentioned in the text are translations in which I focused on meaning, ignoring the poetic structure.

To show how teachers used songs as radical popular education, I used Critical Discourse Analysis [CDA]. CDA is a research approach designed to provide insight into how discourse works (here the focus was on resistance) in relation to inequality and social structures (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). The purpose of the CDA was to alter or obstruct the oppressive nature of discourse. This is an ambitious task for a scientific text, but possible because of the cyclical nature of social struggles for education. The subject of the CDA's research is statements, especially political ones, made to manipulate reality. Protest songs meet these criteria. As for the research method, it will be a thematic analysis with elements of rhetorical analysis.

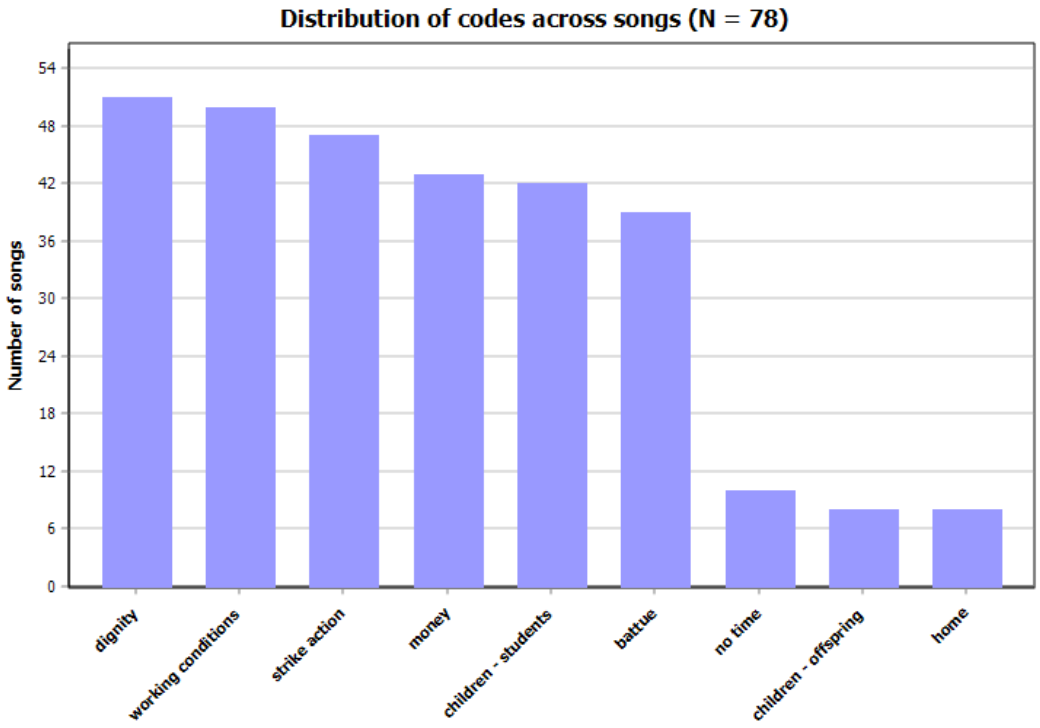
Fairclough's approach had already been used in the analysis of protest songs (Haynes, 2008). In this study, however, I do not compare the collected material with other historical examples. The previous long teacher strike in Poland took place on May 4-24, 1993, and no similar works have survived. Instead, I will devote more attention to the three levels of interpretation that Fairclough distinguished, and which, in his view, constitute the CDA (Fairclough, 2006). These levels are:

- Textual: analysis of the text itself
  After listening to songs several times, I looked for one-word descriptions for the parts of their lyrics, then I combined similar codes into more general ones. Also, I was deliberately looking for passages expressing love for people and specific issues, and those passages that would describe the future after the strike.
- Operational: analysis of various aspects of the production, distribution, and consumption of the text (for Fairclough this would be socio-cognitive, and all practical issues related to the fact that the broadly understood text becomes meaningful for discourse).
  I analysed what remains from videos when the sound is turned off. I started with video descriptions, such as hashtags and keywords; the number of views and likes, the content of the comments. Then I looked at scenography, which was often needed to identify the location of schools and also the video quality. Lastly, I checked where those videos were republished.
- Social: analysis of the role of the text in the social environment at a given historical time as an event.
  Gaining information for this part of the work was essentially a by-product of a song search using various Boolean search strings, using hashtags associated with teachers' strike and their protest songs.

Textual analysis

The most common codes in Figure 2 give an insight into the topics teachers presented to their audience.

Figure 2. Themes identified in the songs (author's own figure)



The most frequently identified topic concerned dignity. Teachers saw a threat to their dignity both in their low salaries and in the fact that politicians manifested contempt for them as people:

> We want the truth, respect, recognition from this authority for our efforts
> Each of us in school is by vocation, we will be hungry without pay increases. [68]

> I am what I want to be, I will not let you offend me,
> I want to teach, that's how I [want] to show the world to children… [70]

Dignity also relates to the working conditions:

> There is much traffic in a small room - crowded, loud,
> different actions here every day, kids crowd,
> time to compete, there's no photocopying paper
> and paints brought from home.
> We give our hearts, our time
> what do we get in exchange?
> Strike! [11]

The strike took place before the final primary school exams, so there was a threat of postponing them. But the government changed the regulations, allowing non-teachers to

conduct external examinations. These substitute workers were paid, while the actual teachers were supposed to conduct the exams without extra payments.

> Difficult exams, students are happy,
> maybe they will not suspend the strike for the moment.
> Your thoughts are vain, my beloved students,
> priests and firefighters will be examining today. [58]

The teachers also showed the insecurity of working conditions. The changing guidelines have become the education system's permanent feature. They strongly interfere with what teachers do in the class, yet they are created without the knowledge and opinion of teachers:

> They keep changing programs, they treat us like nothing. [23]

> Every day I visit all the countries, though on the map,
> I will only go when the strike is over,
> I don't want adventures; I have a program and I have tests.
> The minister creates my craziest adventures himself. [8]

The teachers had common complaints. The topics shown in Figure 2 were predictable, and strike-related, except for the one related to battue.

Animals and the hunt

The code that I called 'battue' refers to a technique used in hunting, aimed at scaring animals by beating sticks, and leading them into a killing zone or ambush. It is an *in vivo* code; i.e., the exact wording derived from the text, and teachers used it to comment on the government propaganda: 'no matter how hard you try, you will not avoid the social battue' [2]. I used it because the hunting motif is in harmony with the animals numerous in the texts. Teachers complained it was easier to take part in a battue than to flee or defend yourself:

> I'll fold all the hate into one warm scream
> To regain our prestige, restore beautiful dreams [15]

The teachers listed complaints about the minister of education and her role in the battue:

> You think, Anka [the minister], you won because you are humiliating us!
> Dirty lies are your weapon and your cheeky game. [30]

> Instead of nonsense, say that we earn 5,000 and more
> Look where you've already gone. Why are you lying?
> Where did you get the data from? [46]

They had been addressing parents of their students directly, seeing the results of the hate campaign in advance:

> The public can be brainwashed, persuaded into a powerful nonsense
> They can cheat and play on emotions to fuel anger
> Hey parents of our students, can't you see that
> you are also just a part of the game that goes on. [30]

The teachers identified themselves as being stigmatised in the media. The teachers devoted much of the text to the reconstruction of hatred, trying to ridicule the accusations by simply recalling them. They could also break away from this humiliating content. They argued that, in the event of a battue, their joint struggle and individual optimism can be a source of dignity:

> Get up, wake up, take a strike,
> be an optimist every day.
> We can do it, all of us together
> although the hate on the Internet is still going on,
> go on strike, fight for dignity,
> be an optimist every day.
> We have had enough of this battue on us that still lasts [8]

From the battue as an element of animal hunting, we turn to the most peculiar feature of the teacher's protest songs. In more than half of the songs, teachers compared themselves to animals. The many appearances of animals in the lyrics were a response to the government's actions, such as the aforementioned proposal of subsidies for farm animals. Animals appear in the songs as a reference group for teachers, as comparisons (to teachers), epithets towards politicians (e.g., a ram) and onomatopoeias, e.g., moo.

> One of them finished studies, and after graduation, as it happens, moo
> There are diagnoses, observations on the development, and discussions, moo
> Why and for what [are we] writing reports at night? [53]

> Woof, woof, woof, woof, meow,
> oink, oink, oink, oink, moo
> quack, quack, quack, quack, honk
> On the farm we will meet anyway [66]

This last one is a complete song. It refers to 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell. The animals portrayed the degradation of teachers:

> The teacher is not a pig. The teacher is a zero today,
> and although he is trying as he can,
> today, a cow is a more important thing. [1]

> We like working at school, but we are advised to go to the field
> to breed cows with patches and be entitled to a subsidy [4]

> There are those for whom you are worth less than a cow [20]

> You said on Monday, cows are important, it's not a sham
> We wait all the time. You decoyed us; you cheated us
> It's you who cheated us, you lied to us again [59]

The animals were used to describe politicians, as in the example below:

> What am I doing here? What are you doing here?
> Yellow badge is already decorating my black blouse for the fourth day
> There are so many different ways... What are you doing here?
> Another day, and the government stands still like a calf. [37]

> Say yes to this rise,
> Like an eel,

stop wriggle in front of it [46]

Don't give up, teacher
Let the donkeys understand,
that you are not worse than a cow [52]

There are also references to those in power who were teachers and ought to speak for them, but instead sold their souls for cat fur. Animals acted as a lever to fight, allowing teachers to articulate who they did not want to be, i.e., through the act of de-identification with them.

Cows, porkers, and other ducks are worth more than education
We will not allow for that, so we are fighting bravely for our honour.[18]

We are waiting for changes because it's high time.
We are not cows, and where is our money? [11]

If I must teach young people, give us a dignified life
A pig cannot be more expensive than one who teaches children to live. [1]

You don't want education, the ignorant mob [is what] you need.
You do not listen to our arguments; I know your lies well.
Hey teacher, don't give up!
They will want to sweep you away like a worm or a louse. [69]

And finally, the animals were also accepted for self-identification, after changing their species.

The assumption of the role of animals was a form of linguistic reappropriation. This change of meaning took place simultaneously with the substitution of the animal species.

We run around like a scalded cat today, struggling to save a leaky budget. Is this how a teacher should live? Who will answer me? I'm curious. [50]

A new talent in me lies dormant, next to the cow a deer will stand
Such a democracy with you as a minister on vacation [42]

You may think that someone will understand that without knowledge,
nothing will be possible!
And for that, you need teachers who fight like lions every day! [66]

The wealth of cultural references to animals is so abundant that they felt at home in taking advantage of it. Using rhyming messages and animals is a classic way of conducting popular moral education in society. An example of the persistence of such references in culture is Aesop's Fables.

The teachers, however, felt uncomfortable with the fact that they had become the object of comparison to farm animals. The songs use these animals as the antithesis of educated people. In biopolitical terms, teachers felt treated not as political animals (*zoon politicon*), but as farm animals, tools, and consequently as slaves. The ease with which the authorities cut themselves off from teachers, let teachers think that their exclusion from a democratic community comes from their own inability to use violence during a strike:

The teachers aren't miners, they don't burn tires in the street.
The state supports human and animal reproduction, not teaching [54]

Oral communication and folklore have historically been important tools for popular education (Westerman, 2005). The consolidation of knowledge generated together in songs belongs to the radical tradition of education and has repeatedly proved its usefulness in the social struggle. Thanks to comparisons with animals, the teachers spoke in simple, picturesque language.

The effect of exposing the paradox that people educated to educate children were treated like livestock should cause a cognitive shock to the public. The provoked teachers could count on the fact that, after the battue, everyone in any social position would perceive the contempt for teachers and their social degradation as a threat to themselves. However, it seems that when some strikers focused on de-identification and others self-identified as animals or even pretended to be animals, mixing the descriptions of the tragedy of teachers' own fate with the comedy of comparisons with animals led to an overall grotesque.

Teachers may have unintentionally channelled themselves, or have been channelled by the politicians, to the unfavourable comparisons with farm animals, which might have ridiculed their case. The announcement of the subsidies for farm animals at the time when teachers demanded higher salaries, may indeed have been a battue, and led the teachers into a trap.

Teaching out of love

In the post-critical perspective of education that emphasises the need to build, if not to save the world, teaching is defined as an act of love:

> Teaching is in itself staying true to the love one has for a particular subject matter. Or more exactly: that this love, as well as the relentless effort to put this love to public display for the new generation, and to make them attentive to what is good in the world, so that they can begin anew with it. (Vlieghe & Zamojski, 2019, p. 3)

To find out what teachers would like to keep in the world, and not just change, you need to look beyond their reluctance to fragments of reality. For this purpose, I searched for parts of the text that showed the temporal orientation of the message. It turned out that in line with psychological research in this area (Stolarski et al., 2015), the temporal orientation was not always clear in the songs. Teachers described the present as a decisive moment, and a moment of absolute frustration. After the frustration has passed, there can only be hope:

> It's time to speak openly where you have all of us:
> In deep despise and that's all about this. [22]

> All this time, it is giving us a tough time
> But today we all say enough!
> We just want these dreams to end,
> Let's make good days come. [27]

But the positive future was denied as well:

> Do not ask me about tomorrow. How long will the strike last?
> We are sailing on a miserable raft of the 'good change' time [15]

This is a reference to the governmental programme of 'good change' in the society. But the meanings of the words have been reversed. There is no future because a simulacrum

of 'good change' has emerged. And the teachers turned out to be those who do not see any good in this. Therefore, the future appeared in songs with a direct relationship to the past. The future is the return and reconstruction of the idea based on Bauman's retrotopia, a projection of an idealised past:

> I am waiting for an open school, still worth more and more.
> In which there will reside the spirit of Enlightenment. [47]

Pastoral conceptions of the past are akin to a fairy tale world - you cannot get there, but the values remain alive there and, from there, teachers recall them:

> I will exchange my low salary for a dream yacht,
> to take me back to before-the-reform time. [15]

> But something from those years remains in me:
> My little missionary, pedagogical world.
> When I remember this bygone time
> I know one thing - it didn't go to waste.
> I would give a lot to experience it again. [51]

If one adopts the post-critical perspective of understanding teaching as giving done out of love, protest songs are gifts, apart from being vehicle for political claims. Based on these passages, we can assume that teaching through these particular protest songs offers a time travel to see the present world from the perspective of past expectations. And teachers offered us a travel to the past, because from there they could see something worthwhile in their profession. During the struggle the logic of politics as based on anger and obstacles to remove prevails, and teachers try both to emancipate from the oppressive circumstances and to find some refuge in the past.

Teachers directly sang about their like or love for something. This declared affective attachment concerned mainly their students, people, and the next generations entering the world:

> We are waiting... We will persevere for the idea because we love the students. [78]

This love also applies to the school:

> They say we’re lazy. That we do nothing at work.
> And we love school. We just want to live with dignity. [34]

> Thanks to all of you, I know, I know I can do it,
> Our plan will finally come true.
> I look at you school, I love you.
> I’ll stand on my head, and nothing can break me. [35]

Teachers find it difficult to explain their ‘crazy love’ for school in the text, especially in the context of the fact that they have described the various torments associated with the work. This teaching passion for school and people is on the verge of madness because it also seems to be outside the logic of a wage strike. This logic of struggle assumes that without adequate wages, there is no work. And teachers were tired of not doing this job. This explains why, in one passage, teachers reject the idea of freedom (implicitly: freedom to choose another job) when they sing:

> I don’t want freedom, I already have a job,
> and I have a passion, and I don’t want to change it,

although I hear it every day. [8]

As with freedom, they also do not really care about being political animals all the time. Although, as noted earlier, they felt that being equated with animals means being excluded from public life:

We don't want to live in politics.
We want to teach kids because that's our passion.
We don't have to do anything, but we fight.
We fight for ourselves, for you, for our common fate! [17]

Perhaps they did not need the current politics, if they had the impression that they were changing the world for the better with their work, anyway.

Many young people were educated by a person who thought:
this is how I will serve the world! [2]

In these fragments there is a love for the world, for school, for what you do every day and for young people. This love of the world is not the essence of the content of protest songs until we accept that they are all songs of dignity. Then the love for students turns into an internal drive to show themselves to society in their humiliation.

The teachers thought of the strike as an educational situation for students, despite their absence from school. One of the songs resonates directly:

Hey students at our school, listen
always choose well in your life
although you will face many more difficulties
break every barrier you meet
Take our example. We are a model for you today
It is a lesson in loyalty and persistence, too. [9]

It is them, the teachers, who serve both as a didactic aid and as an example for students.

Operational analysis

The teachers did not share information on the process of creating these pieces. There were no videos showing them creating texts, discussing and making decisions, so we do not know how dynamic, structured and pedagogically thoughtful the process was. We can assume that these were group processes because the teachers spent their time together in empty schools. Sometimes, videos included information about the authors of the text in the piece's description. Both the creative process and the joy of listening to colleagues' performances had to satisfy the needs of the striking communities. Also, the recordings show that people often enjoyed the performance. Similar to the workers waiting for the results of negotiators' talks during the carnival of solidarity in the 1980s, teachers in empty schools experienced alternative forms of sociality in their workplace while singing together. Their ordinary work is usually individual and physically separated in classes. It is visible that teachers enjoyed the synchronisation of voices and bodies while singing, because they moved to the melody, sometimes unknowingly. This joy of singing together sometimes introduced a certain dissonance, when simultaneously they sang about issues which needed to be changed. Most of the pieces were performed by choir, some pieces were performed in groups, and one piece was individual. The song, performed individually, had a choral performance recorded.

The low quality of some movies turned out to be disappointing, suggesting that the creation of the songs in itself was priority, rather than their later dissemination. One was rotated, many moved around because they were recorded by hand. Sometimes the audio quality was failing, or words were not clearly pronounced, so the lack of subtitles was annoying. The subtitles were inserted in a few cases only, and precisely in those videos where it would not be necessary. Song lyrics were rarely included in movie descriptions but sometimes partially if the song was republished. Some protest songs were made available with the apparent intention of ridiculing teachers by writing offensive descriptions or new titles.

The teachers wanted to get their songs into circulation quickly. Any post-production work on the recorded material would be time-consuming. As a result, spontaneity became the dominant aesthetics of protest songs. This turned out to be counterproductive, because in combination with the salary aspirations and the emphasis on the high level of education in the lyrics, it often embarrassed the viewers. Even if most of the unfavourable comments were politically motivated or even fabricated hate, the positive comments were restrained in nature and limited to repeating declarations supporting striking teachers. Sometimes, active allies publicly stated on social media that out of the many songs they watched, they managed to pick one that they recommended because it was worth listening to.

We can assume that for the authors and performers the lyrics were the most important message. The familiar melody was auxiliary, and the visual layer served to verify the message as authentic. But on social media platforms, protest songs suddenly became a commodity. They were compared to each other and everything that could be considered 'packaging' was discussed.

The case of a video, which, when published in its raw version, did not gain positive attention, evidences the importance of ‘the packaging’. Such a raw version was even republished by another user, and included a compilation of several teachers’ protest songs, over which the commentators published many malicious remarks. In the second version, an oral introduction preceded the video explaining the purpose of the protest. This simple procedure changed the reception of the video, as it encouraged viewers to leave positive comments and 'like' it. It also increased its viewership. Interestingly, in the 1970s it was experimentally proved that for the ability to cause a change of mind in listeners ‘speech-song combination shows greater change than either speech or song’ (Kosokoff & Carmichael, 1970, p. 300).

Contrary to great social mobilisation, such as anti-war protests (Haynes, 2008), the teachers did little to facilitate the dissemination of these songs. They did not encourage downloading, copying, or using. This restraint may have been due to haste, insufficient skills, or unfriendly reception among some of the audience. However, the use of popular melodies could cause the listeners' memory to be 'infected' with the text of the protest song and it would be difficult to recall the original content. Instead, phrases associated the with teachers' struggles would come back.

In terms of the production and distribution of protest songs, teachers did not treat them like material they would present in the classroom. They did not include instructions for recipients. They did not encourage them to take any action. In this form, this presentation only required listening. And listening to a song in front of a screen is something different than performing it together. Other content providers today plan a continuous production process and, thus, encourage viewers to subscribe to their channels. Teachers did not expect that there would be a sequel, that they would have to do it again. They informed the public about their situation and that was it. They did not challenge other teachers or schools to perform. Neither did they instruct what individuals could do,

such as call their representative in Parliament. There was also no incentive for the audience to push the song to a prime position in the radio charts.

Social analysis

Politicians from the ruling party in Poland have systematically dismantled democratic institutions. In this shift of the state towards authoritarian rule, they attach great importance to controlling key areas of social life and the internal coherence of the dominant narrative (Cervinkova & Rudnicki, 2019; Żuk, 2020). Yet, the fully controlled communication of the public media to the teachers did not have to be disdainful. But it was, because for right-wing parties in Poland, education is foremost a field of ideological struggle. And this is a fight that they constantly lose. The political and media hegemony of the authoritarian government prevented discussions with teachers, so they defended themselves with songs.

The fact that the teachers assessed the political situation correctly, singing about the ‘battue’ has been confirmed by leaks that have been published subsequently. On January 14, 2022, e-mails exchanged by advisers and politicians of the ruling party regarding the teachers' strike were released. Planned manipulations, instructing the media how to treat the teacher’s union chairman, and playing parents against teachers was a part of the strategy (Suchecka, 2022, January 14).

Although the teachers' response may not have been the best at the time in history, it was a sincere result of their evaluation of the circumstances. Regarding how to achieve an educational goal, Horton referred to his notes from the time when he was deciding to set up a folk high school: 'an answer [...] can only come from the people in the life situation' (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. xxii).

The use of protest songs was consistent with the 'high culture of protest' built on the myth of Solidarity (Prusinowska et al., 2012), and in line with the direction in which the active culture of protest is growing in Poland. From quiet and gloomy protests, characteristic of Eastern Europe, it is changing into multimodal forms of protest. Music plays a significant role in organising protests. The very rhythm given to demonstrations by samba groups causes even relatively small activities to gain momentum. However, the importance of singing together during demonstrations becomes apparent when the practice has ceased. In Poland, social movements have noticed the disappearance of singing during demonstrations in favour of chanting and playing songs through loudspeakers. This was counteracted by creating the so-called revolutionary choirs, i.e., groups of people who support various city demonstrations with their singing. Such groups include the Krakow Revolutionary Choir, the TAK [Tricity Women's Action] Choir and the Warsaw Revolutionary Choir ‘Warszawianka.’ Contrary to these prominent initiatives, the teachers' voice came mainly from small towns and were limited to performing one piece.

Reaching for songs is still not a straightforward choice in the Polish context. The state of music education is such that the skills of playing instruments and reading music are predominantly found amongst the elite. In relation to children recognised as gifted, music education in music schools in Poland has a long tradition and is successful. But in one of the diagnostic studies among candidates for early education teachers it was even clearly stated that the respondents 'do not have basic knowledge of the rules of music, which prevents them from performing the simplest rhythmic patterns or melodies, not to mention simple accompaniment' (Majzner, 2018, p. 243). Therefore, we assume that not every school could take part in creating protest songs. Mass audiences, although used to

consuming and evaluating music, could not understand the emotions associated with singing together, because they themselves did not have such experiences.

Authentic protest songs sung by teachers with their recordings lacking any post-production efforts surprised the public. The teachers ignored the dominance of the commodity character of contemporary music and clashed with social expectations towards education as a profession preparing for the challenges of modernity. As a result, figuratively speaking, even if in 2019, children in Poland, like those in the USA and UK, dreamed of becoming youtubers rather than astronauts (however alarming or infantile it was), teachers showed that school will not help reach even such dreams. As one commentator summarised a set of videos: 'You want recognition, so you've arranged it. [And now] most of the society considered you unsuitable for educational work'. This is the strongest recap in public discourse of what happened during the 2019 teachers' strike. It remained unanswered because the strike failed and there was no energy for the conversation or a plan on how to continue it. It is also easy to believe that unfavourable statements are hate, and hate is artificially produced, so commentators are not real people. And there is no one to talk to. However, almost simultaneously during these few days of April 2019, teachers believed it was worth singing to everyone and anyone.

Conclusion

Teachers widely resisted the authorities that tried to degrade them. They risked their image to spread their indignation and to confirm the sincerity of their involvement in the strike. They appealed to the whole society, trying to challenge the dominant narrative and spark joy from their struggle. Within days they switched from following the school curriculum to a radical popular education mode. They really tried to do their best. Yet, they lost. I showed that the lyrics of the protest songs carried messages that people of other professions could identify with. These were both general issues and respect for human dignity; professional and public issues, i.e., those relating to working conditions and the quality of education for the next generations; and concerning the functioning of the state, i.e., a critical analysis of the functioning of the media taking part in the political campaign. The usage of comparisons with animals, common in songs, was a common procedure.

Protest songs, however, did not prove to work as one of the many products distributed on social media platforms. Teachers' aesthetic choices were embarrassing or simply rejected. It was teachers' professional neglect to leave content distribution to itself without instructions to urge consumers to act as citizens.

An analysis of the context in which the protest songs were created and used showed that the teachers were strategically at a disadvantage. They could not break through with the typical, rational discourse in the conditions of the domination of the propaganda directed against them. The songs they used as a tool fell on a soil neglected in terms of music education. Even so, the protest songs have proven their potential, and some lyrics are growing stronger with time.

Recommendations

According to the programme of critical discourse analysis (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000) and the tradition of pedagogical research, the diagnosis should be supplemented with recommendations (or even prescriptions, Toolan, 1997). Since the audience had problems with the visual layer of the songs, one can skip the visual part and publish protest songs, replacing the filmed performance with content of symbolic meaning.

A simpler message makes it easier to focus on the lyrics of the protest songs. Yet, unfavourable comparisons, such as those to animals, may – on the other hand – be tricky. The political arena is a complex field and there are many traps one can fall into. Quoting one of the songs again, we can conclude that 'no matter how hard you try, you will not avoid the social battue' [2]. But it is important to consciously choose the comparisons and vivid images.

Hiding the identity of the performers may reduce the intensity of hate speech. The anonymity of the creators will force comments on what is available to criticism, that is, the new knowledge interests carried by songs. The classification of what constitutes knowledge interests was descriptive (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991, 1998) but our results indicate that communicating organizational issues in protest songs such as giving instructions to listeners and viewers should be a norm. If the songs are to arouse listeners to a dialogue or action, it should be communicated, because it will create a real opportunity to go beyond mere consumption. Eventually, I must partially agree with Scandrett (2014) that reducing popular education to one method, even if it is mass-produced protest songs, is risky. One-method popular education requires high-quality actions, while struggle requires them to be quick. Favourably, if the protest songs created in 2019 will not be forgotten. Based on previous experiences, such songs can contribute to teacher education programmes (Esteve-Faubel et al., 2019; Everhart, 2012; Scandrett, 2014). Thanks to protest songs, the memory of past social struggles come alive in subsequent struggles, which forces participants to think about the next steps, such as the future. After all, research on protest songs is usually conducted because the old protest songs are still humming somewhere, even after the immediate needs pass. Therefore, coming back to the definition of a protest song sketched at the beginning, I should supplement it with a postulate. A protest song is a song performed by protesters that brings back the memory of past struggles and prepares for the next. Then it will be up to the next study to investigate how protest songs affect the individual time perspectives of listeners and performers of these songs. And this, in turn, may contribute to the return of songbooks in contemporary projects of radical popular education.

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Maintaining deep roots: The transformative possibilities of adult literacy education

Bernie Grummel
Maynooth University, Ireland (bernie.Grummell@mu.ie)

Abstract

This article explores on the formative influence of adult popular education in the evolution and continued ethos of adult literacy education in the Republic of Ireland. Freire's work has been influential within Irish adult education and community development, informed by Freirean practices of learner-centredness, experiential learning and group learning. This stands in contrast to Further Education and Training system in which the adult literacy services are based, which has become increasingly professionalised in recent years, susceptible to the ideological values and practices of performativity. The article analyses the findings of research reports on adult literacy which used a mixed methods approach. They reveal how the adult literacy sector holds important spaces for educators to counteract systemic pressures of performativity as they work with learners and their communities through the ethos and pedagogies of adult education, but this is constrained in its radical transformative possibilities.

Keywords: adult literacy education, learner-centredness, performativity, transformative

Introduction

This article explores on the formative influence of Freire's ideas in adult literacy education in the Republic of Ireland, which has allowed it to create a distinctive learner-centred approach. However, this ethos is increasingly constrained by the intense performativity demands of a reconfigured adult education sector as explored later in this article. Freire's use of 'interactive and deeply engaging methodologies, on mutually respectful ways of learning and teaching, on critical methods of teaching and research, on personal relationships, and on meaningful dialogue' (Gadotti, 2017, p. 19) have resonated deeply in particular ways in the Irish context. This approach stands in contrast to other sectors of Further Education and Training (FET), where more individualised, curriculum-

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led and performance-based modes of education dominate. The FET sector in Ireland has become professionalised in recent years, increasingly susceptible to the ideological values and practices of managerialism and performativity (Murray et al., 2014; Grummell & Lynch, 2018). Rising levels of managerialism in education has led to systemic and 'institutional disengagement from social and political action' (Crowther et al., 2006, p. 54), but the adult literacy sector reveals important spaces that still exist for educators to counteract these tendencies as they work with learners and their communities through the pedagogies and ethos of adult education. This article examines how literacy educators in Ireland describe their practice and it considers the scope and boundaries of the collective, transformative possibilities of this form of literacy practice.

Providing an evidence base for adult literacy

This research draws on a significant body of research completed in Ireland by researchers, including the author, over the past five years. This research was commissioned by the main government agencies and representative associations for FET and adult literacy in Ireland to provide an evidence base for national policy. The four key agencies include the state authority responsible for FET in Ireland, An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), the national adult literacy campaigning and training agency, National Adult Literacy Association (NALA), the representative group for adult literacy organisers, the Adult Literacy Association of Ireland (ALOA) and the main provider of FET including adult literacy services in Ireland, the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI). Research includes:

- a report on family literacy completed in 2017-2018 (SOLAS, 2020)
- a numeracy report completed in 2018-2019 (SOLAS 2021b)
- Inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities in adult literacy services report completed in 2018-2020 (SOLAS, 2021c)
- Inclusion of adult literacy in FET research report completed in 2021 (Grummell, 2022)

This represented a very active period by the state agency, SOLAS which commissioned research to inform strategic planning as recommended by the national *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019* (SOLAS, 2014).

The author conducted one report on adult literacy for SOLAS during this time (SOLAS, 2021c), as well as developing a series of policy briefing papers to analyse the themes emerging from the research to support planning within these agencies. The Adult Literacy Organisers Association (ALOA) commissioned the researcher to complete a study about the inclusion of adult literacy across the FET sector in 2021 to inform their strategic planning (Grummell, 2022). Collectively the research provides a rich picture of the ethos, practices and context of adult literacy education in Ireland.

While the research reports on adult literacy were completed by different research teams, all used a mixed methods research approach. The specific research processes are described in each report and included a desk-based review of existing research, literature and policy documents. An online national survey was completed by the 16 regional Education and Training Boards (ETB) adult literacy services for each report to give the national picture of family literacy, numeracy and literacy support for learners with intellectual disabilities respectively. In each case, this was accompanied by qualitative interviews exploring adult literacy practitioners' and learners' experiences of the current context. These interviews provided space to discuss key issues and challenges of adult

literacy, to identify examples of inclusive practice, and discuss institutional and pedagogical approaches to supporting adult literacy. In some cases, focus group interviews and workshops with adult literacy staff, managers and learners were also completed, alongside case studies in adult literacy centres. An overview of the number and type of participants in each research report are listed below.

Table 1. Overview of participants in literacy research reports

Research Report	Overview of research participants
Family Literacy report (SOLAS, 2020)	Online national survey completed by 16 ETBs
	Observation and 3 case studies at 4 family literacy centres
	Individual and focus group interviews with 26 parents/carers and 131 literacy and school staff
Numeracy Report (SOLAS, 2021b)	Online national survey completed by 16 ETBs
	9 individual interviews and 38 focus groups with providers, tutors and learners
Learners with Intellectual Disabilities report (SOLAS, 2021c)	Online national survey completed by 16 ETBs
	Individual and focus group interviews with 19 literacy and disability support staff; 34 literacy learners and 3 case studies of adult literacy services
	59 adult literacy staff participated in research workshops
Adult Literacy Organisers report (Grummell, 2022)	online national survey with 43 staff across FET
	14 Individual interviews with literacy staff, Interviews with 3 FET directors
	48 adult literacy staff participated in workshops

Each research project intended to explore the structures, practices and issues in their respective areas of literacy and numeracy nationwide. Thematic analysis was used to identify emergent issues from the interviews and case studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006), while the national survey data was analysed by descriptive statistical methods. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to explore the cross-cutting themes about adult literacy evident in the research (Fairclough, 2001; Hamilton & Pitt, 2011).

Formative influences on adult literacy in Ireland

While Freirean principles are not always explicitly stated in current adult literacy policies, they are acknowledged as formative in the emergence of a diffuse network of locally organised community education, adult literacy and women's education in Ireland (Bassett et al., 1989; NALA, 2011; Connolly, 2014). This overview seeks to respect the varied ideological and educational positions of these groups whilst distilling their experiences together in a narrative about how adult literacy evolved in Ireland. There has been a long tradition of connections between community development, social movements and women's groups in Ireland (Connolly, 2014). National adult education and literacy representative groups such as AONTAS and NALA emerged from this context, organising adult literacy across the country and advocating for a vision of adult literacy based in collective action and social justice. Many working in these groups were inspired

by feminism and Freirean popular education approaches (Connolly, 2014; Fitzsimons, 2017), carrying this thinking and vision into their work.

> It is a testimony to the clarity of vision and the enduring idealism and commitment of the founders and early workers with NALA that they argued so cogently and effectively for an approach based on social justice and empowerment of learners stemming from the philosophy of Paulo Freire (Vaughan in NALA, 2011, p. 8).

Connolly (2006) described how this social justice approach in adult education was influenced by popular education and Freire's work which had been 'brought to Ireland primarily through the Roman Catholic religious who had been involved in basic education for adults in Latin America and the Philippines' (p. 41). This influence of the liberation theological approach contributed to the emphasis on emancipatory processes and participative learner-centered ethos in Irish adult education (Brady in Connolly, 2021).

The expansion of community education in 1970s Ireland coincided with growing public awareness of adult literacy, prompted by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) broadcast of the adult literacy series *On the Move* into Ireland, and the publication of the Government-commissioned Murphy Report on adult literacy in 1973. Research completed by the Murphy Report gave the first official recognition that literacy issues amongst adults were 'wider than at first thought' (Government Stationary Office, 1973, p. 83). However, enacting national-level action on adult literacy was slow, located as it was in the economically fraught context of the 1973 oil crisis and recessions during the 1970s and 1980s.

Literacy was not a very visible part of the school or post-compulsory education system in Ireland at this time. While the Vocational Education Committees (VEC) had been established in the 1930s to provide vocational education and training in Ireland including post-compulsory education, their main focus was on those under the age of 18 years (Murtagh, 2014). Ward and Ayton describe how Irish adult literacy services in the 1970s and 1980s were 'still run on a voluntary basis with some VECs supporting tuition on the basis of a part-time tutor being allocated a few hours each week as part of the night school to organise the adult literacy tuition' (2019, p. 3). It is only in the later part of the 1980s that specified state funding was provided for adult literacy, initially through the Community and Adult Education Budget in 1985 (NALA, 2011, p. 35-36).

Growing recognition was driven by European level recognition with 1996 declared as the European Year of Lifelong Learning. The publication of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) survey in 1997 was pivotal, which recorded that 25 per cent of the Irish population had basic literacy skills level (Darcovich et al., 1997). This stark figure sparked public outcry, with state recognition and investment in adult literacy following over subsequent decades. The Irish *White Paper on Adult Education* in 2000 identified adult literacy and numeracy as a key priority and established the National Adult Literacy Programme under the National Development Plan (NALA, 2011, p. 60). This was the beginning of the formalisation and professionalisation of the sector. It also marked a shift away from the voluntary, community-orientated and often Freirean-inspired adult education tradition from which the sector had originated. National media campaigns on adult literacy, ongoing collaboration with VECs, the establishment of NALA's literacy website and media, continued research and guidelines on adult literacy, professional development for staff and development of quality assurance frameworks all emerged during these decades. Greater integration of adult literacy into the national landscape of post-compulsory FET sector was evident through its growth in the VECs. This was part of a repositioning of adult literacy into the formal structures of the State's education and training systems.

Adult literacy practitioners attempted to actively maintain a clear grounding in the ethos of community and adult education from which it has emerged. National guidelines such as NALA's *Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work* emphasised that 'Freire's view is that developing skills of reflection and analysis enables students to take social action to improve conditions for themselves and their communities' (1985, p. 15). Hope and Timmel's (1995) *Training for Transformation* series of practitioner handbooks were influential in spreading Freirean approaches across Irish adult and community education, especially principles of learner-centredness, experiential learning and community-based praxis. Training for Transformation was initiated in Ireland by members of religious congregations who had been 'involved in overseas development work that was influenced by liberation theology… and [was] a translation of the theories and ideas of the educationalist Paolo Freire into a working methodology' (Fitzsimons, 2017, p. 81-82). Inspired by these influences, adult education and literacy agencies across Ireland advocated for the recognition of a learner-centred approach in adult literacy that recognised learners 'as equal and knowledgeable partners in a learning process where they had the right to explore their needs and interests, set their own goals and decide how they wished to learn' (Ward & Ayton, 2019, p. 3).

Government funding for literacy and numeracy grew as the national Adult Literacy Programme expanded in the 2000s to work with a wider network of adult learners from target groups (such as Travellers, Refugees and Asylum seekers and people who are unemployed) and activities (including Family Literacy, Return to Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages). The VECs built an extensive network of Adult Literacy Services with increased provision, personnel and funding being developed over these decades. Smaller community and adult education centres also continued to provide adult literacy, often working as independent centres with a more explicit radical education ethos (Fitzsimons, 2017)

The formal consolidation of the Adult Literacy Services in FET over these decades was reflected in the continued national policy focus, which culminated in the publication of the first *Adult Literacy for Life Strategy* for Ireland in 2021. This 10 year adult literacy strategy is a cross-Government, cross-economy and cross-society approach that positions literacy, numeracy and digital literacy as key competences to help create a more equal, inclusive Ireland (GoI, 2021, p. 33). This reflects the move across government and international policy towards inclusive and integrated policy models based in the wider social, economic and political context.

Current structure and provision of adult literacy in Ireland

The Education and Training Boards (ETBs) are the national providers of post-compulsory Further Education and Training, including the majority of adult literacy in the country, alongside a smaller range of adult and community education groups. They evolved from the VECs, restructured by the Irish state into 16 regional ETBs in 2013. The Adult Literacy Services work within ETBs across different areas, centres and platforms, with multiple partners in the statutory, charitable and community spheres. 27,168 adults accessed local adult literacy services in ETBs in 2021 across a range of programmes (SOLAS, 2021a, p. 12). They also coordinate literacy support across the ETBs to different training and work-based learning programmes (ALOA, 2021, p. 6-7).

The Adult Literacy Services operate under the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, under the auspices of SOLAS. These guidelines define adult literacy as

> the provision of basic education, including reading, writing and numeracy skills, and ICT for adults who wish to improve their literacy and numeracy competencies to enhance their participation in personal, social and economic life (DES, 2013, p. 3).

The more recent *Adult Literacy for Life* strategy describes literacy as:

> all of the foundational skills related to reading, writing, maths and technology as well as having the confidence to use them. Literacy should be seen through the lens of the personal, emotional, social and psychological well-being that it provides (GoI, 2021, p. 19).

The functional nature of these statutory definitions of adult literacy as the individual skills and competencies is noteworthy, especially in contrast to socially situated definitions of adult literacy used by national literacy and adult education organisations (NALA, 2020, ELINET, 2016). Functional literacy approaches have been widely criticised for their normative assumptions about literacy standards, and its positioning of responsibility at the level of the individual learner, removing any sense of how people learn in social or political contexts (Hamilton & Pitt, 2011).

An adult education ethos in Irish literacy education

Throughout this increasing formalisation of adult literacy within the FET system, literacy education in Ireland has maintained a learner-centred approach that placed the learner and their experiences at the heart of education practice. The national literacy agency, NALA describes adult literacy in Ireland as based on a 'student centred approach where the needs, concerns and experience of the students are the focus of learning, rather than an externally structured and enforced curriculum (2020, p. 51). Similarly, Bailey describes a learning-centred curriculum where 'everyone involved learns through taking part in the process of curriculum development' (quoted in ELINET, 2016, p. 18). The role of the adult literacy tutor and system is seen as facilitating and supporting a learner-centred ethos through a responsive pedagogy and practices (ALOA, 2021). This approach was influenced by Freire's claim that there is no teaching without learning and 'more important than knowing how to teach is knowing how the student learns' (Gadotti, 2017, p. 25). This learner-centred approach stands in contrast to the subject and curriculum-centred emphasis of other forms of education (Murray et al., 2014). It marks an important difference of emphasis where the learner remains at the heart of the learning process rather than being driven by curriculum or subject imperatives.

Adult literacy in Ireland does not explicitly follow a Freirean literacy 'process of decodification and codification, of collective problem solving and discovery, [which] allows learners to develop the tools to teach themselves how to read and write' (Schugurensky, 2011, p. 62). However, it has been strongly shaped by Freirean values which has enabled it to hold a learner-centred ethos at its heart. Freire's problem-posing or emancipatory model of education emphasises the development of 'critical consciousness; the creative capacities; and the confidence, skills, and attitudes to intervene in the transformation of the social world' (Schugurensky, 2011, p. 72). Personal transformation is an important element of adult learning and is central to the learning capacities that adult literacy supports. The extent to which learning transformation permeates from personal to socio-political levels is crucial in an emancipatory approach. It raises the key question of whether literacy education in Ireland supports adults to challenge the political, economic and social conditions of their lives, and become collective agents for change of the structures and conditions of their lives. The rising

focus and ideology of performativity in the FET system to which adult literacy services belong, results in adult literacy being limited in its politicised and emancipatory intent.

A constant challenge for literacy education is how it is moulded and squeezed by these wider imperatives of the education system and broader socio-political context which supports a functional view of adult literacy for individual improvement and employability. The focus on personal transformation is often transmuted into individual employability and development growth rather than capacity-building for social and political transformation. Adult literacy offers an interesting case study of an education service that operates as a smaller part of a larger FET system to form strong webs of transformative learning between literacy learners and staff in individual and group learning contexts. The scale and extent to which social and political transformation can occur within these small spaces and relationships of learning becomes a vital issue which is considered throughout this article. Of question is whether it is a critical literacy 'which ties pedagogical practices in different spheres of social life to configurations of power. Pedagogical practice becomes a political act' (Mayo, 1995, p. 363). This question is explored below through the constituent elements of learner-centredness, impact of schooling, group learning, responsive pedagogies and relationships of learning.

Centrality of learner-centredness

Adult literacy education in Ireland traditionally has been premised in a learner-centred ethos and pedagogies that begins with and builds on a learner's experiences and knowledge throughout the learning journey (Shor & Freire, 1987a). Adult literacy practitioners emphasise participative and democratic learning processes, with learners encouraged to actively collaborate in decision-making about their learning (Grummell, 2022, p. 29). In this sense, it has followed Freire in putting 'the social reality, the vocabulary, and the experience of the learners at the center of the literacy curriculum' (Schugurensky, 2011, p. 58). In many cases, learners are actively involved in choosing the topics and material covered. Literacy staff are deeply committed to literacy education and its learner-centred approach, appreciative and knowledgeable about the pedagogical process they co-create with learners (SOLAS, 2020, 2021b).

> Literacy is something that changes and evolves depending on the situation that a person is in on a given day, on a given week. If they are unemployed, if they are working, if they are going to the doctors or have to meet a teacher… that's what we need to work on […] we're learner-centred (SOLAS, 2021c, p.75).

As I have already noted, while the extent and type of problem-posing and political action in these learning relationships can be questioned, the Adult Literacy Service's commitment to learner-centredness gives it a strong and unique basis in Irish FET which is reminiscent of adult education's work at local community level in small ways and spaces. It is an approach to learner-centredness that facilitates us 'to view our immediate experience with a critical perspective…[which] enables individuals and societies to challenge power' (Allais, 2014, p. 247). Crowther et al. (2006) identifies three aspects of popular education necessary for social and educational transformation that offer useful parameters to explore learning:

- its curriculum comes out of the concrete experience and material interests of people in communities of resistance and struggle

- its pedagogy is collective, focused primarily on group as distinct from individual learning and development
- it attempts, wherever possible, to forge a direct link between education and social action (Crowther et al., 2006, p. 54-55).

While there is evidence of curriculum emerging from the experience and interests of people and a collective group-based pedagogy, the extent to which the third component occurs has to be critically questioned. Much of literacy education emerges from the concrete life experiences and material interests of people's lives. This creates conditions of learning that resonate directly for learners, for example placing abstract mathematical concepts in a real life context of 'the angles in a roof and what you need for the pitch to work and so on. Then it meant something, but when it's done in school with just a blank triangle' (Grummell, 2022, p. 64). It highlights the significance of 'literacies learning arises directly out of, and connects specifically with, the issues that the groups are exploring. It is therefore embedded in real-life situations that have relevance and importance to the learner (Tett & Maclachlan, 2008, p. 670).

Negative burden of schooling and subsequent exclusions

Many literacy learners carry heavy burdens of oppression from negative schooling experiences and subsequent socio-economic, cultural and political misrecognition. Literacy learners describe negative experiences from schooling and a lack of confidence from lengthy absences from learning. This has a devastating impact on their self-belief in their capacity to learn, with profound consequences for their livelihoods, opportunities and sense of self (Carpentieri et al., 2010; Feeley & Hegarty, 2013). This is echoed through numerous accounts of damaging and often brutal experiences of schooling in the records of Irish cultural and social life (McCabe, 1995), as well as in research literature (Quinlan, 2021). It is often intertwined with structural and cultural inequalities of class, gender, ethnicity and disability that intersect across people's lives (Baker et al., 2016; Lynch, 2021). Duckworth and Tett (2019) describe how adult education approaches can validate learners'

> experience and deconstructed the old knowledge, where they blamed themselves for being 'thick' and 'stupid' because they struggled in literacies and instead substituted it with the construction of new, shared knowledge where they were able to see the inequalities and violence in their lives this had stemmed from. (Duckworth & Tett, 2019, p. 372)

The ability of adult literacy to create conditions for collective learning and capacity-building is striking. Literacy education has been an ongoing presence in the Irish adult education landscape, offered in every community across the country through the ETB centres and other adult education providers. It has carved an identity within education that is quite distinctive to the more radical basis of community education (Fitzsimons, 2017) and social movements (Finnegan, 2019). By Freirean popular education standards, the scale of activity in these literacy projects is at a more personal and localised scale rather than being strongly politicised, working with individuals and groups who are learning within and about their community and living contexts. These literacy activities are striking in their strong ethos of learner-centredness and group learning, their embeddedness in local contexts and the potential for personal and social transformation.

Mutuality and solidarity of group learning

Adult literacy is often group-based, beginning in individual or small group tuition through unaccredited programmes that respond to the conditions of learners' lives. The group context of literacy learning is acknowledged as vital, as people 'learn in groups where diversity is welcomed [and] it provides for rich learning opportunities (SOLAS, 2020, p. 57). It provides a solidarity or a 'being with' which is an 'intervention as a subject of what happens in the world' (Freire, 2001, p. 72-73). Group tuition can provide the conditions for 'collective consciousness-raising that can enable people to talk back to the power that has constructed them as wanting' (Tett & Maclachlan, 2008, p. 668).

In an education system increasingly dominated by systems imperatives and performance metrics, education spaces – particular these small, local and relatively unseen spaces – can sustain vital forms and possibilities of 'talking back' collectively to power. They hold people's life experiences at the heart of the learning, offering potential for transformative social learning that engages with people's material conditions, supporting the development of critical thinking and building relationships and collective identities as learners.

Responsive and multi-modal pedagogies

The literacy reports identify specific capacities as essential for adult literacy tutors:

- being learner-centred
- creating caring relationships to improve learners' confidence and build capacities
- using responsive and creative pedagogies and forms of assessment

These are echoed by international research about the experiences of numeracy tutors (Oughton, 2018; Swain, 2005) and literacy tutors (Crowther et al., 2010, Allatt, 2020). Literacy staff describe a deep level of engagement with programme design and pedagogical processes, spending time within learning context to discuss and develop learning which responds to each learner's needs with a 'huge amount of flexibility required in adult literacy' (SOLAS, 2021c, p. 65).

This deeply responsive and caring pedagogy is congruent with the learner-centred ethos of adult literacy. While other forms of education make similar claims, their capacity to care is often undermined by the demands of curricular, assessment and systems imperatives (Lynch et al., 2012; Giroux, 2022). Most literacy education begins with a needs assessment and co-development of a curriculum based on learner's life experiences to ensure that learning starts from the 'vocabulary used by learners in their daily lives and not the words chosen by curriculum developers' (Freire & Guimarães, 1984 in Schugurensky, 2011, p. 13). This learner-centred approach is crucial for literacy and is key in its potential to move towards transformative learning and action. In an era when educators across schooling and higher education describe overwhelming pressures of performativity, outputs-driven approaches and measurement (Clarke et al., 2000; Lynch et al., 2012), this research indicates that adult literacy has managed to maintain a learner-centred ethos and a caring and learner-responsive pedagogy.

Literacy tutors describe a wide range of multi-modal and creative pedagogies they draw on to support learners, includes arts, music, games, cooking, photographs, digital and historical research. This is a deeply 'interdisciplinary and participatory approach to knowledge production' (Schugurensky, 2011, p. 37). These allow people to experience

learning in an interactive way that is not dependent solely on reading or writing. This matches the 'creative ingenuity to adjust the pedagogy for each new group of students' that Freire describes (Freire & Shor, 1987b, p. 28).

> It's quite a task to ensure that everyone is getting what they [need] but it is what literacy tutors can do, that's what we are trained to do and it is different to any other [FET] services in that respect (SOLAS, 2021c, p. 70)

Building relationships of learning

Literacy education in Ireland holds a strong sense of the importance of building relationships of trust between tutors and learners, and within learner groups as a core part of transformative learning. Central in this relational work is the capacity to create 'trust in the room… and then letting people kind of come forward themselves' (SOLAS, 2020, p. 74). Tutors' 'efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in men [sic] and their creative power. To achieve this, he must be a partner of the students in his relations with them' (Freire, 1972, p. 49). Many tutors were conscious that this relational work was not solely within the literacy session but also involves supporting the inclusion of learners in the social life of the education centre.

Highly developed affective capabilities, with personal qualities of empathy and patience are identified as essential qualities for literacy tutors (SOLAS, 2021a, p. 50). Staff work empathetically in relating and communicating with students to build capacity and independence amongst learners. Duckworth and Smith describe how creating a safe learning environment is premised in 'an awareness of the historical positioning of the learners and their communities' which has resulted in prior inequitable experiences of schooling and society (2018, p. 171). Integral to this is building an awareness of the political conditions of schooling and its consequent inequities throughout people's lives. This can occur through a 'problem-posing education aims at a constant unveiling of reality and power structures (through the process of conscientization) and at the development of creative power to transform those structures' (Schugurensky, 2011, p. 72).

The Family Literacy Report describes how 'family literacy programmes respect local, vernacular language and literacy' which is essential to supporting 'schools and parents in reducing the cultural gap between them' (SOLAS, 2020, p. 35). The significance of these relationships of learning are not well recognised in education practice or research, and

> tends to be an invisible and unrecognised part of the teaching process. The skills and time involved in making good connections with colleagues and learners are taken for granted… and left very much to the good will of those involved. (SOLAS, 2020, p. 79)

This lack of recognition also negates the wider impact of adult literacy work in people's lives and communities. The Family Literacy Report described how 'parents establish a new learning identity and become integrated into a solidary parent groups and often into the wider community (SOLAS, 2020, p. 101). For learners with intellectual disabilities who often have limited options open to them after school, the Adult Literacy Services offers greater independence not only through literacy and numeracy learning, but in giving people the right to decide what they will learn, to travel to centres independently, to socialise beyond their immediate context and to seek transformative possibilities for their futures. Respectful and trusting relationships are core to the interdependency that Freire emphasises (1972). These elements of socio-political and cultural recognition are

acknowledged as key elements of transformative education, but difficult to achieve in a system that stifles the learner-centred, collective and caring relationships of adult literacy.

Performativity and literacy education

The power of Freire's work lies in his recognition of how broader social and political imperatives impact on the transformative potential of learning (Freire, 1972). While elements of literacy education are clearly grounded in principles of learner-centredness, collective group-based pedagogy and personal and social transformation, educational practices have been severely curtailed by the growth of performativity and reporting requirements imposed through the annual performance targets in Irish FET (Redmond, 2015; SOLAS, 2021). Performativity is understood as 'a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation' that monitors, guides and transforms education in a systemic way (Ball, 2006, p. 144). It has been a core part of a new managerial culture associated with neoliberalism which prioritised outputs and targets, measurement by performance indicators and emphasised the language of choice, competition and clients across the public sector (Clarke, 2001; Lynch et al. 2012).

New managerialism became increasingly evident in Irish further education as a mode of regulation when the sector was reformed in the wake of the Further Education and Training Act 2013 (Murray et al., 2014; Lynch & Grummell, 2018). This included requirements for the professional registration of FET educators through the Teaching Council in 2013, the introduction of national QQI accreditation framework in 2012 and annual performance agreements introduced in the SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017-2019 to fulfil EU targets on lifelong learning (SOLAS, 2017). While many of these measures were welcomed, the neoliberal ideology framing them privileges market-driven criteria of employability and an outputs-orientated approach to education (Lynch et al. 2012; Allais, 2014). The oppressive qualities of the neoliberal capitalism restricts the transformative possibilities of learning (Giroux, 2021). The Adult Literacy Service in Ireland is particularly impacted by the setting of performance targets for increased numbers of learners and progression rates. This includes targets for a 10 per cent increase in the number of literacy learners achieving accreditation at QQI Levels 1 and 2 annually and a 10 per cent increase in certification levels from courses (SOLAS, 2017, p. 16).

Managers in literacy services spoke about the pressures brought to bear upon them in the annual discussions about their Strategic Performance Agreements, describing how 'students count against you when you keep them for literacy maintenance purposes' (SOLAS, 2021c, p.75). This becomes a crucial issue as achieving this performance target is linked to annual resourcing and staffing of the services. It places pressure on staff, especially management, to focus attention on targets and progression rates rather than learner needs. Managers in literacy describe how they try to fulfil the reporting requirements through 'strategic compliance', but similar to Mayo et al.'s research in the UK this was increasingly difficult to manage (2007, p. 674-675). Included in this pressure is the persistent tension of using text- and numbers-based data management systems to record outputs. Literacy staff also describe how the language and processes of data systems are experienced as deeply oppressive and disempowering by learners and how it undermines trust in the learning relationship (SOLAS, 2020, 2021b; SOLAS 2021c).

The disparity between the use of data management systems and performance targets versus the reality of people's varied learning rhythms and literacy journeys is a continuous source of tension in literacy provision. Newman highlights how evidence-based policy-making creates a 'hierarchy of evidence, which favours some forms of knowledge over equally valid forms' (2017, p. 218). Allais (2014) argues that the 'complexity, structure

and organization in bodies of knowledge' (p. 192) is disempowered by a learning outcomes framework which sees knowledge as 'something that can be broken into little bits which can be selected and combined at will' (2014, p. xx). Literacy staff echo this, describing how the complex lifelong learning is not easily recognised within formal monitoring systems of FET. They recount how this learning is subsumed within the narrower frame of 'transversal skills' as 'core learning outcomes… native language, communications, mathematics, digital media, employability and citizenship competences, critical thinking, problem solving and making arguments' (QQI, 2018, p. 6).

The focus on increasing numbers and progression of learners ignores much of the interpersonal capacity and solidarity building that is a central element of literacy learning. It flattens learning into bite-sized facts disembodied from the social impact of knowledge (Allais, 2014). Crucially, it silences potential for conscientisation and politicalised action (Freire, 1972, 1972a). The recognition of capabilities that are important in adult literacy, such as learner confidence, group work, relationship building, critical thinking and social action are vital for transformative learning. Flattening these capabilities into a list of outputs that focuses primarily on attainment and progression rates ignores the richness and diversity of personal and social transformative learning amongst learners. It also channels learning into linear pathways that ignore the realities of the learning trajectory that can occur during a person's life in a series of interruptions, pauses and re-engagements.

> Measuring progress is one of the hardest areas … because what seems intangible can be so rich for [the learner] … The progression might be that the learner, who had never been in a learning setting now comes in every week, engages fully, participates (Adult Literacy staff in SOLAS, 2021c, p. 75).

Literacy staff argue for greater recognition of the role of non- and unaccredited programmes in preparing learners to move towards accredited programmes and different forms of learning (SOLAS, 2020, p. 51). Greater consideration is needed about what learning progression is, the timeframe for learning to occur and whether progression can be measured through the predefined levels of qualifications frameworks which are not suited to the diverse learning rhythms and temporalities of literacy learning. Carpentieri noting 'that learners may be 'dipping out' [of learning] for a while, generally because of other responsibilities… Inconsistent does not necessarily mean non-persistent' (2007, p. 20). The imposition of set timeframes and predefined boundaries of outputs on learning in the data management systems is a major restriction on learning imposed by systems requirements rather than learners' needs.

Critically informed research and transformative education

The lack of recognition of the elements of transformative learning in the formal performance metrics of the FET system is deeply problematic for literacy learning. Literacy staff report how they resist this in different ways including through creative means of supporting learners (SOLAS, 2021b, 2021c) and continually noting their concerns in research and consultations. Acknowledgement of this by the statutory bodies is evident, especially in terms of current efforts to develop qualitative learning indicators and varied progression pathways. However, the data management system and annual reporting requirements remain in the FET sector to date (SOLAS, 2020, 2021c).

Giving voice to these tensions and struggles to gain greater recognition has also been a key part of what adult literacy staff, representative organisations and learner forums do

as a form of advocacy and collective action on behalf of the sector. Significantly, this can offer hope where one of the tasks of the educator is 'to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be' (Freire, 2004, p. 9).

Representative associations maintain a learner-centred ethos in an attempt to hold a sense of the politicised and transformative potential of literacy education and engage in political advocacy on behalf of learners, albeit in a system increasingly dominated by performativity requirements. Advocacy has promoted a socially situated view of literacy as having socio-cultural, economic, political, cognitive and affective dimensions, highlighting how it is deeply linked with the rights of individuals and communities to have their voice and to learn (NALA, 2012, pp. 6-7). This rights-based approach shifts attention from an approach of what learners might (be assumed to) lack to foreground people's interests and active realisation of their learning capabilities and collective political agency (Freire, 1972). However, it is limited in terms how it engages with a deeper problematisation of social, economic, and political conditions of learning. Fitzsimons' research on community education in Ireland noted that 35% of community education practitioners expressed a radical/ critical education philosophy (with 17% specifically citing a Freirean approach). While this is a significant number, equally significant is the remaining number who expressed a humanistic or no philosophical alliance (Fitzsimons, 2017, p. 119). While similar national level research has not been conducted in other areas of adult education in Ireland, the literacy reports do reveal that a substantial number of literacy staff expressing radical and critical education philosophies, influenced by Freirean traditions of adult literacy. This is clearly evident in their pedagogy and work with learners as presented earlier, but systems imperatives constrain its potential to support deeper critique and transformative action.

Conclusion: sustaining spaces, conditions and possibilities for transformative education

Adult literacy education in Ireland has been formed and still maintains an adult education ethos inspired by Freirean principles which has enabled it to sustain a distinctive pedagogical approach. It is a form of learning which is open to all and guided by its learner-centred values. It is based in learning from practice that emerges from people's material conditions, is grounded in strong relationships of learning that creates transformative possibilities and supports reflections on the conditions of people's lives. It holds a caring and relational pedagogy which is crucial for learning and a precondition for transformative action. It has several key criteria of a Freirean educative process including a dialogic and participative methodology, use of creative methods that are responsive to learners' needs, a democratic relationship between learner and tutor, and a curriculum that originates from the material conditions of learners' lives. What is not as evident is the shift towards problematisation, and how it moves to 'make the connection between reading and writing, on the one hand, and their role as agents for social change, on the other' through the process of praxis 'as reflection and action…upon the world in order to transform it' (Schugurensky, 2011, p. 57). It lacks the explicit focus on the politicalised nature of education and the democratic intent of 'Popular education [that] assumes a view from below' (Walters and von Kotze, 2019, p. 8). This lack of clarity about philosophical intent is reflected in the mixture of humanistic, radical and no philosophies held by adult and community educators in Ireland (Fitzsimons, 2017).
Therefore, literacy learning often remains as a locally-orientated form of consciousness-raising rather than conscientisation, based in a caring and learner-responsive pedagogy

that empowers individual learning, but not necessarily the 'deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes [learners'] lives and of their capacity to transform that reality' (Freire, 1972b, p. 51). It holds value in supporting staff to maintain a learner-centred group-based pedagogy and the adult literacy system to retain a strong learner-centred ethos in the face of the intense demands for performance measurement outputs. It creates a context of democratic learning that can provide the conditions for 'collective consciousness-raising that can enable people to talk back to the power that has constructed them as wanting' (Tett & Maclachlan, 2008, p. 668). This is vital for learners who have been oppressed by previous schooling and societal exclusions. These are all elemental aspects of Freirean approaches to adult education and are held centrally in the practices and values of the adult literacy field.

However, this ethos is constrained by the outputs-based forms of knowledge demanded by current data management systems in FET. As Lynch reminds us '[f]ocusing on measurable outputs has the ultimate impact of defining human relationships in [learning] in transactional terms, as the means to an end – the end being high performance and productivity' (Lynch, 2015, p. 16). The continual pressures of linear and outputs-orientated models of attainment and progression in the Annual Performance Agreements raises key dilemmas for practitioners and policy-makers across FET to consider in terms of its implications for education and learning. Lynch notes how neoliberal pressures in education subordinate 'trust, integrity, care and solidarity … to regulation, control and competition' (Lynch, 2015, p. 16). The lack of a strong sense of the politicalised nature of its pedagogy potentially makes adult literacy education susceptible to the current performativity demands, but yet, its emphasis on learner-centredness and a responsive pedagogy has enabled adult literacy to hold ground. The emphasis on strong relational, collaborative, creative and transformative aspects enable adult literacy education to retain small spaces, conditions and possibilities for transformative education that is vital. However this needs to be grounded in a structural analysis and praxis that recognises that education is a political act 'based on an emancipatory rationality, nurturing both critical awareness and learners' capacity to liberate themselves from oppressive situations and to affect social change' (Schugurensky, 2011, p. 58).

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Acting against health inequalities through popular education: A Scottish case-study

Lyn Tett
University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom (lyn.tett@ed.ac.uk)

Abstract

This article investigates if health inequalities can be reduced using popular education (PE) methods. It argues that, although ill health may be experienced as a private trouble, it is embedded in broader social and political processes and should be seen as a public issue. It illuminates this concept of health by using student writings from the Health Issues in the Community (HIIC) project. These writings illustrate the impact of unemployment, lack of facilities, food poverty etc. on people's physical and mental health and the action they have taken to challenge and reduce these inequalities. It is argued that PE contributes to human flourishing, but the educator must resist the power they have to steer students in particular directions. It concludes that whilst PE cannot abolish health inequalities, HIIC participants have taken small steps to change existing realities and so have challenged oppressive social relations.

Keywords: power, experiential knowledge, democracy, health, popular education

Introduction

This article investigates if health inequalities can be reduced using popular education methods whereby people identify, challenge, and act against inequalities in their communities. Popular education's ideology has been influenced by Gramsci's (1971) insights into how the state and the ruling class use cultural institutions to maintain power in capitalist societies. This hegemonic power restricts access to 'powerful knowledge'

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and so education's role is to develop experiences that promote critical thinking. This means that the processes it uses should 'situate lived experience within a historic context to understand and acknowledge the experiences, constraints, and privileges of different groups' (Bengle & Sorensen, 2017, p. 320).

As many authors have pointed out (e.g., Jara, 2010) the word 'popular' in popular education does not mean 'populist' but 'of the people' referring to 'poor' or 'ordinary' people as opposed to the well-off. Popular education aims to start from where people are and so responds to specific political, economic, and social contexts that 'foreshadow present and future' (Bengle & Sorensen, 2017, p. 320). Kane (2010) argues that this means its aims can range from very modest changes in contexts where communities are poorly organized and lack political consciousness, to large-scale political issues where progressive states become involved, as in the 'the radicalizing contexts of Venezuela and Bolivia in the late 2000s' (p. 278).

This article is set in Scotland where popular education lies in the middle ground, often acting as a support to social movements already engaged with conventional political issues such as challenging resource inequalities. Popular education in Scotland offers an alternative philosophy and practice to mainstream adult education. For example, rather than having a pre-set curriculum it builds the learning programme from students' lived experiences because these provide rich resources through which to interrogate existing oppressive conditions. Moreover, the ideology is based on 'deepening democracy and improving the quality of life in a post- materialist society, rather than struggling for basic material needs' (Kane, 2013, p. 89). Popular education is mainly delivered by staff working for Scottish state-funded organisations as well as some based in civil society organisations (CSOs). However, as Fragoso and Guimarães (2010, p. 19) argued, most CSOs seem 'trapped in a net of technical and formalised procedures and evaluation obligations' and so there is little to distinguish them from state funded organisations.

There are many ways of conceptualising popular education, and I have found Schugurensky's (2000, p. 517) analysis of its four main features helpful. These are summarised below:

1. a rejection of adult education as neutral, which involves recognizing the relationship between knowledge and power and between structure and agency in ways that challenge oppressive social relations.
2. an explicit political commitment to work with marginalised people, and to assist social movements in fostering progressive social and economic change.
3. a participatory and dialogical pedagogy that focuses on the collective, challenges people's unexamined experiences, and promotes an integration of popular and systematised (scientific) knowledge.
4. an attempt to constantly relate education to social action, linking critical reflection with research, mobilisation, and organisation strategies.

These tenets show how popular education differs from other forms of adult education where the focus is often on the national productivity agendas that are in the interests of industry, leading to a narrow skills-focused curriculum that is expected to deliver employment-ready workers for the neoliberal state (see Allatt & Tett, 2019). On the other hand, practitioners of popular education are attempting to contribute to human flourishing and so must be clear about their values. As Crowther and colleagues (1999, p. 4) point out, this means that they need to have an analysis of the nature of inequality, exploitation, and oppression that 'has nothing to do with helping the "disadvantaged" or the

management of poverty [but] has everything to do with the struggle for a more just and egalitarian social order'.

In Scotland, an example of popular education that has such an analysis is the Adult Learning Project (ALP) that operated in Edinburgh for over forty years. The project was underpinned by the ideas of Paulo Freire (1972) and used a 'problem-posing' method of identifying and exploring social issues that were relevant to the community, leading to programmes of learning and cultural action. The process used to investigate and pose problems was based on a participatory dialogical method that had four main stages: investigating social reality; coding and decoding that reality and identifying social problems; developing learning programmes; identifying action outcomes (Reeves, 2020, p. 2). Overall, ALP 'established an action/reflection cycle, and a partnership between the local member participants and the workers who managed and drove it on' (ibid., p. 11). Learning projects included programmes on the family, schooling, Scottish identity, health, women's studies, parenting in other countries and media studies. These in turn led to the creation, funding and management of a photography workshop, writers' workshops, a parents' centre, a skills exchange, and an unemployed workers' centre (ibid., pp. 6-7).

Another important contribution to conceptualising popular education comes from bell hooks. She argued that we should 'teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students [...] if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin' (hooks, 1994, p. 13) and sees education as 'enabling' and as 'enhancing our capacity to be free' (ibid., p. 4). From her perspective the classroom is 'a location of possibility [where we can] […] labour for freedom' rather than a space that is inimical to popular education as others have argued. She adds that these possibilities will only be realised if we approach this work with 'an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom' (ibid., p. 207). This approach to popular education provides both a vision of what education might achieve and a pedagogy of how it might be undertaken. It also shows the importance of including emotional as well as practical outcomes and demonstrates that classrooms can be a potential site for learning. As Wiklund (2022, p. 2) points out, however, the sites in which programmes take place reflect the 'paradoxes and difficulties of popular educational solidarity work that is made possible by the same world order that is being criticised'.

I will draw on these conceptualisations of popular education to explore a project that prioritises action against inequalities in health called Health Issues in the Community (HIIC). Good health makes a crucial difference to people's quality of life, but those that are poor and oppressed are much more likely to experience ill health (Marmot et al, 2020). How health inequalities are understood, however, lead to very different solutions so in the next section I explore what these competing conceptualisations mean for popular education.

Conceptualising health inequalities

Inequalities in health have been increasing over the last decade in the UK, USA, and many European countries (Forster et al, 2018) and these have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Bambra & Payne, 2021). The common way of conceptualising health inequalities is to assert that they are caused by an individual's lifestyle because, for example, they have an unhealthy diet or do not exercise regularly. Research shows, however, that poor health and premature death is linked to the structural factors of inequality, poverty, and social class that has long-term adverse consequences for physical

and mental health (Segerstrom & Miller, 2004). For example, research has found consistent associations between the type of employment that makes high demands but gives employees little control, and stress. In addition, these work situations cause other conditions such as coronary heart disease, hypertension, obesity, and psychological ill health (Bambra, 2011). Universal medical services also tend to be taken up and used by the more advantaged social groups and so are less available to those who need them most. For example, dental services are very limited in poorer areas. This 'inverse care law' (Tudor Hart, 1971) operates because more advantaged groups have better access to resources of time, finance, and coping skills than those who are poor. It means that advantaged people can avail themselves of advice and help in giving up smoking or eating a healthy diet, and in accessing preventive services such as immunization, dental check-ups, and cervical screening (Macintyre, 2007, p. 8).

The place where people live also has a fundamental impact on the quality and meaning of their day-to-day life and health. These psycho-social conditions include social relations with people, the physical fabric of the locality and the local geographies of services and facilities. Research provides strong evidence that living in disadvantaged environments can produce a sense of powerlessness and collective threat among residents, leading to chronic stressors that damage both physical and mental health (Biondi & Zanndino, 1997).

This means that, as Marmot and colleagues (2020, p. 5) have pointed out, the health of the population is not just about how well health services function but is closely linked to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and the resulting inequities in power, money, and resources. These social determinants of health are also associated with feelings of lack of control over one's life leading to greater levels of stress and anxiety at the individual level and lack of social cohesion and trust at the community level. Ill health is strongly related to poverty because the poorer someone is, the less likely they are to live in good quality housing, have time and money for leisure activities, feel secure at home or work, be employed, or afford to eat healthy food (Bambra & Payne, 2021, p. 266). So, although ill health may be experienced as a private trouble, it is embedded in broader social and political processes and should be seen instead as a public issue (Mills, 1959).

It appears to be difficult for policymakers to recognise the political and social determinants of health, and to make the connections between the psychosocial effects of people's lack of control over the social and material conditions of their lives, and poor health (Tett, 2010). However, if health is conceptualised as a public issue, then contesting official definitions of health through popular education can help communities to define and address their own health issues. In the next section I examine a particular project – Health Issues in the Community (HIIC) – to show what can be achieved using this conceptualisation of health inequalities.

Health issues in the community

Health Issues in the Community (HIIC) is a pack of materials that comprise a sixteen-week student programme together with a tutor-training course that identifies how the materials could be used. It is run by tutors across Scotland who are mostly community education practitioners that are experienced in working within and for communities and are familiar with the model of popular education developed by the ALP project outlined above (Reeves, 2020). This was because the ALP project had created a number of self-sustaining programmes that had empowered community members to tackle the issues that concerned them and so provided a powerful model for other popular education projects.

HIIC was particularly influenced by the participatory dialogical method adopted by ALP and the resulting learning and cultural action cycle. The HIIC programme is underpinned by a model of health that assumes that damaging social experiences produce ill-health so remedial action needs to be social. This view of health focuses on the socio-economic risk conditions such as poverty, unemployment, pollution, poor housing, and power imbalances that cause ill-health.

The programme materials help tutors to guide participants' understanding of what affects their health and the health of their communities (see Community Health Exchange, 2022). Its objectives are to help participants understand the social model of health, the causes of health inequalities, the relationship between knowledge, power, participation, and decision making. Its didactic strategies are to use popular education approaches that draw on the philosophy and approach of Paulo Freire. Freire (1972) argues that it is not enough for people to come together in dialogue to gain knowledge of their social reality. Rather they must act together to reflect upon that reality and so transform it through further action and critical reflection. The HIIC programme is focused on helping participants to widen and deepen awareness of health issues and challenge their causes using dialogical, problem-posing methods. It also discusses a variety of strategies through which participants can communicate the action outcomes that they have identified to their communities. These include using presentations, discussions, or other creative methods such as art, drama or song to disseminate their findings to a variety of audiences. HIIC also encourages students to discuss the social problems they have unearthed and take action through engaging with their elected representatives and others to push for change.

The perspective taken by HIIC is that an important way that inequalities in health can be tackled is to find ways of strengthening individuals and communities so that they can join together for mutual support. Moving from an individual solution to one that comes from collective action is the next step in the process of analysis, but this usually needs the intervention of 'skilled helpers' (see Brookfield, 2000). This is the role that the HIIC tutor plays by helping participating students work out what they wish to change, identifying the problems, finding the root causes of these problems, and practical ways in which they can change the situation. This involves the tutor developing a strong relationship with the students so that the design of the programme takes account of the influences that impact on them. The tutor then provides opportunities for the participants to express their own views, and to question everyday assumptions and explanations, particularly where they differ from their own experience. This critical approach is focused on developing participants' skills for examining their lived environment in order 'to realize the root causes of inequality' (Bengle & Sorensen, 2017, p. 320). The HIIC approach recognizes that it is important to challenge people's experiences otherwise it is difficult for them to see the potential that effective social action has in exposing the health inequalities they experience. The programme uses a participatory and dialogical strategy that focuses on the collective, helps develop critical consciousness and promotes investigations that draw on both experiential and scientific knowledge to promote action. If people can take action about their circumstances and recognise that their problems are not their individual responsibility, then much can change.

HIIC is a good example of how popular education can create useful resources for giving people back control over their lives by building the capacity and expertise of people that are experiencing health inequalities. At the end of each programme students investigate and write about a health issue in their community that they believe is important and a selection of their writings has been published in three books edited by Jane Jones (1999, 2001, 2021). I am going to use this student writing to illustrate how participants attempted to change their circumstances and to investigate if health inequalities can be

reduced using popular education methods. I use the words of the students to demonstrate the impact of the health issues they identified and the action they took to bring about change. The names of the students are pseudonyms.

Findings from student writings

The HIIC programme starts by students identifying a common vision about the issue that they wish to address. As Bengle and Sorensen (2017, p. 334) point out, once this is agreed it is a 'precursor for collective action'. The participants in one HIIC programme in a city on the West Coast of Scotland identified poor housing and its impact on health as the issue they wanted to tackle. From this general vision they identified noise, lack of soundproofing and poor insulation as the issues they wanted to change and were able to stand together on. They then went on to examine the reasons behind the problem and identified action outcomes that they could come together to tackle. 'Our strategy was aimed at forcing the housing department to address the problem of poor housing and developing effective procedures in dealing with noisy neighbours' [Alan] (Jones, 1999, p. 35). The group next took these issues to the wider community and their positive response helped the group to grow in confidence. It then further developed the outcomes it wanted to achieve and was consequently able to take to policymakers well thought out solutions that were supported by the whole community. One group eventually gained better insulation, soundproofing and heating for their houses through a long campaign of local and wider action. This drew on the original solutions but also involved demonstrations, a petition to the Council, analysis of the responses to a questionnaire sent to all the tenants and a public meeting. The result was that:

> The [better housing] had an instant effect on improving people's health both directly and indirectly by reducing people's stress and anxiety levels. Your home should be a place where you can relax, unwind, and escape from the outside world [Jimmy] (Jones, 1999, p. 35).

Jimmy's words demonstrate the impact of poor housing on individuals' mental health as well as the importance that acting to change their living conditions has on people's confidence.

Another example came from a HIIC group of women with young children that had come together because of issues about providing a healthy diet for their children. After discussing the way in which poverty impacts on health the students agreed that the media played a big part in blaming people for their own poverty. This led them to investigate the consequences of internalising this discourse where they blamed themselves for not being able to feed their children properly. As a result, the group acted to find what they could change that would be a collective solution rather than an individual one. One of the students explained:

> Healthy diet was a big issue, and it was the priority. The shopping centre was the only place in our town that you could get fresh fruit and vegetables, but the prices were way above most people's budgets. So, we went to our local farmer to buy our fruit and vegetables so that we could sell them cheaper, only adding on the cost of petrol. The group sent out leaflets giving information on where to go to buy cheaper fruit and vegetables, the response was staggering. Everyone knows what a healthy diet is, but they just can't afford it [Hetty] (Jones, 2001, p. 33).

This last comment shows the difference between blaming individuals for eating an unhealthy diet as if it was a personal problem and the alternative of taking action to address the issue collectively.

Poor people often blame themselves for the burdens that they carry and hide their feelings of guilt and inadequacy (Marmot et al, 2020). One way of countering this is to validate local knowledge by taking as the starting point individuals' lived experiences. Participants in another programme that comprised young single mothers described their worries about going to the doctor with their symptoms of mental ill-health and their fears about the impact this would have on their children. The HIIC programme helped to challenge the stigma associated with mental health and the medical solutions that are offered by asking the students to talk about their fears so that they could think more critically about how society had foisted these feelings on them. For example, one student said, 'It is really frightening to say what you feel. You think, if I tell them that, the bairns [children] will get taken away. You're frightened of being labelled a bad mother' [Joan] (Jones, 1999, p. 91). Talking through this issue using problem-posing methods led to a changed perspective as this student illustrates:

> I had been on tranquillisers, but I felt so ashamed about it that I hid it from everyone. Then this young woman spoke up about her experience in the HIIC group and I realised that lots of women had had the same feelings. You have to learn that it isn't your fault, but you need people to talk to about it first [Laura] (Jones, 1999, p. 130).

This illustrates how coming together with others to discuss issues enables people to share experiences, fosters a more in-depth understanding of the issue, and encourages collective action against oppressive views of mental health issues.

A different example comes from a group of older people. This group identified the health issue that most affected them as the difficulties they had in travelling by public transport to the Chiropody Clinic in the next town. They developed and circulated a questionnaire (with the help of their tutor) that provided examples of how this issue impacted on older people in their town and then presented their findings to their local councillors and health board. They also generated a lot of local media interest in their plight by holding a protest 'hobble' to show how difficult it was for them to walk without local chiropody services (Jones, 2001). Eventually a clinic was established in their town with the result that not only were health resources deployed more appropriately but also the participants in the group felt empowered to act against other issues.

Another way in which possibilities for change can be opened up is through the use of creative approaches such as drama. One HIIC group that were concerned with food poverty in their rural area performed a play, based on their own experiences of trying to get healthy food cheaply and the loss of dignity encountered in having to apply for free food. Using the medium of the play helped local councillors understand the social and emotional impact of living in poverty and what were acceptable solutions for the community (Jones, 2021, p. 15). This action also enabled the group to present the realities of their community as a team that was actively fighting for change that could inspire others to pursue alternative visions of possibilities for their future.

A more detailed example comes from a programme that took place in a disadvantaged community in a town in the Central Belt of Scotland. The health issues initially identified by the group were those they had personal experience of such as the impact of losing a job, but these acted as triggers for wider discussion of the bigger issues at the root of their individual, family, and community concerns. The students then enriched and extended this by interrogating the issues using local surveys, interviews, meetings, and visits to groups and organisations. Through this ongoing dialogue between

themselves and the wider community, the detailed way in which issues were impacting locally, and the causes of them, were brought to light. The students reported that:

> What we learned about our community came first from other community members and then we researched various sources to find out if the local statistics supported their views. The methods we used included face to face surveys, finding local health and employment statistics, and small group discussions. We also questioned some organisations that we invited to come and talk to us [Rose] (Jones, 2021, p. 13).

The health issue the group unearthed was the shame people felt about being unemployed or unable to earn enough to live on. The group thought that the shame arose from the labelling of people who become unemployed as 'shirkers' by sections of the media and politicians over the last decade. The effect of this was stigma, loss of dignity and shame, and this damaging emotional and social impact on their community was uncovered in their critical enquiry. One student said that 'this culture of silence in the community means that the issues are not being addressed and as such people are suffering' [Mary] (Jones, 2021, p. 14).

The group then worked with the tutor to identify how this issue might be tackled in the local community and this provided an opportunity to increase their self-determination through collective organisation and action. This led to them creating a more public debate and discussion about this previously unaddressed issue that not only enabled them to find their voice as active citizens but also to formulate a proposal that had the backing of the whole community. As a result, a proposal to establish a Community Hub in the local Community Centre was made to local politicians, the Health Board, and regional welfare organisations. The HIIC group argued that having the Hub would give the community access to the services they needed and the privacy they wanted. After a great deal of discussion, it was agreed by the Council that an advice worker would be based in the Hub as this would help to ensure individuals could discuss their financial issues and be advised about their entitlement to financial and socio-emotional support in ways that protected their right to privacy. As one HIIC participant pointed out, 'The right to privacy protects you against intrusion into your personal life – including unnecessary, heavy-handed state surveillance' [Kevin] (Jones, 2021, p. 14). This meant that the group achieved real changes to the way local services were provided and created dialogues with local, regional, and national decision-makers.

Overall, these illustrations from HIIC show the actions that have been taken against a wide range of health inequalities that have ensured that community voices are heard. Rather that feeling powerless, participants have been able to make critical connections with the political dimensions of health and developed their skills for understanding and critiquing the root causes of inequality. As a result, they have contributed to social transformation by standing up for change through employing new energies derived from their collective power.

Discussion

This case study has shown that health inequalities can be reduced using popular education methods because the participants have identified, challenged, and acted against inequalities in their communities. The dynamic curriculum used by HIIC, where students and tutors are actively engaged with the world around them, has developed capacity, knowledge and skills that have been utilized in their local and wider communities (see Duckworth & Smith, 2019). As a result, people have had their voices listened to about the health issues that are important to them. At the individual level this has raised their

self-esteem and confidence and enabled them collectively to have an impact on decision-making and the use and distribution of resources in relation to health and wellbeing. The people in these groups have been involved in decisions that affect them, and that decision-making has been improved by drawing on their lived experience of inequality. Although these improvements have not led to transformative systemic changes, they have enabled local communities to act on the issues that matter to them, and this has inspired them to be more proactive about contesting solutions that are imposed. It has involved seeing education as a co-operative activity involving respect and trust and giving parity to both 'scientific' and 'experiential' knowledge.

However, it is also important to consider the issues that this approach raises. One is that the aims of popular educators - to inspire people to look at their world from new perspectives, to think for themselves, and enable them to create change - can be unconsciously manipulated by the educator. As Kane (2013, p. 83) has pointed out, 'while popular educators problematise issues rather than provide answers, the problems they see and questions they ask inevitably spring from their particular view of the world'. Challenging students' views is built into popular education's way of working but students' ability to challenge the tutor's view is more limited. Moreover, while the tutor will not be dictating what people should think, s/he will 'direct what people will be thinking *about'* (Kane, 2013, p. 83). In the case of HIIC they are directed to think about health inequalities when they might have prioritised other issues in their communities such as unemployment or housing. This shows, as Fejes and Dahlstedt (2017, p. 225) point out, how the dominant discourse can prescribe ways of doing things and means that spaces need to be 'created for asking questions about how things can be done differently'.

Starhawk (1987) has provided a useful framework for analysing the power of the educator and argues that there are three kinds of power: power-over, power-with and power-within. *Power-over* is defined as the situation where people have power over others, and this is sustained by social, economic, and political systems and by policies and assumptions about which groups have a right to hold power. Although the HIIC tutors are alert to all these factors they must be very aware of the power they hold due to their role, especially when participants in the programmes may feel they should defer to the tutor's knowledge. *Power-with* is about influence in a group and is based on respect for the tutor as an individual who can make suggestions, and be listened to, as one amongst equals. Getting to this position requires the tutor to really listen to the group, acknowledge the influence they have as a tutor and find ways to minimise it. The space in which the programme takes place can also make a difference, so a local community centre that is familiar to the students but not the tutor, is more likely to lead to feelings of equality. As Starhawk (1987) argues, the tutor has the 'power not to command, but to suggest and be listened to' (p. 10). *Power-from-within* comes from a belief that different people have different kinds of knowledges but that all can contribute equally to the achievement of the project. The method of melding experiential knowledge of the key health issues in a community with more systematised knowledge of how to, for example, construct a questionnaire is a good use of the different kind of knowledges that the tutor and the students can bring to an investigation. Overall, popular educators must be aware of all these types of power if they are to really help to challenge social oppression.

A related issue is that the tutor's ideological outlook is also going to influence the dialogue about the knowledges that are brought into the discussion. For example, the tutor may regard the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) statistics (Scottish Government, 2020) as a key source of knowledge of the extent to which an area is deprived in terms of income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime, and housing. S/he may privilege this 'scientific' knowledge over participants' views of

the benefits of living in this community especially when they are part of families that have lived there for several generations. So, participants may see this index as irrelevant to their experience because they are proud of the community that they live in and do not see it as 'deprived'. Both parties will have to engage in a genuinely participatory dialogue that combines these two types of knowledge – the 'scientific' and the 'experiential' – by focusing on their collective views and this dialogue is more likely to result in more progressive social and economic change.

Another problem is that sometimes the changes that popular education can make are overclaimed. Whilst several advocates for popular education have argued that it can lead to transformational social change, this needs to be seen in context. Jara (2010), writing about Latin America, argues that this type of education can enable people to:

> imagine and create new spaces and relations between human beings at home, in their communities, jobs, countries and regions, and have the capacity to generate a vital sympathetic disposition towards the social and environmental surroundings as a daily affirmation (Jara, 2010, p. 295).

However, in the Scottish context, it is a big step to think that any form of education can, by itself, bring about this type of transformative change in society. On the other hand, popular education can enable people to become more aware of how their personal experiences are connected to larger societal problems and historical and global processes and question existing ideological and ethical stereotypes and patterns which are presented as absolute truths (for example, neoliberalism, competition, the market as the regulator of human relations). Nevertheless, sometimes popular education could be seen as involving too many compromises about the health inequalities that are addressed in order to find a solution that is acceptable to those in power and so result in little challenge to oppressive social relations.

A final issue arises when tutors and students are participating in Local Government funded programmes while, simultaneously, arguing against the lack of services that this same branch of Government provides. This means that students are operating both in, and against, the state in what Thériault (2019) describes as a situation of 'conflictual cooperation' where organisations receive funding from the state but also retain a critical stance towards it to advocate for the actions that they are prioritising. Then the state becomes a 'site of struggle', where the role of educators is to push the limits imposed to the maximum whilst still retaining a foot in the door of state-funded education (Kane, 2013, p. 94). This is a difficult role for the educator, but the inspiration provided by the struggle for a more just and egalitarian social order and the support of like-minded others can help tutors to come up with creative solutions.

Conclusion

As Freire (1972) argued, the aim of popular education is not to integrate people that are oppressed into the system but instead to transform the existing structures so that 'they become beings for themselves' (p. 71). He also highlights the link between critical awareness and social transformation because popular education enables people to recognize the oppressive social forces shaping society and to act against them. The philosophy and methodological practice of popular education illustrated in this article also enabled people to see connections between their own lives and wider political structures. In this way it helps individuals, groups, organizations, and social movements to understand problems, reflect on their practice and become more empowered agents of change. It can also help to develop a critical consciousness that fosters an in-depth

understanding of the world and encourages collective action against oppressive elements in a struggle for human dignity and liberation. Through this type of learning, the production of knowledge is put back into the hands of people, competing values can be thought through and their relevance to people's lives can be assessed. It can also re-energise people 'from the inside to re-stimulate hope, development and growth' (Duckworth & Smith, 2019, p. 56) so that they can take action about the issues that are important to them.

Clearly, whilst popular education cannot abolish social divisions, it can make a useful contribution to combating them by challenging the ways in which discrimination is reinforced through the very processes and outcomes of education. This will involve the nurturing of an education system whose function is to foster robust debate and encourage critical questioning. It is also about supporting confrontation that enables the pursuit of alternative visions for the future and 'enhances our capacity to be free' (hooks, 1994, p. 4).

Currently, however, the dominant myth of meritocracy is based on the 'common sense' assumption that one can succeed economically if one just tries hard enough. As Gramsci (1971) pointed out through his concept of cultural hegemony, this form of 'common sense' fosters the belief that success and social mobility are strictly the responsibility of the individual. This obscures the hardships imposed by poverty, classism, sexism, homophobia, and racism and the class, racial, and gender inequalities that are built into the capitalist system. If there is a belief that all it takes to succeed is hard work and dedication, then it follows that the system of capitalism and the social structure that is organised around it is just and valid. This myth permeates common-sense understandings of what change is possible because it assumes that those who struggle educationally and economically deserve their impoverished state and ignores education's role in preserving the status quo.

As Mohanty (1994, p. 147) points out:

> Education represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations. Thus, education becomes a central terrain where power and politics operate out of the lived culture of individuals and groups situated in asymmetrical social and political positions.

The HIIC project has enabled the participants to take some small steps in addressing these power relations through their action to address health inequalities that are based on their desire to change existing realities and so have begun to challenge oppressive social relations. Rather than having their communities positioned as failures, they have instead challenged these individually based, deficit views in ways that have enabled their voices to be heard. It has also given them a seat at the table when decisions are taken and so meant that they can hold decision-makers to account. These may be small steps but, as the renowned poet Antonio Machado put it, 'your footsteps are the road, and nothing more; […] there is no road, the road is made by walking' (2004, p. 56, translated) so these small steps can make a broad path as we walk towards a more democratically just society.

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Deriving a theory of learning from social movement practices: A systematic literature review

Mai Atta
The Pennsylvania State University, USA (mma6173@psu.edu)

John D. Holst
The Pennsylvania State University, USA (jdh91@psu.edu)

Abstract

The field of Adult Education is rich with general theories of learning but limited in terms of theories that inform social movement learning (SML). Today, there are several conceptualizations of SML, but little learning theory development based directly on empirical studies of SML. This article aims to present findings from a systematic literature review of empirical studies on social movement learning (SML). We collected and identified 69 empirical studies focusing on adult learning and education within social movements for this literature review. We purposely focused on empirical research studies and did not include works that conceptualise or theorise social movement learning outside of actual empirical studies of SML. From our review of empirical studies, we have identified five elements we believe could serve as the foundation of a theory of learning and education in social movements.

Keywords: social movement learning, systematic literature review, dialectics of learning and education, popular education, radical adult education

Introduction: Popular Education and Social Movement Learning

Radical popular education is part and parcel of social change. This social change, however, is consciously and collectively achieved through organised social movements. The relationship between popular education and social movements has been a topic of interest for several decades now (e.g., Sur, 1987; Walters & Manicom, 1996; Kane, 2001), and has been more recently addressed by Torres Carrillo (2016).

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Largely parallel to the decades-long interest in popular education and social movements, has been the developing body of literature that falls under the moniker of social movement learning (SML). Our contribution to this special issue focuses on the empirical research that has been developing in the subfield of SML. We feel that the popular education tradition, particularly its focus on educational practices, can potentially re-anchor SML in considering the role of the popular or movement education in social movements. We also feel that SML can enrich popular education through its focus on the learning elements within organised efforts for social change.

The adult education field is rich with learning theories (e.g., Illeris, 2018; Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). In the subfield of SML, several scholars have attempted conceptualising the nature of SML (e.g., Hall & Turay, 2006; Holst, 2002; Niesz et al., 2018). The SML subfield also has a growing number of empirical studies of learning within social movements. Nevertheless, when we look to our field's broader learning theories, they do not necessarily provide us with theories directly drawn from or directly related to learning that takes place in social movements. Moreover, when we look at SML's conceptualisations, it is not clear that these SML's conceptualisations stem from empirical research of actual instances of learning in social movements. Finally, the empirical studies of SML describe specific cases of SML in various social movements but tend not to theorize or look into the characteristics of this learning beyond the particular circumstances. In short, we do not have significant development of a theory of learning in social movements.

Given that the field is increasingly interested in learning and theories of learning; and that the field has a growing number of empirical studies of learning in social movements, we feel it is time that the subfield of SML begin to work toward theorising SML. In other words, begin to develop a theory of learning in social movements. In this article, we report on a systematic literature review (Tight, 2019) of empirical research studies on learning in social movements to identify elements of a theory of learning in social movements. Given the number of empirical studies we found for this literature review, we do feel that the field is ready to begin this theoretical project. We realize that our effort is only a beginning, and we present it to the field with the hope that others will engage in this long-term project of theorising the nature of learning in social movements.

Research purpose and methodology

Our systematic literature review addresses two gaps. First, there is a lack of a theory of SML in our field's theories of learning, and second, we believe there is a gap in theorising in the empirical research on SML. In this study, we reviewed 69 empirical studies of SML. We aimed to analyse the learning identified in each study in its particular context and we tried to find the building blocks of a theory for social movement learning across these studies. We wanted to examine if social movements had unique learning elements.

Searching for Empirical Studies in the Literature

To find empirical research studies on SML, we searched ERIC, Proquest education, GALE global issues, Women & social movements (USA and international), and WorldCat. We concentrated on empirical research studies and excluded conceptual or theoretical studies on SML. An example of such theoretical work would be Holst (2002). In our first search query, we paired ‘Adult Education,’ ‘Adult Learning,’ and ‘Lifelong Learning’ with the following keyword descriptors: social movements, labour union, LGBTQ movement, community organising, aboriginal, indigenous, race education, the

student movement, activism, social change, Marxism, communism, colonialism, abolition, anarchism, imperialism, anti-imperialism, women's movement, and socialism. This query generated 10,000 hits. Many of these results were irrelevant since they came from different disciplines (nursing, political science, human development, or family studies) or were theoretical, not empirical. We then searched for 'adult education,' 'adult learning,' and 'lifelong learning.' We linked these phrases with an AND command with the keyword descriptors 'social movements' and 'social movement learning'. This query produced 118 articles.

We engaged in a further refinement of the 118 articles by eliminating 1) K-12 focused studies, and 2) eliminating studies that focused on the history or culture of social movements, not pedagogy, learning, or education. After this refinement, we identified 69 empirical studies concentrating on adult learning and education within social movements, which we list by publication date in Table 1 (see appendix 1). The studies included empirical research on labor (Bleakney & Choudry, 2013; Schied, 1993; Spencer, 1995; Terriquez, 2011; Woodin, 2005), environmental (Bowles, 2006; Kim 2011; Walter, 2012; Ollis & Hamel-Green, 2015), queer (Walker, 2009), social justice (Brown, 2018), health awareness (DiFilippo, 2015; Endresen & Von Kotze, 2005), women's (Drew, 2015), animal rights (Vea, 2020) movements.

Data analysis

Though empirical studies only make up a small percentage of the literature on social movements in our field, we were nonetheless able to recognise similarities in the ways in which movements educate and organise. We kept a log of all 69 of our studies on a Google spreadsheet. We classified each study by publication year, research methodology, learning theories employed, social movement studied, movement region, theoretical frameworks if available, and movement cause. Since our literature analysis focused primarily on the learning and educational activities within the movement, we had little difficulty extracting data from the studies. We frequently took quotes from participant interviews as well as any descriptions of educational materials or activities.

Coding data

We applied the thematic analysis process outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006) to our studies in order to find codes and generate themes. We utilised a theoretical thematic analysis in which we approached the extracted data with predetermined questions and used them to code our data.

In this first phase of data analysis, we used Engeström's (2018) four questions on learning theories to analyse the research studies and to look for codes: Who are the learning participants? Why do they learn? What do they learn? How do they learn? We added our own fifth question to for the analysis: What are they learning for? Holst (2002) suggests that it is crucial to understand the movements and the learning within them, but it is also important to understand the political direction or goals of social movement learning and education (Holst, 2002; Köpsén, 2011; Mayo, 1999).

Generating and reviewing themes

Using our codes from the five questions, we were able to find within- and cross-movement themes. Despite variation in movement knowledge production based on regional location and movement causes, we found that similar themes emerged across movements. At this point, we began to review our spreadsheet to compare the codes.

When we saw that particular themes appeared multiple times within certain codes as well as across codes, we assigned these themes to the codes (question) where they had appeared most frequently.

Once we identified all the themes, we reviewed them and combined related themes into broader themes. For instance, the themes ‘triggered by shame’ and ‘feeling anger toward injustice’ were combined under the theme ‘emotions as a catalyst for learning within social movements’. Another approach we used was to connect themes that did not have the same exact meaning but were related in terms of participant situations and perspectives. An example of this was the theme of ‘agency and autonomy’, which was the result of integrating and combining the previous themes of ‘independence’ and ‘feeling in control of one’s surrounding’ into one.

Findings

In the findings section, we will describe the data collected and explain the results of the two phases of analysis. The goal here is simply to illustrate the codes and themes that emerged from our extracted data. Then, in the following discussion section, we will discuss our interpretation and the significance of these findings in the SML literature.

Findings from the Phase I analysis of using Engeström’s questions and our own question

Who are the learners?

Beginning with Engeström's first question of who the learning participants in movements are, the research studies in our review focused on the learning of members (e.g., Martin, 1988; Vea; 2020), whom we identified as activists who organise the movement, participants (e.g., Lee 1993; Ollis & Hamel-Green, 2015), whom we identified as people who join the movement, and finally the public who observe the movement from the outside. Few scholars (e.g., Church et al., 2016; Díez-Gutiérrez & Díaz-Nafría, 2018; Roy, 2012) have considered the public in terms of SML research. When they have considered the public, it has been in the form of visitors or the audience of social justice events such as film festivals.

What do learners learn?

By examining what members learn from and about movements, we identified three types of learning and the knowledge they lead to: practical or instrumental learning, raising individual and social consciousness, and experiencing more connectedness. First, instrumental learning includes knowledge that helps members execute daily tasks. Instrumental learning includes computer literacy (Bleakney & Choudry, 2013), media literacy (Roy, 2014), gardening (Walter, 2013), farming (Flowers & Swan, 2011; Scandrett et al., 2010), public speaking (Chovanec et al., 2007; Larri & Whitehouse, 2019; Schied, 1993), and leadership (Harris, 2002). Instrumental learning helps people reject prevailing hegemony, or common-sensical thinking, and helps them build movement-based meaning (Saguy & Ward, 2011; Walter, 2012).

Second, raising individual and social consciousness involves increasing people's understanding of their social, political, and economic realities. Participants learned to be involved by organising and tackling public problems. This expertise came from studying their country's economic, political, and power dynamics. Participants learned about the

history of movements and social change in their cities (Langdon, 2011) and worldwide through lectures, workshops, and field visits (Bleakney & Choudry, 2013; Brown, 2018; O'Donnell, 2014).

Last is community development and engagement. Examples include forming alliances (Walter, 2007), exercising solidarity (Ollis & Hamel-Green, 2015; Roy, 2012; Woodin, 2007), and building community (Harris, 2002; Serrat et al., 2016; Woodin, 2007). Working in movements gave members social support, which enabled them to communicate with neighbours and officials. This connectedness, it is argued, led to horizontal structures within movements, unlike hierarchical or authoritarian systems in society. Participants realised that 'you are not a number here; you are a person integrated with other people who are producing knowledge' (O'Donnell, 2014, p. 280). This understanding gave people empathy for other marginalised communities (Hamilton, 2016).

Why do people learn?

Studies that use empirical methods to investigate why people learn focus on members of social movements who are actively involved in organising activities. According to the findings of our review, participants in movements consciously organise learning activities in order to develop skills and knowledge they see as necessary to achieve the goals of the movement. We also believe that these activities are examples of intentional educational endeavours. According to the literature, the primary motivation for learning is functional. Participants and activists alike are interested in acquiring new knowledge in order to improve their capabilities for participating in movement-related activities. In addition, they need to arm themselves with the necessary knowledge in order to participate in community discussions.

How do people learn?

Looking at how people learned, we found four modalities. Some movements show elements of a community of practice where participants learn from more experienced members (Foroughi, 2013; Ollis & Hamel-Green, 2015; Underhill, 2016). Movement members learn about advocacy and organising by observing other members' daily activities. Another popular form of learning was the instruction and facilitation of skills and professional development workshops such as fundraising and letter writing (Ollis, 2020; Schedler, 1993). These are examples of intentional educational efforts within movements. They are most definitely how people learn, but it is learning directly facilitated by others in the movement. Finally, we identified self-generated learning activities where people advance their own learning (Schedler, 1993; Tobias, 2000) often followed by reflections and discussions (O'Donnell, 2014; Zieliska et al., 2011). These modes are not mutually exclusive, they can be combined.

What are people learning for?

Finally, when examining the purpose of learning within movements, we found four common elements in the empirical studies: strengthening communities, building collective power, pursuing new identities, and seeking change, liberation, and emancipation. A member of a movement in Serrat et al.'s (2016, p. 77) study said they joined the movement to 'avoid being manipulated'. Another group of women activists said SML was their source of collective power and liberation because the 'City Department of Environment couldn't continue to sit in [their] faces and lie to [them] about

what was going on' (Bowles, 2006, p. 56). In Lee's (1993) study, women said their participation in the movement enabled them to learn about their new identities as immigrants.

Findings from the Phase II analysis

After organising and analysing the empirical studies based on Engeström's four questions and our additional question, we identified five main themes that we believe can be building blocks of a learning theory for social movements. The first element is reflection as a way to bridge events and experiences with education. In this case, activist-educators lead the educational process by helping members and participants to examine and reflect on their own experiences. Secondly, we identified enhancing agency and autonomy as characteristics of learning within and from social movements. Our analysis has shown that participants' agency facilitates their taking the lead and responsibility for their learning. The third element is the importance of emotions, an affective element that plays a role in members' participation in learning within and from the movements. Next, unlearning, or reversed learning has negative and positive impacts on participation. An unfavourable outcome of the unlearning is that when participants start to face challenges during their organising, there is a tendency that they unlearn the knowledge that led them to be engaged with the movement initially. A positive outcome of unlearning is when participants rid themselves of knowledge that is not helpful to their participation and replace it with new knowledge. Finally, depending on where activists organise, the broader political atmosphere influences their education.

From event to experience in social movement learning and education

Participants of social movements apply various tools to educate and organise one another, and one of the most common tools was reflecting on their own experience. Members of social movements witness or participate in events that are not turned into experience unless they revisit and reflect on them. That is when experience can turn into learning. We understand this revisiting and reflecting on events as intentional acts to generate learning. We also understand this to be a major task of popular education in social movements. In other words, these intentional pedagogical acts by movement activists are social movement education dialectically linked to social movement learning; Social movement learning does not occur spontaneously; it is a result of pedagogical activity within movements. What we found, then, in this review of research on social movement learning, was actually evidence of social movement education; the intentional acts of movement members to generate learning. Köpsén (2011) states that this education's political purpose or direction are determined by the amount of critical reflection allowed in the learning process. Faced with encouraging or frustrating events from social movement participation, activists cannot help but keep asking questions about their practice, the reason for and the result of their work; 'this process, self-questioning, and self-answering, is exactly the process of reflection' (Kim, 2011, p. 324).

We also found in our review less intentionally pedagogical activity in movements that also leads to learning. A learner's contemplation of a given event is strongly dependent on their cognitive praxis and reflection on it, which is arguably maximised when a learner's reality and community are acknowledged in the process. This ongoing process of directed action and reflection contributes to the participants' learning. These forms of directed action and reflection were difficult to capture in the literature because they were not necessarily intentionally designed as educational by the members. Our

review of research studies indicates that knowledge creation occurs within the movements' everyday activities, which is sometimes difficult to assess. More empirical research is needed to understand this type of learning and how movements utilise the generated knowledge of these experiences.

Agency and Autonomy

SML is rooted in movement participants' perceptions of their agency and autonomy within their communities (Sandlin & Walther, 2009). This agency stems from their realisation that they are subjects within their environments and not mere objects that react to their surroundings. Autonomy is built on participants' willingness and ability to create spaces of 'counter-hegemonic' learning that values their knowledge and experience over experts. Learning within or through social movements is an autonomous educational tool that enhances people's ability to seek solutions to their own specific problems, as well as a means to exercise autonomy and power in order to transform existing institutional relations (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2013). Additionally, autonomy in SML represents a discourse where workers, women, and indigenous people get the chance to create their 'useful' knowledge that is born from and thus relevant to their very own realities. These groups increasingly choose to engage and learn from meaningful educational activities that reflect the 'situation of real people' (Gillespie & Melching, 2010).

Though agency and autonomy are often thought of as processes of individualisation, in social movements, they are collective endeavours (Kapoor, 2007). These collective practices are viewed as means to reclaiming power. Participants make their movements to be powerful platforms through which they feel they matter, experience solidarity, and can be actively engaged in problem solving. Most simply put, people coming together in organised ways and around a common vision gives them more power. In Kapoor's (2007) research, for example, one participant said: 'I am not powerful by myself. But when we sit together… much more is accomplished' (p. 29).

Emotions as an affective element of SML

Learning is both driven by emotions and an emotional process (Vea, 2020). Movement participants talk about experiencing a wide range of emotions, including fear, anger, despair, shame, hope, empathy, satisfaction or trauma, and acknowledged how these feelings resulted from their participation in and helped facilitated their learning within movements (e.g., Endresen & Von Kotze, 2005; Ollis, 2020; Underhill, 2016; Vea, 2020). In some studies (e.g., Drew, 2015; Foroughi, 2013), members of movements who through their activism overcame the feeling of shame, were able to better participate and become more active members of movements (Drew, 2015; Foroughi, 2013). Other studies (e.g., Hill, 2004; Mirshak, 2020), highlighted that oppressed populations could repurpose the feeling of rage and anger toward injustice and use it to facilitate their learning about themselves and their lived realities and how they can change those realities while at the same time building feelings of community and connectedness (Bowles, 2006; Woodin, 2007).

We found that researchers often identify the role of emotions in SML, nevertheless, affective learning does not capture the totality of SML; rather, in our view, it is more accurate to claim that SML has an affective element. Our review has pointed to the idea that emotions either triggered, mediated, or enhanced the learning process in social movements. Given these findings, we believe it is important that movement activists and educators acknowledge these emotions in their educational practices in order to enhance learning and participation within movements.

Unlearning as both positive and negative

Finally, and related to our findings on emotions, our review affirms Baltodano et al.'s (2007) notion of 'learning in reverse' or 'delearning' as Zielińska, Kowzan, and Prusinowska (2011) called it, which refers to the disappointment or negative learning that can tear movements apart. This learning can be a result of intergroup conflicts or members' burnout. After one of these experiences, one participant in Zielińska et al.'s study commented, 'Sometimes, by sharing our knowledge, we demobilise people who would otherwise challenge the 'police order' again. Maybe they would even succeed, because something might have changed meanwhile or because our knowledge was 'wrong'' (p. 265).

More research is needed to understand the dynamics of this learning as it leads individuals to believe that their work has no significant impact. Other social movement scholars, on the other hand, have suggested that 'unlearning' can be constructive. An example of this would be the trend of women from marginalised backgrounds opting to give birth at home rather than in hospitals (DiFilippo, 2015). In addition, in Gillespie and Melching's (2010) study in Tostan, it was found that women had to unlearn everything about female genital cutting that they had been taught by people in power. Alternately, these women's involvement in the movement helped educate them about their own bodies and the ways in which they care for their health. Unlearning or reversed learning in movements centres reflection as a core element in social movement education. Kim's (2011) study showed that when activists experience frustration with their movement experience, they keep looping back and questioning their participation, resulting in an ongoing process of unlearning and relearning. A challenge for movement activists in their educational work is to balance unlearning or reverse learning in order to maintain or build a movement without allowing these emotions to derail it.

Surrounding environments shape learning and organisation

A prevalent theme in the literature was how the movement's context affect the types of activism of the movement and leads to various forms of knowledge production. In Figure 1, solid-lined arrows point to each quadrant's learning. To comprehend this learning/context link, researchers need to study the relationships between the goals of a movement, the worldviews of a movement's members, and the movement's socio-historical circumstances. Local cultures and surroundings of social movements may impose different educational roles on activists; in some movements, activists become adult educators (Martin, 1988; Schedler, 1993). Other movements plan education alongside other organisational activities (Baltodano et al., 2007; English, 2005).

Ollis (2008), for example, distinguishes two types of activists: lifelong activists and accidental activists, based on how they became involved in social movements, their political environment at the time, and the type of formal schooling they received. The lifelong activist is someone who received formal education in politics, law, or the humanities and grew up in a politically permissive community. These lifelong activists tend to be well-versed in social movements and have experience participating in a variety of protests and campaigns. An accidental activist, on the other hand, is someone who became involved in organising due to a series of events in their life. They were motivated to protest for a variety of reasons, such as personal circumstances or a specific social crisis. Their education is rapid and ongoing because they need to keep learning, act and organise at the same time. Other scholars (Kapoor, 2007; Kim, 2011) use Foley's (1999) approach to classify activists depending on their surroundings, level of struggle, and local context. Foley emphasised learning in, from, and within the struggle, where struggle can

be a continual process for some movements like the struggle for liberation or a single event like struggling to find a job or learn something new. Foley (1999) claimed that this type of learning helps individuals evolve into 'knowledge-creating...beings,' (p. 64), which necessarily makes social movement members knowledge producers (Flowers & Swan, 2011).

In other words, the distinctions between social movements based on their surrounding environments or contexts are vital for SML scholars to recognize because they impact how these movements educate or generate learning. Established movements have more prerequisite critical and formal political training and may operate in an environment with more public involvement with politics. These movements, then, have preestablished access to knowledge and educational resources before they even begin to organize. Other movements, however, face or emerge in contexts with less favourable conditions for learning and education and must create them as they begin to respond to existing injustices and inequalities.

Discussion

The Dialectics of Learning and Education

Exploring empirical research studies on 26 different countries and a wide range of movements demonstrates that the discourse of learning and education within the context of social movements has changed over time. We found that more studies focused on learning within the movements or used a discourse of learning in their analysis and only a few studies (Martin, 1988; McGregor & Price, 2010; Roy, 2014; Walter, 2012) examined how movements educate their participants. Between 1988 and 2005, scholars employed a discourse that was more oriented toward analysing educational practices and pedagogies. This research described education as a purposeful activity among a group of people rather than a spontaneous process. Since 2005, researchers have focused more on learning than education, or at least have used a learning discourse to describe what in the previous period was identified as education. The SML studies in this latter period we examined reflected what Biesta (2012) identified as a trend to separate learning from education, leading to a conceptualisation of learning as an individual process.

There is no doubt that social movements are sites of learning and knowledge production, whether within or from the movement. How, why, and which knowledge is produced within movements is an essential element for theorising SML. Movements, however, are also sites of education. If in developing a theory of SML, we fail to consider learning in dialectical relation with education, we fail to see the social nature of learning itself. Following Freire (1993), we understand learning in dialectical relation to education. This puts the pedagogical practices of movements at the centre of our theorising from the empirical studies we reviewed. To put this more simply, social movements have educators, or if you will, teachers. Much of the practice of social movements is intentionally educational in that people, and in particular activists, engage in activities that are crafted to assist their own and other's learning. This learning, however, does not happen spontaneously or in isolation from others; it is the product of specific people's actions in relation to others that are pedagogical in nature whether consciously so or not. Therefore, there are people in movements who educate through what they do in the movement. They are movement educators.

Some studies from both periods (e.g., Butterwick & Elfert, 2015; Martin, 1988) did examine how members learn collectively, reflect on learning from one another, and how

education had a radical effect on the participants of the movement. In other words, for these researchers, educating within social movements was political in every sense and had consequences and actions that stem from its political nature. Nevertheless, we clearly saw a shift over time from a discourse of education to a discourse of learning in the research studies even though the dialectical relationship between learning and education in actual movements continues unabated. Today's learning-oriented research seems to be well distanced from Paulston's (1980) research in which he specifically refers to 'social-movement education' (p. xiii) and his definition of 'movement education' he developed with Lejeune (Paulston & Lejeune, 1980) as 'structured learning activities, developed and controlled by a social movement within a liberating framework, for the express purpose of meeting movement needs, priorities, and goals' (p. 30). For us, Freire's (1993) insistence on seeing education and learning as dialectically related is a way forward for future research that seek to identify and understand learning as part and parcel of (educational) practices of social movements.

Building blocks of a theory of social movement learning and education

Previous researchers have situated learning within social movements along one or more dimensions (Cooper, 2007; Duguid et al., 2007; Foroughi, 2013; Scandrett et al., 2010; Serrat et al., 2016).

In this section we, present social movement literature's theorisation before addressing our findings and proposed SML building blocks. Overall, the available theories were based on sample studies or a specific movement, with questionable generalisability to SML across movements. Also, the typologies we examined did not provide enough details on the pedagogical aspects of social movements, but rather borrowed from human resources and development literature.

Schugurensky (2000) defines informal learning as a mix of learning types. Although the term informal learning captures an important form of learning, it is still too broad when it comes to explaining its causes, results, and manifestation. Using two continuums, he proposed a typology for informal learning. Intentional vs. unintentional and conscious vs. unconscious. He outlined three learning types: socialisation, incidental learning, and self-directed learning. Kluttz and Walter (2018) expanded on Scandrett et al. (2010) to conceptualise climate justice learning. They identified three main education levels: micro (individual learning), meso (reframing the individual perspective), and macro (the world and the power dynamics outside the movements). These levels are on two continuums: disordered and organised learning and individual and collective learning. These continuums were an excellent way to visualise how learning and education occur within the movement, and we use them below to explain our proposed building blocks.

To theorise social movement learning, we tried to situate each of its elements we identified above based on its intentionality, consciousness, and educational method. In Figure 1, we identify four quadrants: QUAD 1: formal and non-formal instruction (intentional and conscious), self-directed learning (intentional and conscious); QUAD 2: incidental learning (unintentional but conscious); QUAD 3: through observing other members (intentional and unconscious); and QUAD 4: social and spontaneous learning (unintentional and unconscious).

This is our attempt to develop a theory of the nature of SML. Figure 1 shows what social movements participants actively do for internal education, which is a combination of self-directed learning and non-formal instruction methods. The building block of this work is reflection. Educators of the movements, regardless of whether they self-identify as such,

help movement participants make meaning of their own experience through the creation of various learning experiences.

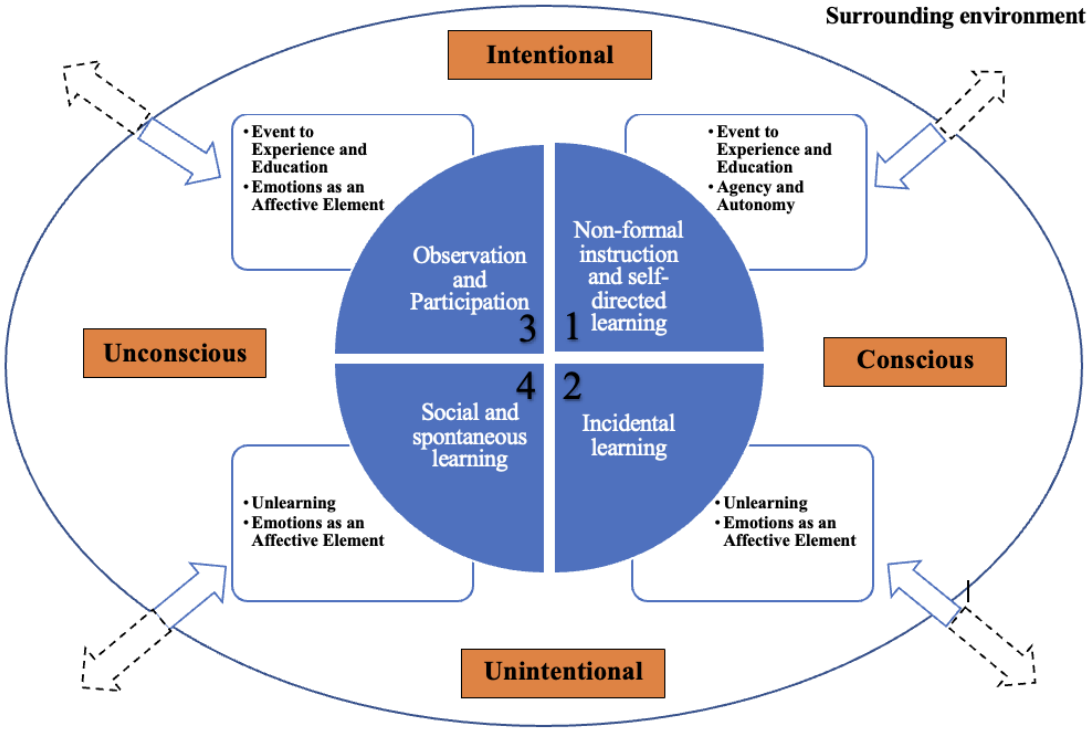
In the first quadrant, learning is pre-planned and mainly occurs before the movement acts and sometimes within organising for the movement. In the second quadrant, incidental learning occurs when members are conscious that their participation produces knowledge and furthers their learning, but this is an unintentional process and results from their engagement. In the third quadrant, learning occurs through observing other members and participating in various activities within the movement. Members observe other members engaging in tasks and try to learn from them in an intentional process. However, the analysis has shown that they are not usually conscious of how this observation results in significant learning experiences. The fourth quadrant is the most challenging form of learning, and we have less empirical data from current studies to explain it. Learning occurs due to social connections and is mostly invisible and hard to measure because it is unintentional and unconscious, so it requires researchers' investigation and observation because participants are mostly not aware of it.

We placed our suggested four elements of SML on the quadrant at moments where we believe that element was most prevalent. In the first quadrant, where learning is an intentional and a conscious process, the elements of education as a result of reflection on events that create experiences, and agency and autonomy are more prevalent. Our analysis revealed that both scholars and interviewed participants could quickly identify intentional and conscious learning due to its nature, and because it often requires prior planning. In the second and fourth quadrants, where subtle experiences and social connections take place, elements of unlearning and emotions as drivers for learning are more prevalent. Finally, in the third quadrant, watching other participants perform tasks emphasise the elements of reflection as an educational tool along with emotions.

In summary, each form of learning in the four quadrants represents an educational process. Our review of the literature revealed that social movements always have someone or some people to assist members in learning, designing learning experiences, or advancing learning. Learning within movements is rarely spontaneous; it is more commonly the result of someone, or some people consciously engaged in activities that create learning.

To separate these, or to only present the pedagogical work that occurs within movements as learning processes is a double error. Because first, it separates what is a dialectical process; it becomes one side. Second, and relatedly, it underplays one of the most important roles of social movements, which is to educate; to be sites of education and to be schools. To fail to see movements and those within them as educators is to miss one of their major purposes: to educate.

Figure 1. Elements of a theory of SML (authors' own figure)



Conclusion

We began this article by placing radical popular education in the context of social movement learning. As we argue for the need to consider learning and education as dialectically related, so as to avoid a one-sided focus on learning, SML researchers may want to consider that popular education has maintained the term education precisely because popular educators understand very well that they play an educative role in organised efforts for social change. To overcome the teacher/student contradiction as Freire (1993) insisted is not to make everyone only learners, but to make everyone learners and educators. There is no question that learning takes place in social movements, we should heed popular educators, however, and not forget that education also takes place in social movements.

The elements of learning we have identified can be interrelated, but each can be unique within a movement. We found that for most researchers, prevailing learning theories could not explain what was happening within movements. Current research focuses on activists' experiences and explicitly non-formal educational activities. Future studies should identify the learning process that emerges from pedagogical work or what we would define as education that turns events into experience through conscious reflection. This focus could help us understand how people transform and use experience-based knowledge.

Our research has two major limitations that could be addressed in future research. To begin, the study focused on existing literature in the field of adult education and lifelong learning, which resulted in a set of empirical research studies on progressive, left-oriented social justice movements. We did not examine, because we did not find, any research on right-wing movements. Second, we found that the literature we examined did not fit neatly into a Global North-South dichotomy. The studies appear to focus predominantly on the Global North. However, there have been several studies of Global South immigrants and refugees in Global North countries, as well as Indigenous Peoples within Global North countries. This prevented us from studying how specific educational practices were related to specific geographies, and it may limit any universality of our findings.

Moving forward, we believe more empirical research efforts are needed to explore ways to capture four things: first, how members learn within and from the educational activities of movements and the extent to which these activities are consciously conceived of as educational; second, the invisible, incidental, and unintentional aspects of SML; third, more focus on the reverse learning aspects of SML will undoubtedly provide valuable insights and findings. Finally, we need more empirical studies to understand how movements educate those outside the movements in the surrounding environment as we depict with dotted arrows in Figure 1. Here, we can begin to uncover the pedagogical impacts of social movements in creating new policies, new social relations, and new ways of viewing the world beyond the activist milieu within movements. To do this, adult educators should consider the work in the sociology of social movements (Almeida, 2019) where scholars have developed theories and conceptual frameworks perhaps better suited for understanding the impact of social movements on their surrounding environments.

The typology developed by Paulston and Altenbaugh was written in 1988, before the SML explosion. The concept of SML is useful because it focuses on how people change in movements and what movements do, but we have lost sight of identifying the things that people in movements do that change others when we do not see movements as both sites of learning and sites of education.

As researchers, we are particularly interested in movement pedagogical work that purposefully creates learning events and revisits and reflects upon them. We believe that this pedagogical work demonstrates the dialectical relationship between education and learning and more fully captures the breadth of pedagogical activities within and by social movements. It potentially leads the field to consider the need not for a theory of learning in social movements, but rather a theory of learning and education within social movements. As a result, we should consider SMLE. Dare we create a new acronym?

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Appendix 1

Table 1. Empirical studies on SML

Author	Theoretical Framework	Participants/ Movement/ Location	Global North/South
Martin (1988).	n/a	Anti-uranium movement activists in Australia	Global North
Schedler (1993).	n/a	Women's group in the Liberal Party and Leiden University in the Netherlands	Global North
Lee (1993).	Post-modernist and post-structuralist feminist theories	Women immigrants and refugees in Canada	Global North
Schied (1993).	Radical adult education	Workers Nineteenth Century in Chicago	Global North

Spencer (1995).	New and Old social movements	Canadian Labour Union focused on Environmental issues in Canada	Global North
Kilgore (1999).	Sociocultural learning and Critical Consciousness	Social movement groups	Global North
Tobias (2000).	Self-directed learning	Active citizenship programs in New Zealand	Global North
Sawchuk (2001).	E-learning	40 labour activists in Canada	Global North
Harris (2002).	Emancipatory and Transformative Learning	Rural activists in Canada	Global North
Narushima (2004).	Feminist and developmental theories	Raging Grannies' movement in Canada	Global North
Woodin (2005)	Community-based learning and Freire's literacy theories	The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers in the U.K.	Global North
English (2005).	Third space theory	13 women (from Canada, Asia, and Africa) doing international adult education in the Global South	Global South
Endresen & Von Kotze (2005).	Frere's theory of humanization	HIV-positive activists in South Africa	Global South
Bowles (2006).	Interpretivism	Environmental justice movement in the USA	Global North
Baltodano et al. (2007).	Learning as a social process for learners to develop a political analysis of their context	Immigrant workers in Canada	Global North
Kapoor (2007).	Decolonizing methodologies and social movement learning	Social movement activists in India	Global South
Duguid, Mündel & Schugurensky (2007).	Social movement learning	Volunteers of 4 community organizations in Canada	Global North
Walter (2007).	Environmental adult education	Activist forest monks and Buddhist environmental movement in Thailand	Global South
Woodin (2007).	Radical pedagogy	Worker writing groups in the U.K.	Global North
Chovanec et al. (2007).	Popular education	Youth unions in Canada	Global North
Cooper (2007).	Radical adult education	Members of South African Local Government Union	Global South
Salazar (2008).	Feminist intersectionality and Freire's theories of teaching and learning	Maya women who experience state violence in Guatemala	Global South
Sandlin & Walther (2009).	Foucault	Adults who practice simplicity in the USA	Global North
Ismail (2009).	Freire and Gramsci's theories	Women from South African Homeless People's Federation	Global South
Walker (2009).	Foucauldian power-relations theory to create educational experiences	Queer Nation movement	Global North
Langdon (2009).	Post-colonial lens with Freire and Habermas' theories	Women's movement and Anti-mining movement in Ghana	Global South

Jennings & De Matta (2009).	Using radical education to build counter-pedagogies.	Women educators in Brazil	Global South
Gillespie & Melching (2010).	Freire and Dewey's theories	Female rural activists in Senegal	Global South
Scandrett et al. (2010).	Lifelong education theory of Ettore Gelpi	Environmental justice movement in Scotland and India	Global North/South
Köpsén (2011).	Communities of Practice and Freire	Trade unions in Sweden	Global North
Kim (2011).	Marx (use-value and exchange-value), self-directed learning and	Five environmental social movements in the USA	Global North
Terriquez (2011).	n/a	Latino immigrant workers and parents in the USA	Global North
Flowers & Swan (2011).	Informal learning	Food Movement activists	
Zielińska, Kowzan, & Prusinowska (2011).	Collective learning, situated learning, and social movement learning	Activists at the University of Gdańsk in Poland	Global North
Saguy & Ward (2011).	Narrative learning theory	Fat rights movement and Queer movement in the USA	Global North
Langdon (2011).	Foley's learning in/from struggle	Social movement members in Ghana	Global South
Grayson (2011).	Popular worker's education and Gramsci's social movement theory	Labour movement in the U.K.	Global North
Larrabure, Vieta & Schugurensky (2011).	Informal and non-formal learning	Socialist Production Units in Venezuela and Worker-Recuperated Enterprises in Argentina	Global South
Meek (2011).	Gramsci's hegemony	Brazilian Landless Workers' movement	Global South
Rule (2011).	Collective and social learning	HIV & AIDS and disability movements in Uganda, Zambia and South Africa	Global South
Walter (2012).	Collective learning and identity and counter-hegemonic knowledge production	Environmental Movement in the USA and Canada	Global North
Roy (2012).	Freire's Pedagogy of indignation	Audience of community film festivals in Canada	Global North
Walter (2013).	Transformative learning, communities of practice and place-based learning.	Food Movement in the USA	Global North
Foroughi (2013).	Informal learning	Tenants of Toronto Community Housing Corporation in Canada	Global North
Hemphill & Leskowitz (2013).	Community of practice and Freire	Community of anarchist, anticapitalist "Do-It-Yourself" activists in the USA	Global North
Bleakney & Choudry (2013).	Non-formal and informal learning	Immigrant workers in Canada	Global North
Drew (2015).	Embodied learning and situated learning	Activists in the animal rights movement in Australia	Global North

Roy (2014).	Collective learning and experiential learning	Audience of documentary film festivals in Canada	Global North
O'Donnell (2014).	Foucault	Popular educators in Argentina	Global South
Choudry (2014).	Marxist theory	Activist researchers in the Philippines	
Butterwick & Elfert (2015).	Feminism and narrative learning	27 elder women social activists in Canada	Global North
Ollis, & Hamel-Green (2015).	Bordieau's habitus and situated learning	Protestors against fracking in Australia	Global North
DiFilippo (2015).	Critical feminist lens and transformative learning	Women health movement in Canada	Global North
Boumlik & Schwartz (2016).	Third-space theory	An NGO and a female activist post the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia	Global South
Church et al. (2016).	Learning through object and story- based cultural production	Professors and activists working on a Disability History museum exhibition in Canada	Global North
Hamilton (2016).	Adult education	The Poor People Movement	Global North
Serrat, Petriwskyj, Villar & Warburton (2016).	Informal learning	Elders' political participation in Spain	Global North
Holst & Vetter (2016).	Gramsci's cultural hegemony	Members of a Trade Union School in Chile	Global South
Underhill (2016).	Social movement learning	Egyptian revolution activists in the Diaspora	Global South
Chen & Rhoads (2016).	Critical race theory and ethnic studies	Staff and faculty allies of undocumented students in a university	
Brown (2018).	Transformative learning and non-formal learning	Citizenship education in UK and Spain	Global North
Kluttz & Walter (2018).	Feminist theories	Climate Justice movement in the USA	Global North
Díez-Gutiérrez & Díaz-Nafría (2018).	Expanded learning	Participants of vocational training center for employment in Spain	Global North
Larri & Whitehouse (2019).	Communities of practice and action learning	Elder activist women in Australia	Global North
Underhill (2019).	Emotions in social movement learning and Boler's 'Pedagogy of discomfort'	Egyptiandiaspora activists in the U.K.	Global North
Webb (2019).	Radical pedagogy	Occupy Wall Street activists in the USA	Global North
Ollis (2020).	Critical Pedagogy and new social movements	Activists from a coalition of anti-coal seam gas groups in Australia	Global North
Vea (2020).	Emotions and learning in sociocultural activity	Animal Rights movements in the USA	Global North
Mirshak (2020).	Gramscian framework	Civil society organizations in post-uprisings Egypt	Global South

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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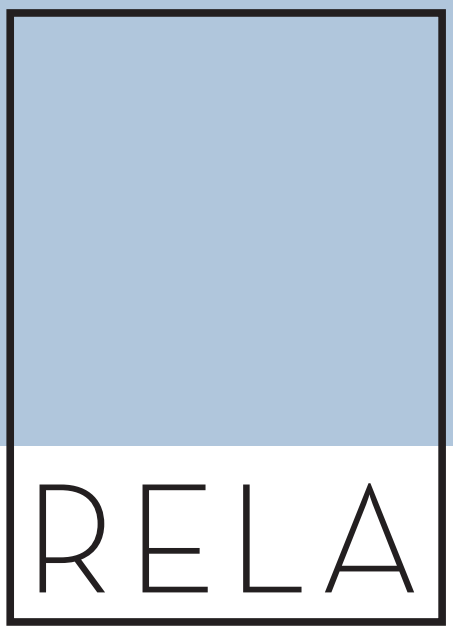

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