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Učenje odraslih in skupnosti v svetu v gibanju
Adult learning & communities in a world on the move

IMPRÉSUM

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EDITORIAL

ADULT LEARNING
IN A WORLD ON THE MOVE

The papers in this special issue of *Studies in Adult Education and Learning* carry us back to some of the moments of discussion and debate that participants at the 9th ESREA Conference of the Network Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Communities (BGL-ALC) at the University of Lower Silesia (ULS) in Wrocław, Poland in May 2017 generated around the conference theme *Adult learning & communities in a world on the move: between national tensions and transnational challenges*.

In the course of the months previous to the 2017 conference and since we have witnessed unparalleled waves of migration across Europe, waves of refugees moving through countries and crossing borders on a scale unseen in Europe since 1945. Over a million refugees and displaced people crossed EU borders in 2015 alone. According to UNHCR figures, in 2018 there are 65 million displaced persons worldwide, 22.5 million refugees under UN mandate, and of the three main countries of origin (South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria) Syria alone counts for 5.5 million refugees…

The BGL-ALC Network decided to turn its attention to adult learning and communities in this world 'on the move' and sought to address in discussion possible responses to the national tensions and transnational challenges we observe and experience in our work. The 'local' emergencies, the destruction of civil societies (Syria, Yemen, Ukraine), the bombing of Syrian cities by the Russian, US and in the meantime the Turkish air forces, become 'global' experiences in the rafts we see sinking off the coast of Lampedusa, the still overfilled 'jungle' camps at Calais, on Lesbos, or in cities all across the Balkans. And these global shocks become again 'local' emergencies, local chances, too, as they begin to involve the civil societies each migration wave and each political shock successively reaches.

Responses in civil society have shown the great creativity and the energy that solidarity and the idea of civil social justice, twinned with education, can engender. Countless initiatives sprang up to provide a welcome where state institutions responded tardily, the energies of thousands of volunteers, teachers, guides, mentors and employers galvanised the response of action groups and local communities to develop new forms of solidarity and apply in practice basic democratic citizenship. This response is timely, as we have witnessed contradictory reactions across Europe and beyond from civil and 'uncivil society',

new forms of political turbulence and global dis-order which are putting in question most of the institutions and practices we have perhaps taken too long for granted.

OUR NETWORK AND A WORLD ON THE MOVE

In the research fields and methodological perspectives of the BGL-ALC Network, the first thing that can be stressed is diversity, which is wholly coherent with the diversity we face when talking about communities. Diverse communities, we argue, include within themselves all the diversity of the people living in them. Community is a place where conflict and confrontation are the usual thing, and conflict and the way conflict is resolved are substantial elements in the definition of community as a symbolic place. Thus, in our discussions we have reflected on the concept of community and the different roles that it can play in people's daily lives, either as a place of shelter or as a place of confrontation and debate.

Community is also a place in which to join people. It is a public place where everyday life is developed. In this sense, it can be affirmed that community is a place to learn; a good place to learn about democracy and participation, and a place that is a source for learning and teaching. Community is a place where people create knowledge about themselves, allowing them to transform the community further and improve the life of the people living in it.

The creation of knowledge is an important step to researching and transforming communities, but this creation of knowledge can be done in an alternative way (as participatory research, for example, does) and can produce an alternative knowledge: a liberating knowledge that allows people to understand and transform the surrounding environment and that helps people to understand the world.

Social movements, as well, are spaces of adult learning and development. Social movements can be creators of solidarity and of shared responsibilities. Communities are based on the solidarity among their members, but also on solidarity with other people outside the community. This important move from 'I' to 'we', in the context of the waves of migration and displacement, chauvinism and xenophobia we are experiencing today, is discussed in our network and is a central element of the papers published here.

In short, we conclude that the most important task is to reflect on social change in a context of migration and flight, the ongoing struggle for social justice, for peace and the right to a decent life in safety, dignity and equality: to reflect on, and to combat, the temptations of demagogy and chauvinism in a time of increasing disorder, and to reflect on the way adult learning can help people to confront these changes in a participatory and democratic way.

THE PAPERS

The five papers included in this special issue of AP have been chosen for the contributions they make to theories of learning in a world on the move. They all ask how adequate our

notions of lifelong learning, international adult education and adult learning programmes are and what the contribution of our research in this field is, should be and can become. They all in their different ways ask how we can build better dialogue and connectivity between diverse people in situations where opportunities for dialogue are being challenged, when in our cities and regions the 'other' is frequently experienced as a threat rather than a source of solidarity, learning and enrichment. They propose alternative perspectives on adult learning and discourses of power, on difference and 'identity', and new forms of solidarity that further social learning and the creation of democratic forms of citizenship and living together.

Adult learning and the work of social movements, local initiatives, and the responses of state agencies is another important area of debate addressed here. These papers ask how our research responds to current definitions of 'sovereignty' within the nation state, and to the takeover of the notion of 'identity', seen for many today as the fixed attribute of nations/ethnic groups, and formulated as an antithesis to difference and diversity. These and any other themes which address the relationship between adult education and communities, and the role of local actors, whether individual or institutional, and transnational movements confronting the challenges posed by thousands of people on the move are the stuff of this special issue.

Jim Crowther, of the University of Edinburgh, with his paper entitled 'The contradictions of populism: reasserting adult education *for* democracy', opens the discussion by challenging common assumptions among educationalists regarding the democratic legitimation of populist protest. While recognizing that expressions of popular anger at 'the establishment' and the 'political elite' are often problematic, Crowther nevertheless considers it essential to 'recognise the legitimate democratic aspirations of people who have been victims of globalisation and ignored by liberal democracy.' He argues that we must look for ways to conjugate these expressions of anger and frustration that easily lead to the search for a 'strong' Trump or Le Pen-type leader figure with adult education as a resource for deepening democracy rather than simply dismissing and condemning popular reactions as unwarranted and small-minded. Drawing on the work of Gramsci, Laclau and Mouffe, Crowther argues that we can use the creative force of dissent to turn the crises of democracy and adult education to use in generating productive synergies which adult educators need to develop. Reasserting adult education *for* democracy creates an opportunity to reinvigorate adult education and to reinvigorate democracy. Crowther supports his argument by examining developments during the Scottish Brexit debate. The discussions around such notions as sovereignty, 'patriotism' and community identity and the numerous forms of popular action that were created in order to carry forward an open, democratic debate illustrate in his view the impetus for new forms of political learning and education which adult education needs to engage with. Adult education, globally and in the Scottish context Crowther discusses, is in serious danger of remaining isolated from social struggles by being kidnapped by dominant policy agendas which have little to do with democracy, social justice, equality or

freedom. Adult education, Crowther insists, must connect once more to its historical roots of being an ally for enhancing democratic life, and must go beyond the limits of liberal democratic versions of democracy.

Adult education has to be involved in history if it is to save its own soul. Its historic role is in promoting an expansive and inclusive democracy which can contribute in turn to the revitalisation of adult education.

Sylwia Słowińska's paper 'Bottom-up cultural initiatives in local communities – between retreat and social engagement' looks at the ways in which the creators and organisers of bottom-up cultural initiatives in local contexts shape relationships with the local community. She presents five ways of shaping relations with the local community. These can, the author argues, be located on a continuum between two poles: retreat (distance from the community) and engagement in its affairs. The findings of her research suggest three models of bottom-up cultural initiatives: enclave, niche and platform initiatives. The suggestion is that all three types of bottom-up cultural initiatives clearly provide opportunities for learning in local communities, but 'platforms' – activities open to collaboration and community participation – are more likely to create a space for education which is strictly connected with the needs and problems of the local community.

This research on bottom-up cultural initiatives was carried out in 2012, in western Poland employing in-depth interviews and observation. Słowińska's data covers 16 cultural initiatives, carried out respectively in villages, small towns, and in cities. Polish society is understood by Słowińska as 'liminal', as a society in which patterns and social norms coexist that are characteristic of the 'old' and the 'new' orders. As with other societies where the pace of change was or is very fast over a relatively brief period of time, the resulting 'hybrid' character of social and cultural reproduction is of enormous relevance for the development of citizenship and democratic community education. Research into bottom-up cultural initiatives is of special interest in times of increasing social non-commitment, of withdrawal into the private sphere and a weakening of the idea of citizenship. The construction of a democratic civil society in Poland, Słowińska writes, is an arduous affair and she notes the weakness and fragility of civil society, and emphasises the importance of initiatives that can couple community participation with adult learning chances.

Emilio Lucio-Villegas, in 'The river and the people. An approach to memories, craft and adult education', presents work in progress on people and their traditional crafts, their work and lives on the banks of the river Guadalquivir in Spain – simply called the 'River' at the centre of this piece of research – and argues for the recovery of the memory of the community and of the craft memory, both threatened by the forces of globalisation with their accompanying features of labour migration, redefinition/destruction of professions and labour patterns, education for qualification, economic peripherisation, and so on.

In this paper Lucio-Villegas' interest is turned towards the human, symbolic and geographical territory on the banks of the River. Recovering the integrity of the lived traditions and continuing practices of this territory can be a generator of experience and

learning, the author argues. Experience is related to individual and community identity as an element which enables people in the community to understand and communicate the way they establish relationships amongst themselves and with their environment. In these first results of his research on the River, Lucio-Villegas discusses the crafts associated with the River; the use of the River to transport goods and people; the family ties associated with the craft; the increased mobility of the people of the River as an effect of globalisation/cosmopolitanism and the changes derived from it. A notable role in the life of the River, he shows, is played by the women of the River community and by elements of magic and mystery handed down over years of work and life on its banks. Lucio-Villegas indicates the importance of recovering traditional crafts as a source of adult education and for the maintenance of a cultural identity threatened by globalisation processes. By re-discovering, recovering and maintaining these traditional crafts it may, he suggests, be possible to enhance traditional knowledge and the resources of community. This kind of adult learning is clearly opposed to lifelong learning policy-making that is only focused on the individual as a worker or a future worker without memory or history. Lucio-Villegas' paper finishes with a clear challenge: to react against policies that dehumanise people, with Freire, we have to reconstruct local cultural identities that allow people to become protagonists of their life-world and their community life.

Marta Gregorčič, of the University of Ljubljana takes up this argument in a paper that sets out to challenge not only the threats to the life-world and knowledge of people in their communities, but also explicitly takes issue with the bias in 'Western' mainstream social science in general, and in the research of our own networks, in particular. Thus, in 'Silenced epistemologies: the power of testimonies and critical auto/biographies for contemporary education', Gregorčič asks whether the narrators of witness accounts or of critical auto/biographies can also be recognised as (co-)authors of scientific or literary written records. Reflecting in this paper on her own biographical research with revolutionary movements of the Global South as well as oppressed and silenced groups in different continents, the author has identified characteristics of testimonies which she has positioned in relation to Santos' *Epistemologies of the South*. Using prominent examples of literary written records which have empowered social emancipation she shows how the pedagogy of testimonies can be used innovatively for learning and research, and also how testimonies can make a fruitful contribution to a much-needed consideration of what she terms 'silenced epistemologies in the classroom and in society'.

Witnesses of social injustice, of human rights' abuse and war are often not merely sources of information, but are as well the bearers of 'specific' expertise, knowledge, and sometimes even epistemology, the author claims, indicating ways of coming to an alternative scientific understanding of the world. In the same way, following Stanley and feminist research methodology, witness accounts and autobiographies cannot be anything but inter-textual, discourse-responsive, and inter-subjective. The question of a research subject's authorship and co-authorship of new epistemology, or at least a part of an epistemology, has not been theoretically explicity addressed. However, sociologists, educators,

journalists, and others have already introduced this idea, and had witnesses recorded into or directly sign the scientific and/or literary work.

Gregorčič's argument is trenchant and some may find it one-sided. Many researchers – particularly those coming from the area of auto/biographical research will respond that they have been practising the recovery of silenced epistemologies in the 'ghetto class-rooms', institutions, the family, in communities of native populations, at least since the work of hooks, Rockhill, Steedman, Lather, to mention but a few who come to mind. Her trenchancy, however, is both justified and salutary, we feel. The dilemma of language and the 'right to speak' makes itself felt often enough in the most comfortable of research communities, and the epistemologies that clothe themselves exclusively in 'Western' Anglo-Saxon formats – see the citation indexes that rule our academic lives and our work – and prioritise forms of English writing and discourse must be challenged, by us, and Gregorčič makes here a valuable start.

'"Rewriting sociality" – sociographicity as a concept for comprehending emancipatory practice and social change' is the title of the last paper by Angela Pilch-Ortega of the University of Graz. This final contribution challenges, too, notions of learning that are normally focused on the learning individual and learning for profit, for self-interest, for individual self-actualisation. Pilch-Ortega writes that in a world on the move, questions of democratisation, solidarity, dignity, equitable distribution of resources, opportunities for life and learning are becoming increasingly important and evermore urgent. In this con-text, she writes, social problems in societies due to dramatic changes and grave social dis-parities are not only seen as individual problems but are also framed as supra-individual challenges which call for the creation of collective modes of coping and learning. Given the generally accepted view that social movements can have an emancipatory and innova-tive potential for societies and social change processes, she focuses in her paper on 'civil learning', emancipatory practices and processes of social change. Pilch-Ortega wishes to theorise learning processes which are layered on a supra-individual level and which are related to communities and societies. To do this, she explores the social world as a relational sphere that arises between social actors and the interplay between individual and collective modes of learning. Her argument is that our research frequently overlooks the relevance of collective modes of learning for social change processes, and that civil spheres and new learning environments offer opportunities for a learning society. Equally, she finds that much theoretical work neglects the relevancy of intersubjectivity and over-emphasises either the structural or the individual perspective in the processes of sociation.

Pilch-Ortega points out that as members of societies we have to deal with the doxic as-sumptions and pre-reflexive knowledge with which we navigate through our daily lives, in the process reproducing the status quo of social regimes. There are in this coping nevertheless important opportunities for breaking the circle of reproduction and for creat-ing moments of critical reflection, which may lead to emancipatory practices and social protest. Here the author introduces the term 'sociographicity' as a draft concept which tries to map such processes of 'rewriting sociality'. By interacting with others we create

the social world which arises between us. As, to a large extent, social relationship regimes are reproduced by implicit knowledge structures, by our 're-writing of sociality' we can transform figuration patterns through critical reflections on a shared world. Pilch-Ortega argues that the practice of rewriting sociality should best be conceived as an ongoing process which is relational, interdependent and contextualised. This has consequences, she writes, for the question of how to theorise emancipatory practices and agency in order to (a) prevent the continual reproduction of Eurocentric perspectives on emancipation, (b) counter tendencies to overemphasise agency as an individual phenomenon, and (c) rethink the collective as a figurational structure which is constantly progressing.

With this eloquent paper, grounded in an existing body of research and pushing forward the boundaries of our research thinking and practice, we close this selection of papers. All five in very real ways offer a photograph of the state of our discussions at present. All of them, too, throw up important, imperative challenges to our field of work. The common theme is the search for learning perspectives in a world on the move that are focused on new, open, shared, learning opportunities which are embedded in community and group learning for social change. The challenge to certain global pressures, the challenge, too, to Western-centred perspectives can be clearly heard in these papers. May the discussion be good.

Rob Evans and Ewa Kurantowicz

UVODNIK

IZOBRAŽEVANJE ODRASLIH V SVETU V GIBANJU

Članki v tej tematski številki *Andragoških spoznanj* nas vračajo v trenutke kresanja mnenj med udeleženci 9. konference ESREA Network Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Communities (BGL-ALC) na Univerzi Spodnje Šlezije (ULS) v Vroclavu na Poljskem maja 2017, ko smo razpravljali o nosilni temi konference *Adult learning & communities in a world on the move: between national tensions and transnational challenges*.

Vse od mesecev pred konferenco leta 2017 smo v Evropi priča migracijskim valovom brez primere, ko se valovi beguncev premikajo iz države v državo in prečkajo meje v številu, kakršnega v Evropi nismo videli vse od leta 1945. Samo v letu 2015 je meje EU prečkalo več kot milijon beguncev in razseljenih oseb. Po podatkih UNHCR je leta 2018 na svetu 65 milijonov razseljenih oseb, 22,5 milijona beguncev v pristojnosti OZN, med glavnimi tremi državami izvora – Južni Sudan, Afganistan in Sirija – pa samo iz Sirije prihaja kar 5,5 milijona beguncev ...

Mreža BGL-ALC se je odločila, da se posveti izobraževanju odraslih in skupnostim v tem »svetu v gibanju« ter skozi razpravo obravnava možne odzive na nacionalne napetosti in nadnacionalne izzive, ki jih opažamo in doživljamo pri svojem delu. »Lokalne« izredne situacije – uničevanje civilne družbe (Sirija, Jemen, Ukrajina) in bombardiranje sirskih mest s strani ruskih, ameriških in zdaj tudi turških zračnih sil – postajajo »globalne« izkušnje na splavih, ki se pred našimi očmi potapljajo pred obalo Lampeduse, v še vedno prenatrpanih »džungelskih« taboriščih v Calaisu, na Lezbosu in v različnih krajih po celotnem Balkanu. Ti globalni šoki se nato spet spreminjajo v »lokalna« izredna stanja in hkrati tudi lokalne priložnosti, ko več migracijskih valov in političnih šokov, drug za drugim dosegajo in začenjao vključevati civilno družbo.

Odzivi v civilni družbi kažejo silno ustvarjalnost in energijo, ki ju lahko spodbudita solidarnost in ideja civilne socialne pravičnosti, prepleteni z izobraževanjem. Kjer so državne institucije reagirale z zamudo, so begunce začeli sprejemati v okviru številnih iniciativ, energija na tisoče prostovoljcev, učiteljev, vodnikov, mentorjev in delodajalcev je sprožila odziv civilnih iniciativ in lokalnih skupnosti, ki razvijajo nove oblike solidarnosti in v praksi udejanjajo osnovno demokratično državljanstvo. Ta odziv prihaja ob pravem času, saj smo povsod po Evropi in tudi širše priča medsebojno nasprotujočim si reakcijam civilne in »necivilne« družbe, novim oblikam politične turbulence in globalnega nereda,

ki postavljajo pod vprašaj večino institucij in praks, ki smo jih morda predolgo jemali za samoumevne.

NAŠA MREŽA IN SVET V GIBANJU

Prva stvar, ki jo lahko poudarimo glede raziskovalnih področij in metodoloških perspektiv mreže BGL-ALC, je raznolikost, ta pa je povsem v sozvočju z raznolikostjo, s katero se srečujemo pri razpravljanju o skupnostih. Trdimo, da raznolike skupnosti v sebi vključujejo celotno raznovrstnost ljudi, ki v njih živijo. V skupnosti sta konflikt in konfrontacija nekaj običajnega, konflikt in način, kako se ta razrešuje, pa sta pomembna elementa za definicijo skupnosti kot simboličnega prostora. V razpravah smo tako razmišljali o konceptu skupnosti in različnih vlogah, ki jih skupnost lahko ima v vsakdanjem življenju ljudi kot prostor zatočišča ali kot prostor konfrontacije in debate.

Skupnost je tudi prostor združevanja ljudi in javni prostor, kjer se razvija vsakodnevno življenje. V tem smislu lahko potrdimo, da je skupnost prostor učenja; odličen prostor za učenje o demokraciji in participaciji ter hkrati prostor, ki je vir učenja in poučevanja. Skupnost je prostor, kjer ljudje ustvarjajo znanje o sebi, to pa jim omogoča nadaljnjo transformacijo skupnosti in izboljševanje življenja ljudi, ki v njej živijo.

Ustvarjanje znanja je pomemben korak k raziskovanju in spreminjanju skupnosti, vendar pa je takšno ustvarjanje znanja mogoče izvesti na alternativne načine (kot se to na primer dogaja v participativnem raziskovanju) in s pridobivanjem alternativnega znanja: osvobajajočega znanja, ki omogoča ljudem, da razumejo in preoblikujejo svoje okolje, in ki jim pomaga razumeti svet.

Družbena gibanja so prav tako prostor izobraževanja in razvoja odraslih. Družbena gibanja lahko ustvarjajo solidarnost in delitev odgovornosti. Skupnosti temeljijo na solidarnosti med člani, a tudi na solidarnosti z ljudmi zunaj skupnosti. V današnjem kontekstu valov migracij in razseljevanja, šovinizma in ksenofobije je ta pomembni korak od »jaz« k »mi« predmet razprave v naši mreži in osrednji element tukaj predstavljenih člankov.

Sklenemo lahko, da je najpomembnejša naloga razmišljanje o socialnih spremembah v kontekstu migracij in bega, nadaljevanja boja za socialno pravičnost, za mir in pravico do dostojnega življenja v smislu varnosti, dostojanstva in enakosti: razmišljanje o skušnjavah demagogije in šovinizma v sedanjem času naraščajočega nereda in boj proti tem skušnjavam, skupaj z razmišljanjem o načinu, kako lahko izobraževanje odraslih pomaga ljudem, da se s temi spremembami soočajo participativno in demokratično.

ČLANKI

Izbor petih člankov, ki so del te tematske številke AS, temelji na njihovem prispevku k teorijam učenja za svet v gibanju. Skupno jim je to, da vsi premišljajo koncepte vseživljenjskega učenja, mednarodnega izobraževanja odraslih in programov za učenje v

odrasli dobi ter postavljajo vprašanje, kakšen je prispevek našega raziskovanja k temu področju, kakšen naj bi bil in kakšen lahko postane. Vsak na svoj način se sprašujejo, kako lahko zgradimo boljši dialog in večjo povezanost med raznolikimi ljudmi v situacijah, kjer se priložnosti za dialog znajdejo pred izzivi, kjer so »drugi« v naših mestih in regijah pogosto doživeti kot grožnja in ne kot vir solidarnosti, učenja in obogatitve. Članki prinašajo alternativne poglede na učenje odraslih in diskurze moči, na razlike in »identiteto« ter nove oblike solidarnosti, ki spodbujajo socialno učenje ter ustvarjanje demokratičnih oblik državljanstva in skupnega življenja.

Učenje odraslih in delo, ki ga opravljajo družbena gibanja, lokalne iniciative in vladne agencije v svojih odzivih, so še eno posebno področje razprave, ki ga tu obravnavamo. V pričujočih člankih se avtorji sprašujejo, kako se naše raziskovanje odziva na trenutne definicije »suverenosti« znotraj nacionalnih držav in na prevzemanje koncepta »identitete«, ki ga danes mnogi vidijo kot nespremenljiv atribut narodov/etničnih skupin in formulirajo kot antitezo razlik in raznolikosti. Tokratna tematska številka prinaša te in še vse druge teme, ki se nanašajo na odnos med izobraževanjem odraslih in skupnostmi ter vlogo lokalnih akterjev, najsi gre za posameznike najsi institucije, in nadnacionalnih gibanj, ki odgovarjajo na izzive na tisoče ljudi v gibanju.

Jim Crowther z Univerze v Edinburgu s prispevkom »Protislovje populizma: potrjevanje vloge izobraževanja odraslih *za* demokracijo« odpira razpravo, tako da izzove običajne predpostavke izobraževalcev o demokratični upravičenosti populističnih protestov. Čeprav prepoznava, da so izrazi ljudske jeze na »esteblišment« in »politično elito« pogosto problematični, Crowther še vseeno meni, da je bistveno »priznati legitimna demokratična prizadevanja ljudi, ki so žrtve globalizacije in ki jih je liberalna demokracija prezrla«. Dokazuje, da moramo poiskati načine, kako te izraze jeze in frustracije, ki zlahka vodijo v iskanje »močnega« voditeljskega lika tipa Trump ali Le Pen, združiti z izobraževanjem odraslih kot virom za poglabljanje demokracije, namesto da jih preprosto zavračamo in obsojamo kot neupravičene in ozkogledne. Crowther se opira na avtorje, kot so Gramsci, Laclau in Mouffe, ter trdi, da lahko ustvarjalno moč tega nasprotovanja uporabimo za to, da krizo demokracije in izobraževanja odraslih koristno izrabimo za generiranje produktivnih sinergij, ki jih morajo razviti izobraževalci odraslih. Ponovno uveljavljanje izobraževanja odraslih *za* demokracijo ustvarja priložnost za krepitev izobraževanja odraslih in za krepitev demokracije. Crowther svojo argumentacijo podpre s pregledom razvoja dogodkov v času polemike o brexitu na Škotskem. Razprave o konceptih, kot so suverenost, »patriotizem« in skupnostna identiteta, skupaj s številnimi oblikami ljudskih iniciativ, ki so bile ustanovljene z namenom doseči odprto demokratično debato, po njegovem ilustrirajo zagonsko spodbudo za nove oblike političnega učenja in izobraževanja, s katero se mora izobraževanje odraslih aktivno povezati. Izobraževanje odraslih je globalno in tudi v škotskem primeru, ki ga obravnava Crowther, v resni nevarnosti, da bo ostalo izolirano in ločeno od socialnega boja kot ujetnik dominantnih političnih programov, ki imajo le malo skupnega z demokracijo, socialno pravičnostjo, enakostjo ali svobodo. Izobraževanje

odraslih, trdi Crowther, se mora ponovno povezati s svojimi zgodovinskimi koreninami in spet postati zaveznik promocije demokratičnega življenja, ki gre prek meja liberal-nodemokratskih različic demokracije.

Če želi rešiti svojo lastno dušo, mora izobraževanje odraslih aktivno sodelovati v zgodovini. Zgodovinsko je njegova vloga, da spodbuja ekspanzivno in inkluzivno demokracijo, ta pa lahko nato sama prispeva k revitalizaciji izobraževanja odraslih.

Članek Sylwie Słowińske »Kulturne pobude od spodaj navzgor v lokalnih skupnostih – med umikom in družbenim vključevanjem« obravnava načine, kako ustvarjalci in organizatorji kulturnih iniciativ od spodaj navzgor v lokalnih kontekstih oblikujejo odnose z lokalno skupnostjo. Avtorica predstavi pet načinov oblikovanja odnosov z lokalno skupnostjo. Trdi, da lahko te umestimo na kontinuum med dvema skrajnostma: umik (odmaknjenost od skupnosti) in aktivno sodelovanje v reševanju skupnostnih problematik. Ugotovitve kažejo na tri modele kulturnih iniciativ od spodaj navzgor: iniciativa kot enklava, niša in platforma. Avtorica meni, da vsi trije tipi kulturnih iniciativ od spodaj navzgor očitno omogočajo priložnosti za učenje v lokalnih skupnostih, vendar pa je za »platforme« – aktivnosti, odprte za sodelovanje in udeležbo skupnosti – bolj verjetno, da bodo ustvarjale prostor za izobraževanje, strogo povezano s potrebami in težavami lokalne skupnosti.

Predstavljena raziskava kulturnih iniciativ od spodaj navzgor je bila izvedena leta 2012 na zahodu Poljske s pomočjo poglobljenih intervjujev in opazovanja. Avtoričini podatki zajemajo 16 kulturnih iniciativ, med katerimi se posamezne izvajajo v vaseh, manjših krajih in mestih. Słowińska razume poljsko družbo kot »liminalno«, kot družbo, v kateri soobstajajo vzorci in družbene norme, ki so značilni tako za »staro« kot za »novo« ureditev. Tako kot v drugih družbah, kjer je prišlo ali prihaja do zelo hitrih sprememb v relativno kratkem času, je posledični »hibridni« značaj družbene in kulturne reprodukcije izjemno pomemben za razvoj državljanstva in demokratičnega skupnostnega izobraževanja. Raziskovanje kulturnih iniciativ od spodaj navzgor je posebno zanimivo v času naraščajoče družbene zadržanosti, umika v zasebno sfero in slabljenja državljanske ideje. Kot piše Słowińska, je gradnja demokratične civilne družbe na Poljskem naporno početje; avtorica ugotavlja, da je civilna družba šibka in krhka, ter poudarja pomen iniciativ, ki lahko povežejo sodelovanje v skupnosti z možnostmi izobraževanja odraslih.

Emilio Lucio-Villegas v članku »Reka in ljudje. Pristop k spominom, obrti in izobraževanju odraslih« predstavlja raziskavo v teku o ljudeh in tradicionalni obrti, njihovem delu in življenju na bregovih reke Guadalquivir v Španiji – v osrednji študiji preprosto poimenovane kot »Reka« – ter zagovarja obujanje spominov skupnosti in obujanje spominov na obrt pod grožnjo sil globalizacije skupaj z delovnimi migracijami, redefiniranjem/uničevanjem poklicev in vzorcev dela, izobraževanjem za kvalifikacije, potiskanjem na ekonomski rob itd.

V prispevku se avtor zanima za človeško, simbolno in geografsko ozemlje na bregovih Reke. Obnavljanje integritete življenjskih tradicij in nadaljevanje praks je na tem

območju lahko generator izkušenj in učenja, trdi avtor. Izkušnje so povezane z identiteto posameznika in skupnosti kot element, ki članom skupnosti omogoča, da razumejo in verbalno posredujejo, kako ustvarjajo vezi med sabo in z okoljem. Prispevek prinaša prve rezultate raziskovanja na Reki. Lucio-Villegas obravnava obrt, povezano z Reko; uporabo Reke za prevoz blaga in ljudi; družinske vezi, povezane z obrtjo; čedalje večjo mobilnost ljudi na Reki, ki izvira iz globalizacije/svetovljanstva, in posledične spremembe. Avtor pokaže, da imajo v življenju Reke pomembno vlogo ženske iz te rečne skupnosti, a tudi prvine magije in skrivnosti, ki se prenašajo skozi leta dela in življenja na bregovih Reke. Lucio-Villegas nakaže pomen obnavljanja tradicionalne obrti kot vira za izobraževanje odraslih in kot sredstva za vzdrževanje kulturne identitete ob grožnji globalizacijskih procesov. Ponovno odkrivanje, obnavljanje in vzdrževanje te tradicionalne obrti bi, pravi, lahko potenciralo tradicionalno znanje in vire skupnosti. Takšno učenje odraslih je postavljeno v jasno nasprotje s politiko vseživljenjskega učenja, ki se osredotoča samo na posameznika kot (bodočega) delavca brez spomina ali zgodovine. Lucio-Villegas članek zaključuje z izzivom brez okolišanja: da bi, kot zagovarja Freire, reagirali proti politikam, ki razčlovečujejo, moramo rekonstruirati lokalne kulturne identitete, ki ljudem omogočajo, da postanejo protagonisti svojega sveta življenja in življenja v svoji skupnosti.

Marta Gregorčič z Univerze v Ljubljani se v svojem prispevku postavi na podobno stališče in kritično obravnava ne samo grožnje svetu življenja in znanju ljudi v skupnostih, temveč izrecno tudi pristranskost tako v »zahodnem« družboslovju na splošno kot tudi v raziskovalnem delu znotraj naših lastnih mrež. V članku »Utišane epistemologije: moč pričevanj in kritičnih (avto)biografij za sodobno izobraževanje« se tako sprašuje, ali lahko pričevalke oziroma pripovedovalke kritičnih (avto)biografij prepoznamo tudi kot (so)avtorice znanstvenega oziroma literarnega pisanja. Avtorica v prispevku razmišlja o lastnem biografskem raziskovanju na področju revolucionarnih gibanj na globalenem jugu in zatiranih in utišanih skupin na različnih celinah ter identificira značilnosti pričevanj, ki jih umešča v odnosu do Santosovih *Epistemologij Juga*. S pomočjo nekaterih najpomembnejših primerov literarnega pisanja, ki je opolnomočilo družbeno emancipacijo, pokaže, kako inovativno se lahko pedagogika pričevanj uporablja pri učenju in raziskovanju ter tudi kako lahko pričevanja tvorno prispevajo k nadvse potrebnemu razmisleku o tem, čemur pravi »utišane epistemologije v predavalnici in v širši družbi«.

Priče socialne nepravičnosti, zlorab človekovih pravic in vojne pogosto niso samo viri informacij, temveč so hkrati tudi nosilci »posebnih« sposobnosti, znanja in včasih celo epistemologije, trdi avtorica in nakazuje načine za privzemanje alternativnega znanstvenega razumevanja sveta. Sledeč L. Stanley in feministični raziskovalni metodologiji, pričevanja in avtobiografije nujno zaznamujejo medbesedilnost, odzivnost na diskurz in medosebnost. Vprašanje, ali so raziskovalni subjekti avtorji oziroma soavtorji nove epistemologije ali vsaj dela epistemologije, doslej ni bilo eksplicitno obravnavano. Kljub temu so nekateri sociologi, izobraževalci, novinarji in drugi že predstavili to idejo, tako da so bile priče zabeležene ali neposredno podpisane v znanstvenem in/ali literarnem delu.

Argumentacija M. Gregorčič je zelo ostra in nekaterim se bo morda zdela enostranska. Mnogi raziskovalci – še posebno tisti, ki prihajajo s področja (avto)biografskega raziskovanja – bodo dejali, da prakticirajo odkrivanje utišanih epistemologij v »getovskih učilnicah«, ustanovah, družini, domorodnih skupnostih že vsaj od del avtorjev, kot so hooks, Rockhill, Steedman in Lather, če naj jih omenimo le nekaj. Menimo, da je avtoričina ostrina, nasprotno, tako upravičena kot koristna. Dilema o jeziku in »pravici do govora« je v najbolj udobnih raziskovalnih skupnostih več kot dovolj pogosta in mi sami moramo zavzeti kritično stališče do epistemologij, ki so zapakirane izključno v »zahodne« anglosaške formate – na primer citatne indekse, ki vladajo akademskemu življenju in delu – in ki dajejo prednost oblikam pisanja in diskurza v angleščini; prav tu M. Gregorčič dela dragocene prve korake.

»'Preoblikovanje družbenosti' – sociografičnost kot koncept razumevanja emancipatorne prakse in družbenih sprememb« je naslov zadnjega prispevka, ki ga je pripravila Angela Pilch-Ortega z Univerze v Gradcu. Tudi zadnji članek se kritično loteva konceptov učenja, ki se običajno osredotočajo na učečega se posameznika in učenje zaradi dobička, lastnega interesa, posameznikovega samouresničevanja. A. Pilch-Ortega piše, da postajajo v svetu v gibanju vprašanja demokratizacije, solidarnosti, dostojanstva, pravične porazdelitve virov, priložnosti za življenje in učenje čedalje pomembnejša in čedalje bolj nujna. Kot pravi, so v tem kontekstu družbeni problemi v skupnostih zaradi dramatičnih sprememb in resnih družbenih razlik videni ne samo kot problemi posameznikov, temveč tudi kot nadindividualni izzivi, ki kličejo k ustvarjanju kolektivnih oblik spopadanja z njimi in učenja. Glede na splošno sprejeto stališče, da imajo lahko družbena gibanja emancipacijski in inovativni potencial za družbe in procese družbenih sprememb, se avtorica v članku osredotoča na »civilno učenje«, emancipacijske prakse in procese družbenih sprememb. A. Pilch-Ortega se iz teoretične perspektive loti učnih procesov, ki se nahajajo na nadindividualnem nivoju in so povezani s skupnostmi in družbami. Pri obravnavi tega področja rašišče družbeni svet kot odnosno sfero, ki nastaja v interakciji med družbenimi akterji, in vzajemno delovanje individualnih in kolektivnih oblik učenja. Avtoričin argument je, da v raziskovanju pogosto spregledamo pomen kolektivnih oblik učenja za procese družbenih sprememb in da civilne sfere in nova učna okolja ponujajo možnosti za učečo se družbo. Prav tako ugotavlja, da teoretična dela mnogokrat zanemarjajo pomembnost intersubjektivnosti in dajejo preveč poudarka bodisi strukturni bodisi individualni perspektivi v procesih sociacije.

A. Pilch-Ortega poudarja, da se moramo kot člani družb soočati z doksičnimi predpostavkami in predrefleksivnim znanjem, ki nas vodijo skozi vsakdanje življenje, ob tem pa reproduciramo družbeni status quo. Kljub temu se v tej naši dejavnosti skrivajo pomembne priložnosti, da prekinemo krog reprodukcije in ustvarimo trenutke kritične refleksije, ki lahko vodi k emancipacijskim praksam in družbenemu protestu. Tu avtorica uvede pojem »sociografičnosti« kot poskus koncepta, ki naj oriše tovrstne procese »preoblikovanja socialnosti«. V interakciji z drugimi ustvarjamo družbeni svet, ki izvira iz tega skupnega delovanja. Ker se ureditev družbenih razmerij v veliki meri reproducira prek implicitnih

struktur znanja, lahko s »preoblikovanjem socialnosti« transformiramo vzorce figuracije prek kritične refleksije o svetu, ki si ga delimo. Avtorica trdi, da lahko prakso preoblikovanja socialnosti najbolje razumemo kot neprekinjen oseben, medsebojno odvisen in kontekstualiziran proces. Kot piše, to posledično vpliva na vprašanje, kako naj teoretsko obravnavamo emancipacijske prakse in delovanje, da a) preprečimo nenehno reprodukcijo evrocentričnih pogledov na emancipacijo, b) se bojujemo proti težnjam po prevelikem poudarku na delovanju kot individualnem pojavu, c) ponovno premislimo kolektivno kot nenehno napredujočo figurativno strukturo.

S tem zgovornim prispevkom, ki temelji na obstoječi znanstveni literaturi in pomika meje raziskovalnega razmišljanja in prakse, zaključujemo tokratni izbor člankov. Vseh pet kaže zelo realno sliko trenutnega stanja naših razprav. Vsi članki prav tako osvetljujejo pomembne in nujne izzive za naše delovno področje. Skupna rdeča nit je iskanje učnih perspektiv v svetu v gibanju, ki se osredotočajo na nove, odprte, skupne učne priložnosti, ukoreninjene v skupnosti in skupinskem učenju za družbene spremembe. V teh prispevkih lahko jasno zaznamo, da se postavljajo po robu globalnim pritiskom in tudi na Zahod osredotočenim pogledom. Naj bo razprava zanimiva in bogata.

Rob Evans in Ewa Kurantowicz

Jim Crowther

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF POPULISM: REASSERTING ADULT EDUCATION *FOR* DEMOCRACY

ABSTRACT

The context for this paper is the rise of populism across the UK, Europe and the US, a trend which is sweeping western liberal capitalist democracies in particular but also beyond in countries such as Turkey. Populism is used primarily as a derogatory label to demean the poor, working class groups and people with low educational attainment, as not having the experience or capacity to make wise decisions. In the UK this has led to demands for a second referendum on leaving Europe because the 'will of the people' was manipulated. It is also claimed that Parliament is sovereign so the decision to exit Europe should be made by its members who are better informed and can legitimately overturn the referendum decision. On the other hand, demagogues of the far right who led campaigns of disinformation and thinly veiled racist vocabulary to sway the Brexit result champion the 'will of the people' in disingenuous ways. If we widen our lens, there are also examples of progressive populist politics in Europe, such as Podemos in Spain, which are indicative of a counter-trend to the neoliberal model of globalization. Whilst populism is mainly used as a derogatory label, it can also be framed progressively as a response of the powerless, the poor and the ignored reacting to the limits of liberal democratic institutions in the current context. The election of Trump in the US and the Brexit result in the UK can be understood in these terms too. The repressed, overlooked or denigrated by the political and media elite, have responded at the only opportunity available to them. At the same time, the kind of social purpose adult education which aimed to engage with people in communities, on their own terms, has withered as neoliberal forms of lifelong learning and citizenship transform educational practices into 'remoralising' citizens to take care of themselves. In this context adult education and democracy are in crises. However, both crises can be turned towards generating productive synergies which adult educators need to connect with. This presentation seeks to explore and stimulate this debate.

Keywords: *populism, interregnum, democracy, Scottish referendum*

PROTISLOVJE POPULIZMA: POTRJEVANJE VLOGE IZOBRAŽEVANJA ODRASLIH ZA DEMOKRACIJO – POVZETEK

Članek je vpet v kontekst vzpona populizma v Združenem kraljestvu, Evropi in ZDA, trendu, ki se še posebej širi v zahodnih liberalnih kapitalističnih demokracijah, hkrati pa sega tudi drugam, na primer

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v Turčijo. Izraz populizem je v rabi predvsem kot slabšalna oznaka z namenom poniževanja revnih delavskih skupnosti in ljudi z nizko stopnjo izobrazbe, ki naj ne bi imeli niti izkušenj niti sposobnosti za preudarno odločanje. V Združenem kraljestvu je to manipuliranje z »ljudsko voljo« vodilo do zahteve po drugem referendumu o izstopu iz Evrope. Hkrati se pojavljajo trditve, da naj bi o izstopu odločali člani parlamenta, ki so bolj poučeni in lahko upravičeno ovržejo referendumsko odločitev. Po drugi strani pa demagogi skrajne desnice, ki so vodili kampanjo dezinformacij in prikrito rasističnega diskurza, da bi vplivali na rezultat brexita, varljivo podpirajo »ljudsko voljo«. Če pogledamo širše, opazimo tudi primere progresivne populistične politike v Evropi, na primer Podemos v Španiji, ki nakazujejo nasprotni trend neoliberalnemu modelu globalizacije. Populizem, sicer večinoma uporabljen kot slabšalna oznaka, v progresivnem okviru označuje odziv nemočnih, revnih in prezrtih na omejenost liberalnodemokratičnih institucij v sodobnem kontekstu. Izvolitev Trumpa in rezultat britanskega referenduma lahko razumemo tudi v tem smislu. Zatrti, spregledani ali očrnjeni s strani politične in medijske elite so se odzvali ob edini priložnosti, ki jim je bila na voljo. Tisti družbeni element izobraževanja odraslih, usmerjen k povezovanju z ljudmi v skupnostih, pod njihovimi pogoji, je zamrl, neoliberalne oblike vseživljenjskega učenja in državljanstva pa so preoblikovale izobraževalne prakse v »remoraliziranje«, da naj državljani skrbijo sami zase. V tem kontekstu sta tako izobraževanje odraslih kot demokracija v krizi. Vendar pa je obe krizi možno usmeriti k ustvarjanju produktivnih sinergij, čemur se morajo pridružiti izobraževalci odraslih. Namen tega prispevka je raziskati in spodbuditi to razpravo.

Ključne besede: *populizem, interregnum, demokracija, škotski referendum*

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this paper is to open up debate and dialogue rather than present a finished argument. In the UK both adult education and democracy are in crisis but, in some respects, both can be repaired by developing synergies between the two. Rather than framing the problem mainly as one of 'populism' and authoritarianism, perhaps the cracks occurring in liberal democracies present opportunities for widening and deepening democracy?

The crisis of liberal democracy is linked to the rise of neoliberal globalization which has undermined the power of nation-states to influence economic decisions by powerful transnational companies and international financial interests. The consequences in terms of political reactions, particularly from working class communities, has often been denigrated as populist, which is usually taken to mean bigoted, uneducated, racist and xenophobic. Whilst it is clear that there are problematic expressions of popular anger at 'the establishment' and the 'political elite', which can end in demands for a strong leader (e.g. Trump), it is also essential to recognize the legitimate democratic aspirations of people who have been victims of globalisation and ignored by liberal democracy. Indeed, working class communities have been at the sharp end of austerity policies and are still paying the price of the 2008 recession which started in the sub-prime housing market in the US but then spread outwards, having a global impact. Their political reactions to these events may be problematic, however, if adult education is to be a resource for developing

political forces to deepen democracy, it needs to formulate a way of contributing to progressive social aspirations 'from below', rather than dismissing popular reactions as unwarranted and small-minded. I will draw on the work of Gramsci (1971), Laclau (2005) and Mouffe (2016, 2014)[1] to develop this argument. At the same time, the kind of adult education which aimed to engage with people in communities, on their own terms, has withered as neoliberal forms of lifelong learning and citizenship transform educational practices into 'remoralising' citizens to take care of themselves. However, the crises of democracy and adult education can be turned towards generating productive synergies which adult educators need to develop. My argument is that reasserting adult education *for* democracy creates an opportunity to reinvigorate adult education and to reinvigorate democracy. This is supported by developments in the Scottish context.

THE CRISIS OF ADULT EDUCATION

The long-term erosion of adult education for democracy in Scotland is similar to the pattern in the rest of the UK where social purpose adult education has been systematically undermined by economistic versions of lifelong learning (Biesta, 2006).

Austerity measures have accelerated and magnified the trend of forcing cuts on public sector provision which has been central to neoliberal ideology since the 1980s onwards. In the alchemy of austerity, Clarke and Newman (2012) differentiate between the *economic consequences* of austerity which further inequality; *political consequences* which involve shifting the blame from structures and institutions to the moral lapses of individuals; *social consequences* which increase social divisions in communities; *subjective consequences* that change expectations and generate active consent. These multi-faceted consequences are relevant for thinking about the democratic impact of austerity on communities.

An increasing scarcity of resources makes it hard for small and struggling groups to sustain an organisational base and therefore maintain an independent voice. The result is that the active community shrinks or is redeployed into forms of consumer participation rather than active community development that involves communities defining their own interests and acting collectively to promote or defend them. As the state withdraws welfare provision, the community is co-opted into providing, for example, low-resourced service substitutes which they still need because of the closure of care homes, libraries and community centres, to be run by local volunteers on the cheap.

Austerity also sets community and voluntary groups in competition with each other in a scramble for scarce funding. One response is to 'play the game' by nominally working towards the outcomes which funders are willing to resource (e.g. often meaningless 'employability' projects), whilst at the same time stretching the meaning of policy, as far

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1   I'm not claiming to be an authority on these two theorists and Laclau, in particular, seems to me very opaque in his writing. However, they both contribute to the analysis of populism as a potentially progressive social force – hence my interest in them.

as practical, to do something different. Another response, however, has been a change in culture and subjectivities as groups and organisations seek to 'fit into' and embrace the dominant paradigm. The development of neoliberal subjectivities in the community sector, who work to the logic of market principles, marks a significant shift towards non-democratic and anti-democratic practices as the need for profitability replaces the significance of community engagement and control in decisions made.

Another powerful force moulding subjectivities consistent with the neoliberal project has been the dominant discourse of lifelong learning. Biesta (2006) makes a convincing argument about the impact of European Union, OECD and IMF discourses which reduce the focus of lifelong learning to narrowly economistic objectives, where social and economic 'problems' are supposedly amenable to learning 'solutions' i.e. 'learnification' in Biesta's awkward term. There may well be broader narratives of lifelong learning promoted by UNESCO through its Confintea conferences, but the overwhelming drive has been to see lifelong learning (to which adult education was tied) as a commodity to be purchased or as re-working the relationship between the individual and the state through the stripping away of the social rights of citizenship. Lifelong learning has come to mean learning 'for earning' rather than 'learning for yearning' (Martin, 2003). In the global 'north' it has generally developed as a disciplinary practice to prepare people for the labour market (Crowther, 2004) and to accept the imperatives of precarity as a mode for differentially evaluating some people who can work over others who cannot (Coffield, 1999). Its potential as a tool for social transformation from 'the bottom up' has been emasculated.

Neoliberalism in the public sector has also led to the growth of a culture of performativity through managerial practices imported from the business sector, such as performance target setting (Fraser, 2012). The focus on measuring what matters to policy, rather than what matters to people, reflects the incremental incorporation of adult education provision into the state's social, educational and economic policy objectives – particularly the latter. This diminution of purpose to vocational skills and 'employability', along with growing mandatory and coercive welfare rules to ensure people comply, have eroded the distinctiveness of adult education and morphed it into a pale shadow of its former self. Family literacy and parenting skills, which can be linked to promoting educational attainment in schools, is another example of how adult educators are deployed to serve performance outcomes set by Government. The main objective of educational intervention is to deliver communities to policy targets – not to engage with communities on their own terms – so that governments can claim successful interventions (Crowther, Martin and Shaw, 2007). However, education is not a pizza delivery service.

THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

The bourgeois class is 'saturated': it not only does not expand, it starts to disintegrate; it not only does not assimilate new elements, it loses part of itself (or at least its losses are enormously more than its assimilations). (Gramsci, 1971, p. 276)

The crisis of democracy is not only about the institutions of liberal democracy but also a crisis of the hegemonic claims of capitalism to provide the opportunity for never ending growth and social mobility which can absorb rising demands from working and middle-class groups. For the first time since the 1950s, young people cannot expect to have a better standard of living than their parents. In the context of neoliberal globalization, the widening of inequality between the rich and poor has accelerated the shift of power away from organized labour and reduced the power of nation-states to regulate the activities of the corporate and financial sectors. For example, companies such as Apple and Google negotiate with national governments the taxes they are willing to pay. It has also opened the door for scurrilous politicians and political factions to 'other' an 'enemy within', or to present social and economic problems as one of migrants and refugees seeking to take advantage of 'our' liberal values. Gramsci (1971) referred to the interregnum, a condition in which the old society is disintegrating and decaying but where the new society has not yet emerged, as a context full of 'morbid symptoms' but also, perhaps, of opportunities. Simply defending liberal democracy, which is part of this problem, ignores the need to transform democratic life. If adult education is to make a difference, then it also has to address the critical changes shaping liberal democratic institutions and the tensions between these changes, communities of the powerless, and global capitalism.

Radicalising liberal democracy rather than abolishing it

Liberal democracies are characterized by the rule of law, an independent judiciary, the protection of civil rights, civil liberties, political and press freedom, along with a system of checks and balances to limit any one branch of Government or Executive power acting unaccountably. Liberal democracies involve elected representatives, usually organized in political parties, which seek electoral support to enact their programmes in government. However, issues of accountability have to be addressed with proponents of direct democracy advocating for more participatory forms of engagement in decision-making. Of course, more participation in political thinking and decisions is laudable but so are the critical skills of holding powerful people to account. In any large, complex society, different degrees and forms of representation are inevitable, so it is essential that systems which involve the delegation of decision-making include democratic loops which enable people to hold their representatives to account. Another problem with liberal democracy is that, in the context of capitalism, the ideal of political equality is systematically undermined by massive economic inequalities which distort the system so that it undermines the liberal and egalitarian principles it claims to enshrine. In the UK it has also been characterized by political parties that differ on some policy areas but, primarily, see their main task as managing the economy rather than transforming it. The task, therefore, is to radicalize this system so that inequalities of power are counterbalanced by more democratic forms of control and influence. We need to therefore start with the recognition of political inequality.

Political inequality

Political inequality exists where decision-making processes systematically benefit dominant social classes and groups who are able to use the system for their own ends (Lawrence, 2014). Such inequalities reinforce the need, as Nancy Fraser (2005) argues, for redistribution, recognition and representation to achieve social justice and make democracy meaningful. Maldistribution of economic power and low social status interact and undermine the possibility of successful representation of excluded voices. The experience of political inequality helps explain why democracy often falls far short of expectations for it. Political inequality shifts the argument away from thinking about the problem of democracy in terms of personal apathy and disinterest in politics, by relocating issues of motivation in structural inequalities in society, which systematically reproduce unequal political outcomes. In the UK the poor, working class communities, the least educated, young people and minority groups are all more likely to experience the disbenefits of political inequality (Lawrence, 2014).

Post-Democracy

Crouch (2004) refers to post-democracy in the sense that the historical tradition of the struggle for democracy has been undermined and reversed. As he puts it:

> Democracy thrives when there are major opportunities for the mass of ordinary people actively to participate, through discussion and autonomous organization, in shaping the agenda of political life, and when these opportunities are being actively used by them (Crouch, 2004, p. 101).

The educative nature of democratic association is important to a thriving *demos*. Crouch, however, goes on to argue that contemporary experiences of democracy have seriously undermined this ideal. Politics and political debates become media spectacles which are tightly controlled; campaign strategists are experts in the powers of persuasion rather than generating critical engagement; the issues and agenda of politics reflect an implicit technocratic consensus; corporate interests are always dominant in the background; real power often lies outside political institutions in the sphere of multinational and transnational agencies, institutions and private companies; as a consequence, citizens are socialised into apathy and political disengagement.

Populism

In contrast to apathy and disengagement, however, there has been a dramatic and widespread surge of populist responses which have been evident in the UK Brexit referendum in 2016 and the Trump election in the US. Populism is often used pejoratively to attack the (unthinking) poor and badly educated by depicting them as easily influenced by powerful demagogues (Hindess, 2016). What this negative labelling does is undermine why political mavericks attacking the establishment, such as Donald Trump, have legitimate appeal to people; instead, the people making the choice are denigrated.

Populism is not ideologically fixed and could, potentially, lead to progressive social and democratic outcomes. The experience of Podemos in Spain is an example of this (Mouffe, 2016). Populist reactions often reflect the failures of liberal democracy to address the inequities of capitalism and neoliberal globalisation with its 'winners' and 'losers'. Trump's 'America First' campaign connected with popular discontent over increasing inequality, widespread precarity and the failure of liberal democratic institutions to make a significant difference to poor people's lives. In the UK the message of Brexit was 'take back control' from EU institutions, which reflected a contradictory dissatisfaction with the centralisation of power and draconian policies of austerity, whilst also charming with a discourse of xenophobia and racism accompanying movements of refugees fleeing conflicts (White, 2017).

One contradiction of populism it is important to draw attention to is the discourse of renewing citizen agency in the figure of a powerful leader who will take on the establishment and repair the damage done by the liberal institutions that the privileged have used to their advantage. The analysis has traction whilst the solution of a powerful leader does not. To safeguard the interests of the working class and other marginalised communities from the predatory practices of neoliberal globalization, we need to do democracy better.

The rise of populism also seems to undermine the very foundation of radical education. If reason, evidence and argument are no longer important to political choices, what is the value of education? The issue of 'post-truth' politics is a case in point. Post-truth refers to overt attempts to mislead with inaccurate information; one counter-reaction is to offer the 'true facts'. The Trump election and the Brexit result suggest this type of response is unlikely to succeed. As the Canadian philosopher Ignatieff points out: "'Enlightenment humanism and rationalism' can no longer adequately 'explain the world we are living in'" (cited in Mishra, 2016), and we therefore need to go beyond such narrow intellectual frameworks. The mere comparison of specious claims against factual realities misses the complex mix of reason and emotion that has to be addressed educationally.

If the crisis of democracy reflects the disconnect caused by the failure of politics and policies to listen to the voices and experiences of ordinary people, why should we be surprised at their cynicism, contempt and anger? Writing in the 1970s, Sennett and Cobb (1972) highlighted the hidden injuries of class as social conflicts in society are internalised into internal conflicts for the individual. This psychic damage people experience festers by being ignored, denied status, dignity and respect, whilst at the same time material inequality between social classes increases. The basis for trust between social groups breaks down when material inequalities are so great that people's lives share little in common. The result can be anger, malice and loathing towards the beneficiaries of the system but, unfortunately, also against minorities and others who are blamed in the media and by manipulative politicians seeking advantage from popular discontent by 'othering' some groups as the enemy within. But these negative outcomes are not inevitable. Anger can result in creative and critical agency for social change.

Adult education can be a resource for turning such anger into hope, for fostering respect and belonging, and for turning despair into purposeful action (Martin, 2003).

Reason and emotion can change and interact in productive or destructive ways (Jasper, 1997). It would be very limiting to see them as mutually exclusive, or necessarily in conflict; the emotional impact of poverty and starvation, for example, can be a powerful motivator for rational action to address it. Reason and emotion are simply aspects of the human condition. The real problem is over-emphasising one at the expense of the other. Thus, educational engagement has to address the interplay between reason and emotion, that is, develop a critical pedagogy of the mind and the emotions, if it is to succeed in deepening and extending democratic life (see this argument in relation to climate change in McGregor and Crowther, 2016). Democracy is unfinished and education should be part of the process of exploring how it can become a resource for transforming society rather than merely managing its contradictions and tensions.

WAYS OF DOING POLITICS: THE SCOTTISH EXPERIENCE

A brief description of the 2014 referendum on independence: The Scottish referendum involved a yes/no decision on independence from the UK which was reflected in two campaign groups supported by different political parties. On the one hand, there were the mainstream political parties (the Conservatives, the Scottish Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats), who supported the politics of the union with the UK; on the other, two political parties (the Scottish National Party and the Green Party) which supported independence from the UK.

What was unexpected and, in some respects, had deeper consequences was the emergence of a range of unofficial campaign groups and spontaneous popular interest in the referendum issue. Community groups, organisations and movements across the length and breadth of the country were intent on propaganda and educational activities aimed at promoting or rejecting the cause of independence. Unofficial campaigns were active in 'real' spaces as well as in the digital sphere with over 700 blog sites and social media groups providing a vibrant, humorous, critical, opinionated and flourishing online opportunity for people to engage in politics in their own way, outside the restrictions of the mass media, formal political structures, parties and processes (for example, http://bellacaledonia.org.uk). People engaged, individually or collectively, through the activities of campaign groups, social media sites, friendship networks, online and offline, and locally-organised community provision, in discussion and debate about the issues that mattered to them. It was at the community level that a wide range of grassroots initiatives canvassed for voter registration, raised awareness, engaged in debate and in the main promoted independence. There were pro-union groups but these were much less visible and less active at a community level.

All this official and unofficial 'political education' had an impact on political thinking. Around 95% of the electorate registered to vote and over 85% voted on the day. People also learned to change their views. In 2013 support for independence was around 25%

but this increased significantly to almost 45% at the time of the vote in September 2014 (Curtice, 2014).

Analysis of the campaign as populist politics: According to Laclau (2005), what defines populism is a way of 'doing politics' which can take different forms but involves constructing the political by establishing a political frontier that divides society into two camps, appealing to the mobilization of 'the underdog' against 'those in power'. How the 'people' are constructed is critical to the nature of the conflicts generated and the ideological possibilities for change. When cracks appear in the dominant consensus of politics, these are opportunities to create linkages between different groups, through a populist identity, that can lead to alliances and the mobilization of change efforts. Laclau (2005) uses the term 'floating signifier' which refers to ambiguous ideas which can 'house' different claims and realign them. What is interesting about the Scottish experience is that the referendum on independence reflected the mobilization of conventional political subjects (i.e. voters in the classical sense of liberal democracy who were to choose a political preference) along with new political subjects who were self-organised and began to 'fill' the 'floating signifier' of independence with new political demands. This is outlined below in terms of two distinct political frontiers being established (which overlapped in reality).

1. Nationalism as a political frontier: there were two forms of nationalism which aimed to mobilise support for the unionist case and the case for independence. The case for independence was presented as a form of civic nationalism which was open to migrants and people who wanted to live and commit to Scotland. Independence was essential to achieve the level of political agency in Scotland that was being held back by the UK Parliament. On the fringes of this was also a form of identity nationalism, of being Scots first and foremost, and on the extreme edge of identity politics was a darker anti-English nationalism. The other nationalism on offer, although never represented in nationalist terms, was British nationalism. From this perspective, Scottish separatism would undermine the role of the UK in the wider world which had benefited from it. The British nationalist case was partly based on identity (with some extreme Union Jack flag waving supporters) but also on the benefits of the union to Scots – the benefits which derived from empire – as well as the social union and trade relations between England and Scotland which might be threatened by independence. The latter was raised in terms of the need to establish a border (build a wall in some accounts) between England and Scotland if independence happened.

2. Inequality and marginalization as the political frontier: overlapping the Scottish nationalist independence campaign was another, more radical form of populist politics, focused on the poorer areas of Scotland or less powerful communities, which argued for independence as a struggle to address inequalities of wealth and power linked primarily to social class, gender, 'race' and sexuality. The ideological content was disseminated in community-based campaign groups such as the Radical Independence Campaign[2],

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2   https://radical.scot

Women for Independence[3], the Women's Equality Party[4], Scots Asians for Yes[5], LGBTi for Independence[6], Commonweal[7] and so on. What these various groups shared was the need to fundamentally change politics by ensuring different voices, experiences and interests would be part of what independence would involve. The frontier was between the powerful and powerless, not simply British nationalism or Scottish nationalism, which deepening democracy could resolve.

What these different constructions of 'the people' represent are very different ways of doing politics, which are populist, bringing together new political subjects in some cases, but also based on a spectrum of ideological perspectives on the need for consensus or change to the status quo. What this paper will now focus on is the potential of these constructions, particularly the second – because of its recognition of the key issue of political inequality – to link learning and radicalizing democracy as a context for adult education.

Reframing populist politics as democratic innovation

Democratic innovations refer to the creation of spaces somewhere between deliberative democratic practices such as citizen juries, mini-publics and more direct, participatory, democratic procedures such as participatory budgeting (Elstub and Escobar, 2017). What is characteristic of democratic innovations is that they are designed to address the perceived limitations of the failings of representative democracy and, in this sense, are policy measures 'from above' which seek to legitimate and shape new forms of democratic life by renovating or reforming what exists already. On the other hand, populist politics 'from below' seeks to radically transform the kinds of political inequality which liberal democracy is based on and which it reinforces. Populist politics has the advantage of working in the idiom and culture of socially excluded groups in order to provide a voice and channel for addressing the anger and resentment which social and political inequality produces and sustains. Democratic innovation, in this sense, includes new and inclusive structures of participation 'from below', along with the generation of a culture and idiom of active political engagement rooted in lived experience.

In the context of the referendum, this culture of political participation loosened the vice-like grip of formal politics on political debate. It generated more inclusive and open spaces for participation in grassroots movements, aided by social media, which motivated widespread political debate in diverse spaces, in the home and in friendship networks. A consequence of these democratic innovations was that there were many different referendum debates, encompassing a range of social interests and a spectrum of ideological

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3   http://www.womenforindependence.org

4   http://www.womensequality.org.uk/scotland_2016

5   https://safi4yes.wordpress.com

6   http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/09/01/scottish-independence-yes-lgbt-campaign-releases-rainbow-paper-for-scottish-equality-issues/

7   http://www.allofusfirst.org

views. These developments showed the potential of democratic innovations 'from below' to revitalise the *demos* and to revitalise formal politics.

Impact on formal politics

Populist politics has had repercussions on formal politics at least in terms of influencing engagement with political parties and political events. It had immediate impact on support for the Scottish National Party (SNP), which has been the main political beneficiary, with membership more than trebling. It is now the third largest political party in the UK, whereas the Scottish population is only one tenth of the country. Increases in membership have been claimed by all the political parties that supported independence, not simply the SNP. Moreover, polling evidence suggests around 25% of 16-17 year olds have joined a political party, with a similar number being involved in political campaigning since the referendum (Black, 2015).

Another indicator of this linkage of horizontal politics in communities impacting on organized politics has been attendance at political events. The Annual Convention of the SNP in November 2014 attracted a remarkable 12,000 members, and on the same weekend in Glasgow, 3,000 participants attended the Radical Independence Campaign's Annual Conference. The opposite trend seems to be occurring in the main Scottish political party supporting the union position – membership of the Scottish Labour Party is in deep decline. In the General Election in May 2015, the SNP achieved phenomenal success whereas the Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish Liberal Democrats haemorrhaged support and were almost wiped off the political landscape. The three political parties behind the pro-union campaign were only able to elect one MP each. In addition, the average turnout in Scotland was particularly high at 71.1% (the UK average being 66.1%), rising to over 80% in two constituencies where the SNP gained seats (BBC.co.uk Election 2015).

In summary, the referendum led to a widening and deepening of politicisation in Scottish communities through both formal political processes but probably more so through the emergence of a deliberative and participatory form of populist politics. These political forces were also productive of various types of initiatives which enabled people to learn, discuss and argue the merits of a variety of issues and not merely those issues which dominated the agenda of the official campaigns. A pluralistic political culture which had vibrancy and popular energy emerged that filled the 'empty signifier' of independence with radical demands for addressing social and political inequality. We can now turn to see how adult education reacted to this new context.

THE RESPONSE OF ADULT EDUCATION

Education for democracy and social justice are always a product of wider social and political changes which create the motivation and spaces for reflection, study and social action. In the previous section we have seen how this need was met mainly through a

myriad of different local groups, campaigns and movements. In general, however, educational provision up and down the country was slow to respond – if they responded at all.

Voter registration

Providing information on voter registration was regarded as the least sensitive political activity and therefore the most widespread in schools and communities across Scotland. The inclusion of 16 and 17 year olds in the vote placed an onus on schools to provide such information. At the same time, registration information was one issue that educators felt most comfortable with in that it appeared more procedural rather than responding to substantive policy and constitutional differences that divided the pro-union and independent camps.

However, the issue of registration was not merely procedural. Scotland had been the testing ground for the UK government's poll tax in the early 1990s, which because of its blatant unfairness, was vigorously resisted in Scottish communities and this eventually led to the downfall of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Many people resisted the poll tax by going missing from the electoral register, and prior to the referendum, over a million adults were unaccounted for (Sullivan, 2014). These missing people had to weigh up the risk of becoming visible against their eligibility to vote. In the end 96% of the electorate was registered, which is a testimony to the fact that people understood how and why the vote was important.

Political education

There were also inspiring examples of educational activity. Learning to access political procedures was relevant to groups who had little or no previous experience of voting, of dealing with the paperwork of registering, and in making the connections between different political arguments as well as the difficult business of assessing claims and counter-claims. Participatory public spaces which enabled informed debate and 'safe' opportunities to listen to alternative points of view was important. These spaces for public engagement outside official channels can widen awareness and provide the chance to directly participate in debate and learn in more meaningful terms through contact with peers. If adult education is to foster critical intelligence, it needs to enable people to move beyond the limitations of personal experience.

Courses of study in history, culture, nationalism and political issues are instances of more formal adult education learning opportunities which provided spaces for in-depth examination of contentious claims. These were, of course, limited in terms of spread and the number of people involved but they were indicative of ways in which adult education can contribute to political analysis. A MOOC (Mass Open Online Course) on the Scottish Referendum, provided by the University of Edinburgh Centre for Constitutional Change, brought together critical insights from leading intellectuals nationally and internationally with opportunities for public online participation. It had over 10,000 registered participants from within and outside Scotland.

Barriers to political education

Censorship and self-censorship: One significant barrier was the local state's response which, in some cases, censored educational activity by discouraging its provision. Also self-censorship occurred amongst educators who believed they would find little support from their colleagues and limited their own potential engagement. Whilst adult and community educators do work on contentious issues (e.g. racism, sexism, etc.), the boundaries of confidence did not extend to politically controversial ones. Uncertainty and insecurity in dealing pedagogically with political complexities was a theme which emerged later as a reason why many educators felt uneasy with political education.

Bias, propaganda and education: Worry over appearing to be biased also held some practitioners back. Adult educators need to be able to make the distinction between education and propaganda and understand the relationship between the two. Whilst propaganda is commonly understood as deliberate distortion of a position, its original meaning is the systematic presentation of arguments for a particular case. In this sense it is not simply the opposite of education; it can be educative by opening up ideas, values and information which have been suppressed by opposing groups. Political hustings, which compare the propaganda of different positions, can be educative as assumptions are exposed, questioned, defended and challenged. The key difference between education and propaganda is that education involves acquiring the tools for critical engagement and is open-ended, rather than telling people what to think.

The claim that education is open-ended is not the same as saying it is neutral. As Paulo Freire (1972) states, "being neutral in a situation of inequality is merely to side with the powerful". All education involves taking a stance in relation to what values and beliefs are important and the kind of knowledge and skills necessary to sustain and nurture them. In periods when the dominant hegemony is accepted, such values, beliefs, knowledge and skills seem natural and commonsense. It is only when disruptions occur to the canopy of assumptions which form the dominant hegemony – the cracks which populism reflects – that the prospects for social change are stepped up.

The 'human relations' element of contentious issues: Binary choices in referendums squeeze decisions into one or another preference, which may generate false polarities that can exacerbate conflicts between people, particularly when they disguise a spectrum of views. False polarities on public issues spill over into interpersonal conflicts. The human relations element of this is clearly important so that respectful debate is managed. There is, moreover, no simple way in which recourse to 'facts' or information can reduce the tensions in this process. Often the facts themselves are hotly contested by the different sides both in relation to the status and weighting of the 'evidence' or what, indeed, are the significant facts which need to be considered. What might be highly significant to one group may be irrelevant to the other. Thus educators need to have the skills and confidence to manage tensions and disputes within groups and harness the energy this generates for learning and action.

Reinvigorating learning for democracy

During 2016 and 2017 the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, working along with committed allies in the Workers' Educational Association, the state-sponsored agency Education Scotland and Learning Link Scotland (a national learners' agency) have been busy promoting the agenda of learning for democracy. Three national events have been resourcing and stimulating professional interest in this work. The first event was held in the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh and focused on what learning for democracy means and examples of practice during the referendum. The second event in Glasgow addressed the theme of political inequality and drew on international experiences and policy developments to think through how to address it. The third event at the University of Dundee focused on the practical skills for organising and campaigning, for area-based work to promote democratic life and how the university can be a resource to support this work.

These national events have aimed to include a range of voices and experiences to reflect on politics and educational practice. By their very nature they provide a challenge to understanding the purpose of adult education and how educators might further the struggles for a democratic life. The response from practitioners has been overwhelmingly positive, with many keen to revitalise their work and to ally it with a socially progressive cause. One such example is Camina (http://carminaproject.weebly.com/), a new initiative by a small group of community education practitioners that responds to the need to connect and support critical education practice and practitioners in Scotland. More needs to be done… and will be done.

CONCLUSION: RENEWING DEMOCRACY AND RENEWING ADULT EDUCATION

The Scottish context is probably an easy one to make this argument for the case of populist politics as potentially progressive and democratic rather than nasty, racist or xenophobic. Whilst there were examples of bigoted identity politics and interpersonal conflicts, the types of hardcore racism which have been evident in some parts of Europe and the US, backed by political leaders, were not evident or were very marginal (the experience of Brexit was very different in this respect). The political frontiers drawn by the official campaigns avoided, in the main, the othering of specific groups. These deeply regressive political practices seek to turn populist responses into supporting authoritarian solutions.

Nevertheless, the Scottish case can provide a good example of populist politics in a socially progressive cause by illustrating the impetus for new forms of political learning and education, which adult education needs to engage with. The synergies between the two are mutually productive. Adult education in Scotland, and adult education globally, is at a crossroads of isolation from social struggles by being hitched to dominant policy agendas which have little to do with democracy, social justice, equality or freedom. Working in the 'nooks and crannies' of policy can be productive but austerity, 'learnification', or performativity measures, are making such spaces increasingly difficult to

find. The only way out of this is to ensure adult education connects once more to its historical roots of being an ally for enhancing democratic life. In taking up this challenge, adult education has to go beyond the limits of liberal democratic versions of democracy by renewing the culture and practice of grassroots democracy. It is its value in these terms which needs to be resuscitated and argued for. As long as adult education is simply a handmaiden for some other end, such as the development of human capital, the more likely it is to disappear altogether or morph into something completely different. Adult education has to be involved in history if it is to save its own soul. Its historic role is in promoting an expansive and inclusive democracy which can contribute towards the revitalisation of the *demos* and this, in turn, can contribute to the revitalisation of adult education.

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Sylwia Słowińska

BOTTOM-UP CULTURAL INITIATIVES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES – BETWEEN RETREAT AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

ABSTRACT

The goal of this text is to discuss the ways in which the creators/organizers of bottom-up cultural initiatives in local communities shape relationships with these communities and to present their involvement in the communities' affairs and problems. This is considered in the context of concepts of local education and learning in the local community. I describe five ways of shaping relations with the local community that can be located on a continuum between two poles: retreat (distance from the community) and engagement in its affairs. In the conclusion I present three models of bottom-up cultural initiatives constructed on the basis of the research findings: enclave, niche and platform initiatives. At the end I point out that all three types of bottom-up cultural initiatives provide various opportunities for learning in local communities, but it is primarily 'platforms' that create a space of local education strictly connected with the needs and problems of the local community.

Keywords: *bottom-up cultural initiatives, cultural activity, local community, relationships with the local community, involvement in local affairs, local education, learning in the local community*

KULTURNE POBUDE OD SPODAJ NAVZGOR V LOKALNIH SKUPNOSTIH – MED UMIKOM IN DRUŽBENIM VKLJUČEVANJEM – POVZETEK

V članku razpravljam o tem, kako ustvarjalci/organizatorji kulturnih pobud »od spodaj navzgor« v lokalnih skupnostih krojijo odnose s temi skupnostmi, ter predstavljam njihovo vključenost v dogajanje in probleme skupnosti. Področje obravnavam v okviru konteksta konceptov lokalnega izobraževanja in učenja na lokalni ravni. Pri tem opisujem pet načinov oblikovanja odnosov z lokalno skupnostjo, ki so razpeti med dvema poloma: umikom (distanco do skupnosti) in vključevanjem v lokalno dogajanje. V sklepu predstavljam tri modele kulturnih pobud od spodaj navzgor, oblikovanih na podlagi rezultatov raziskave: modele enklavne, nišne in platformne pobude. Na koncu poudarjam, da vse tri vrste kulturnih pobud od spodaj navzgor ponujajo raznolike priložnosti za učenje v lokalnih skupnostih, primarno pa so »platforme« tiste, ki ustvarjajo prostor za lokalno izobraževanje, ki je tesno povezano s potrebami in problemi lokalne skupnosti.

Ključne besede: *kulturne pobude od spodaj navzgor, kulturna dejavnost, lokalna skupnost, odnosi z lokalno skupnostjo, vključenost v lokalno dogajanje, lokalno izobraževanje, učenje v lokalni skupnosti*

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of bottom-up cultural initiatives seems especially interesting in times of increasing social non-commitment, withdrawal into the private sphere and the weakening of the idea of citizenship (see Bauman, 2001; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, and Tipton, 1996; Putnam, 2001). In Poland, ever since the transformation of the political system, the arduous building of a civic society is constantly being carried out. Over 25 years after the collapse of the socialist system, researchers still describe the weakness and fragility of civil society and emphasize the need for extensive education to develop civic attitudes (Mocek, 2014; Wódz, 2005). Numerous studies reveal the limited involvement of Poles in activities for supra-individual purposes, for volunteering and social activities (Czapiński, 2015; Drozdowski, 2008; Pazderski and Walczak, 2014; Niedźwiedzki, 2005). Dariusz Niedźwiedzki (2005) explains that Polish society is in a liminal state: in a form of crisis, a phase of cultural change in which there are no stable, universally accepted and applied values, norms and principles of collective life, because the values, norms and patterns of the old and new order apply at the same time (p. 246). This state of suspension between the old and the new order manifests itself in the fact that people are not interested in public affairs, that the concentration on particular interests prevails, and that the creation of clientistic systems replaces political equality. Limiting trust, solidarity and loyalty to small primary, family, and friendship groups restricts the life of the community. Poles continue to engage in social activities to a small extent within the framework of civil society structures, for example, in non-governmental organizations (Niedźwiedzki, 2005, pp. 248-249). The changes will be slow and require patience as this concerns the formation of stable pro-social attitudes (Wódz, 2005).

A lack of commitment and withdrawal into privacy prevailing in Polish society today are phenomena that heavily occupy researchers and commentators on social life. The practices of engagement are, however, also noteworthy, which is why my research focuses on bottom-up cultural initiatives. These are activities outside the framework of traditional institutions; they are non-commercial, planned, independent of top-down inspiration and supervision, and are undertaken by people who are voluntarily associating in the name of matters important to them. Against the background of the withdrawal into privacy, it seems worth investigating the activities of people who are involved, people who 'go against the flow' and selflessly make an effort to organize cultural events on their own, engage actively and creatively in socio-cultural life in their environment, and encourage others to do so as well. In the text that follows, I would like to discuss some findings of my research on bottom-up cultural initiatives. The goal of the study was to understand this kind of activity, which required focusing on the subjective interpretations of social actors – on the meanings people who take action assign to their experiences –, in this case, the creators/organizers of such initiatives (Eberle, 1984; Hitzler and Eberle, 2000; Schütz, 1971; 1974; Schütz and Luckmann, 2003). Reconstructing the meanings of bottom-up initiatives also included questions about who their creators/organizers are and how they perceive their role, what actions they take and how

they work (i.e. what ways they develop for dealing with the various tasks involved in carrying out the initiatives).

From the perspective of adult education, these initiatives create a space of informal and non-formal education for the people participating in them. Social actors who run them play the role of leaders, originators, animators of cultural activity as well as educators and creators or initiators of learning situations. Each initiative is carried out in a specific local community (related to the specific territory of a village, town, or city district) by the people living there and can therefore be considered from the perspective of education in the local community and local education. As Ewa Kurantowicz (2008a) explains, local education creates a space for excluded voices (p. 26). It occurs in many variants but always focuses on the problems and needs of the community, goes beyond institutional education, takes place mainly in informal and local contexts, is focused on the implementation of a locally and socially involved goal, empowers, and introduces a difference (Kurantowicz 2008a, pp. 27-28).

This topic is the central focus of this article. My aim is to answer the following question: How do the creators/organizers of cultural initiatives shape relationships with the local community? As an adult education researcher, I was also interested in whether the organizers of the initiatives create spaces for local education. This is related to the questions of whether initiatives are involved in the affairs of the local community and which affairs they engage in.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF THE RESEARCH

The studies were embedded in the interpretative approach; their philosophical foundation was the social phenomenology of Alfred Schütz because it is phenomenology that takes an interest in how people understand the world and what meanings they ascribe to phenomena, i.e. how and as what they appear in their experience. My research was characterised by the following views: that a researcher is confronted with a reality that is imbued with sense by the social actors acting in it, and that understanding the actions of people requires a view of the world through their eyes, focusing on subjective interpretations rooted in their lifeworld. Using methodological procedures, a researcher reconstructs these subjective meanings and, based on them, creates typologies and scientific models, the so-called second-degree constructs (Schütz and Luckmann, 2003; Schütz, 2006; 2008). According to Alfred Schütz's viewpoint, which I adopt, the actions of the social actors included in the study are rooted in their lifeworld, and it is through them that the organizers/implementers of the initiatives reveal how they understand reality, how they experience it, and what is relevant to them according to their individual systems of relevance. They assign meaning to initiatives by determining the expected results of actions, i.e. 'motives in order to', and by assigning them 'motives because', i.e. social and biographical conditioning, in the acts of reflection. Therefore, in my search for the meanings of grass-roots cultural initiatives, I concentrated on reconstructing these motives of action.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCHED INITIATIVES AND THEIR CREATORS/ORGANIZERS

The research on bottom–up cultural initiatives was carried out in 2012 in the Lubuskie province, which is located in western Poland. Data was collected with the use of qualitative tools – through in-depth interviews and observations of activities. The data derives from 16 bottom-up cultural initiatives undertaken by various social actors: individuals (5), formalized groups – associations (9), and non-formalized groups (2). Eight initiatives were carried out in villages, three in small towns (with populations under 20,000), one in a medium-sized city (with a population between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants) and four in small towns with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants.

Interviews were conducted with 32 people working at the heart of these initiatives, that is, the people most engaged in them: the ones participating in creating ideas, planning, decision-making and realization. Among the interviewed creators/organizers of initiatives were 9 women and 23 men, between the ages of 20 and 80; 21 respondents had achieved higher levels of education, 6 people had completed secondary-level education, 1 person had basic vocational education, and 4 organizers were students. In addition, 9 of them worked professionally in the area of culture.

Table 1: Fields and profile of initiatives

Range of fields/ Profile of initiative	Field of culture/topic of initiative
one cultural field/ profiled	1) stage improvisation 2) comedy 3) film
one main cultural field plus additional fields/profiled	4) arts (plus other fields, e.g. cultural heritage) 5) arts, music (plus other fields, e.g. culinary, handicraft) 6) modern art (plus other fields, e.g. theatre, music)
many cultural fields/ profiled	7) Lemko culture 8) Jewish culture 9) history of the region, local culture, Polish-German relations 10) hip-hop culture
many cultural fields/ partly profiled	11) social relations, art, music, history, local cultural heritage; entertainment 12) social relations, music, local cultural heritage 13) regionalism, cultural heritage, history, photography, visual arts, music 14) forest, sculpture, music, work, sports, entertainment
many cultural fields/ not profiled	15) culinary, fun, music, singing, dancing 16) social relations, religion, poetry, music, theatre, recreation

Source: own

The researched initiatives involve various fields of culture and various topics. First, three initiatives are focused on one cultural field (e.g. film), so they are thematically profiled. Second, the next three initiatives are focused on one main cultural field too but are sometimes linked to different fields (for a specific project). Third, four initiatives are related to many fields of culture and thematically profiled (specializing in specific issues). Fourth, the next four initiatives are related to many fields of culture but only partly thematically profiled (some activities are profiled, others not). And finally, two initiatives are connected with many fields of culture and are not profiled thematically.

WAYS OF SHAPING RELATIONS WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The ways in which the creators/organizers of initiatives shape relationships with the local community are linked to their understanding of the initiatives. Three types of understanding have been reconstructed in this research:

A. initiative as a space of self-realization (mostly focused on the chosen cultural field, mainly an artistic one);
B. initiative as a space of self-fulfilment that includes a component of social engagement (but engagement has a limited scope);
C. initiative as a space of socially engaged cultural activity.

Each initiative is implemented in a particular local community; however, they are open to the local community and local issues in varying degrees. Based on data analysis I identified five ways of shaping relations with the local community. These differ according to how the local community is understood (its role, its position relative to the initiative) and in the planned results (what the organizers want to achieve). The reconstructed ways of shaping relationships with the local community are:
• opening up to the community,
• familiarizing the community with the initiatives and winning it over
• cooperation with the community,
• staying aloof,
• going against the grain.

Opening up to the community

The first way of shaping relationships with the community can be illustrated by the words of an interviewed creator/organizer of an initiative as:

> […] going beyond institutions and reaching out to a greater number of people.

The local community is understood here as the addressee of a specific offer of cultural activity, its recipient, but not as a co-creator. It is important for this approach to avoid financial, competence and spatial barriers to the use of this offer. The creators/organizers carry out initiatives in an open, public space, choosing mainly forms such as

concerts, festivals, performances, shows, workshops and more. Thus, the offers of cultural activity are for community members (for everyone) and they are easily accessible. Using this way of shaping relationships with the community, their creators/organizers want to achieve the increased interest in the subject matter or cultural field of the initiative as well as greater cultural activity in the community. They create a space for informal learning through cultural activity, in which locals develop the competences of the recipient of a cultural event, enabling them to move around in the world of culture and use its products.

Familiarizing the community with the initiatives and winning it over

One of the respondents describes this approach as follows:

> […] just like with the Little Prince and the fox [...] [,] this is a form of taming, familiarizing people with a certain sphere of cultural life.

The community is also seen here as the addressee of the action and its recipient, but primarily as the subject of educational influence. It is about familiarizing people with certain forms of cultural activity, certain phenomena or problems, and is about provoking changes in their thinking patterns and actions. This way of shaping relationships is primarily chosen when initiatives are new in an environment or when they address issues in a difficult context. The idea is to gradually introduce locals to the new activities, to accustom people to what is unknown, and can thus cause anxiety or simply disturb the current routine. The planned results attributed to this way of shaping relationships are community acceptance for the initiative and its ideas, rooting it within community life and the gradual involvement of people in action.

Cooperation with the community

This way of acting is illustrated by the voice of one initiative creator/organizer:

> […] when it comes to festivals, the entire village is included.

Both the above-presented ways of forming relationships with the community consist of work *for* the community – the third is about work *with* the community (Lucio-Villegas & Fragoso, 2016). It is based on the perception of the community as a co-creator of the initiative. This cooperation can range from involving individuals and community representatives, to specific tasks, to involving the whole community in the action.

This way of working is based on the participation of community members and on giving them a voice, a key feature of community education. It should enhance the potential of the community and strengthen the bonds between its members and their engagement in joint affairs as well as their identification with the initiative. It creates opportunities for the community members to practice democracy and to learn citizenship.

Staying aloof

One respondent expresses this approach thus:

> […] we have not yet dealt with an open group, we do not post posters, 'Everybody come here, please!'

The first three ways of shaping relationships with the local community are conciliatory approaches that do not take into account tensions or divisions within communities and avoid conflicts. In addition, they show that the initiative needs the community. The situation is different in the case of 'staying aloof'. Here, the creators/organizers of initiatives reduce the local community to the background of the activities. They tend to retreat into a niche instead of openly approaching the community with their activities. They address initiatives to a narrow circle of interested people who have similar passions and do not try to open up the initiative to the whole community. This is connected with the subject matter of the initiative, which may in some cases generate negative reactions, but above all, it is oriented inward (to the realization of one's own interests) and not outward (in order to change something in the environment). According to Ian Martin and Mae Shaw, in this case, the community is a frame of activity (cited in Kurantowicz, 2008a, p. 24). Within a community understood in such a way, there are various learning groups gathered around specific topics and interests (Kurantowicz, 2008b, p. 58). The organizers of initiatives create opportunities for the formation of such learning groups.

Going against the grain

One interviewee describes this way of acting as follows:

> I just do it, whether you like it or not.

Rob Evans, Ewa Kurantowicz and Emilio Lucio-Villegas claim that "Community is a place where conflict and confrontation are the usual thing" (2016, p. 9). Such a view is revealed in this way of shaping relations with the community. 'Going against the grain' is an uncompromising approach and includes a risk of conflict with the community. The latter is seen here as a witness of action, indifferent or critical, not always accepting and understanding the idea of the initiative. Consequently, the organizers assume that the community is also a subject of educational influence. The principle of this mode of action is not to be discouraged by the opinions articulated by the community representatives and perform tasks perceived as important (often crucial in local and supra-local contexts). Despite resistance, criticism, dislike or lack of interest in the community (or its parts), the actors are trying to 'go forward', 'do their thing'. The key here is to believe that specific issues need to be tackled and resolved regardless of the response of the community. At the same time, they assume that their persistent efforts will eventually change the community's attitude. This mode of action is usually chosen by people who have a strong position in the community and who are active in their environment. Importantly, they never use this way exclusively.

Table 2: The ways of shaping relationships with the local community – juxtaposition

The way of shaping relationships with the local community	Understanding the local community	The main feature	Planned results
Opening up to the community	recipient, audience	activities in open public spaces, 'no barriers'	interest in the subject/ cultural phenomenon/ cultural field, greater cultural activity of the community
Familiarizing the community with the initiatives...	recipient, subject of educational influence	gradual acquaintance with the initiative/new activities	acceptance for the initiative, local participation
Cooperation with the community	co-creator	involving community members, participation	identification with the initiative, greater involvement in community issues, progress of the initiative
Staying aloof	background	retreat, acting in a secure niche	security, focus on individual goals
Going against the grain	indifferent or critical witness, subject of (educational) influence	acting despite the lack of community support	change in the views and attitudes of the locals

Source: own

The creators/organizers of initiatives combine different ways of shaping relationships with the local community. Their choice is related to their understanding of the initiatives. The actors representing the first way of understanding initiatives (A) are guided mainly by individual needs. They create for themselves and people with similar interests a space of self-fulfilment, unengaged in daily affairs, social problems or local needs. That is why they use a rather narrow spectrum of ways of shaping relationships with the local community. They primarily understand the locals as consumers (the audience) of the cultural activity offered. By implementing these initiatives, the organizers create situations for the informal learning of locals, enable the formation of learning groups in the local community but they do not, in fact, constitute a space for local education related to the problems and everyday life of the community. The situation is different in the case of the next two approaches. The broadest range of ways of shaping relations with the community is used by the actors for whom cultural initiatives are a space of social engagement (C). Their starting point is not the self, not their needs and aspirations, but specific situations in the social world, experienced as inappropriate and requiring intervention. Their actions are complex and require different treatment of the community, which in turn has different roles, but most importantly, it becomes a contributor, cooperator and participates in the initiative.

Table 3: Ways of shaping relations with the local community and understanding initiatives

Ways of shaping relations with the local community	Initiatives															
	A					B		C								
	1	2	3	6	13	8	10	4	5	7	9	11	12	14	15	16
Opening up to the community	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Familiarizing the community...				+			+		+	+	+	+		+		+
Cooperation with the community		+	+					+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
Staying aloof					+	+										
Going against the grain											+			+		+

A – initiatives as a space of self-realization
B – initiatives as a space of self-realization including a component of social engagement
C – initiatives as a space of a socially engaged cultural activity

Source: own

INITIATIVES IN RELATION TO LOCAL COMMUNITY ISSUES/AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT

The ways of shaping relations with the local community can be located on the continuum between two poles: retreat (distance from the community and its needs) and engagement in the affairs of the local community (in some cases related to wider supra-local contemporary challenges).

Figure 1: Bottom-up initiatives between retreat and engagement

There are two ways in which the organizers of initiatives involved in the affairs of the local community perceive the things they engage in. First, they *act locally and think locally* (Idzikowski, 2011). They treat these issues as specific phenomena related to the life of this particular community, which bind them to the local context. Their involvement deals with issues such as:

- weak involvement of the inhabitants in the life of the community;
- disturbed local relationships (conflicts, lack of community spirit, disintegration);
- disappearance of local traditions;
- exclusion of the inhabitants of a small village;
- limited opportunities for the development and success of local artists–beginners.

Secondly, the initiative organizers/creators *operate locally, but think locally and supra-locally*. They engage with issues that concern a given community, but they perceive it in a broader perspective, as a supra-local phenomenon. Their initiatives deal with problems such as:

- weak social/cultural activity;
- the threat of the disappearance of minority culture (Lemko culture);
- threats to the development of children and adolescents (captivating media influence, exclusion of children from rural areas);
- intolerance, stereotypes and prejudices (against hip hop subculture, Jewish culture, Lemko culture, Germans);
- difficulties in Polish-German reconciliation;
- threat of social exclusion (villagers);
- neglect, degradation, obliteration of cultural heritage.

The organizers of these initiatives, therefore, not only create a learning space in the local community, but above all initiate local education involved in the affairs and needs of the community.

IN CONCLUSION: MODELS OF BOTTOM-UP CULTURAL INITIATIVES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Based on the results of the study, I have constructed three models of bottom-up cultural initiatives. The following criteria of division have been used:

- the scope of openness of the initiative to the local community;
- the way the actors think about the cultural activities;
- the goals of the activities and their relation to the social context.

Thus, *enclave initiatives* create a space that is separated from the social environment (Gołdyka and Machaj, 2007; Gołdyka, 2009). They constitute an isolated world of cultural activity for a limited group of people. The initiatives are created to meet their own needs and aspirations. Therefore, initiatives of this kind are exclusive and closed. Cultural activity is understood rather narrowly: it focuses on a specific, selected field of culture, the fascination with which connects and unites the creators/organizers of the initiative.

'Enclave initiatives' constitute a space for cultural activity focused on individual goals (primarily self-realization) and are not involved in the surrounding social reality and in the affairs of the local community, whose members are the creators/organizers of the initiative. They provide an informal and non-formal learning space and build learning groups in which people gather based on specific interests. They strengthen the educational potential of the local community but only to a limited extent because they do not cooperate with other entities in the local environment and the range of their impact is small.

Niche initiatives also build a separated space of cultural activity, but unlike 'the enclaves', they are not fully enclosed and hermetic. First, they provide opportunities for cultural activity for the narrower (their own) group of creators/organizers and people close to them (internal offer, not addressed to the outside); second, there is also a proposal for 'non-initiative' people, community representatives, primarily treated as audience. There is also greater opportunity (though not unlimited) of entering the niche, which means joining the initiative group. As in the case of 'enclave initiatives', cultural activity is narrowly understood and tied primarily to the goal of individual self-realization. Cultural activity is not a way to get involved in social affairs, it is not an instrument for making changes outside the niche. Its semi-open nature makes it possible for certain issues to penetrate it and the organizers/creators of the initiative expand their activities ad hoc by joining in specific actions in the community.

Finally, *platform initiatives* set up a certain space of cultural activity that is not enclosed away from the life of the local community but is a platform of broad engagement. 'Platform initiatives' are an example of activities open to collaboration and community participation. A broad understanding of cultural activity means linking it to the social context. Cultural activity, therefore, does not constitute a separate reality isolated from the community but is a way of integrating into its life and changing it. Such bottom-up initiatives are an expression of concern for common issues, an expression of commitment and responsibility for issues of universal character.

All three types of bottom-up cultural initiatives create various opportunities for learning in local communities, but it is primarily 'platforms' that construct a space of local education strictly connected with the real life of the community. In this case, organizers think collectively and teach community members collective thinking; they encourage people to participate in local community life; they provide new learning opportunities in places and areas where there is a gap, that is, where there is nothing on offer or it is poor; they raise topics not taken on by other entities, for example, cultural and educational institutions existing in their environment. They create opportunities for social interaction that strengthens local bonds and is crucial for the development of the local community. These kinds of initiatives, as Kurantowicz (2007) has pointed out, are a way to build and develop the educational potential of the local community (p.149).

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Emilio Lucio-Villegas

THE RIVER AND THE PEOPLE
An Approach To Memories, Craft And Adult Education

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this article is to describe an ongoing study to recover the memories of the people and the traditional crafts associated with the Guadalquivir River where it passes through a town called C., 12km from the city of S. in the south of Spain. It seems that people are losing their sense of belonging to both a symbolic and geographical territory. The process for recovering it can be considered a generator of experiences and learning. These experiences are related to identity as an element which enables people to understand how individuals establish relationships amongst themselves and with the environment. The paper describes the process of research based on interviewing people to capture their experiences. This is a work in process. The first outcomes are related to a number of descriptive categories such as: the crafts associated with the River; the use of the River to transport goods and people; the family ties associated with the crafts; the cosmopolitanism of the people and the changes ensuing from it; the role of women; and the River as a magical and mysterious place. Preliminary conclusions call on us to consider the importance of recovering traditional crafts as a source of adult education, and of maintaining a cultural identity threatened by globalisation processes.

Keywords: *adult education, artisans, crafts, experience, identity, memories*

REKA IN LJUDJE. PRISTOP K SPOMINOM, OBRTI IN IZOBRAŽEVANJU ODRASLIH – POVZETEK

Glavni namen članka je opisati raziskavo v teku, s katero poskušamo obuditi spomine ljudi in tradicionalno obrt v povezavi z reko Guadalquivir na točki, kjer teče skozi kraj C. 12 kilometrov od mesta S. na jugu Španije. Zdi se, da tukajšnji ljudje izgubljajo občutek pripadnosti tako simboličnemu kot geografskemu ozemlju. Proces spominjanja in obnavljanja je lahko generator izkušenj in učenja. Te izkušnje so povezane z identiteto kot elementom, ki ljudem omogoča razumevanje, kako posamezniki ustvarjajo medsebojna razmerja in vezi z okoljem. Prvi rezultati raziskave, ki še poteka, so povezani z več opisnimi kategorijami, na primer: obrt, povezana z reko; uporaba reke za prevoz blaga in ljudi; družinske vezi, povezane z obrtjo; svetovljanstvo prebivalcev in posledične spremembe; vloga žensk ter reka kot magičen in skrivnosten kraj. Preliminarne ugotovitve nas vabijo, da premislimo o pomembnosti obnavljanja tradicionalne obrti kot viru v izobraževanju odraslih in o vzdrževanju kulturne identitete ob grožnji globalizacijskih procesov.

Ključne besede: *izobraževanje odraslih, obrtniki, obrt, izkušnje, identiteta, spomini*

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INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this article is to describe research dedicated to recovering the memories of the Guadalquivir River where it passes through a town called C., 12km from the city of S. in the south of Spain. Questions are raised about the River and its influence on people's daily life. Knowledge about this could be an instrument of learning and teaching addressing not only the elderly but also the younger generation, in order to explain what the role of the River has historically been, and perhaps still is, for the town. The main research questions are related to the way that people understand the social changes in their surrounding reality and the issue of how adult education can help people to understand these changes better.

At the present time a series of interviews are being conducted in order to reclaim people's experiences in relation to the River. In this article, the focus is on the interviews and specifically on some aspects directly related to crafts, trade, identity, etc. Lastly, some conclusions will be presented.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We are living in a society undergoing an unstoppable process of globalisation. Local identities are confronted with a stream of modernisation processes and pressures to change certain traditional ways of life and work to more competitive ways in order to benefit the market. I have previously studied these processes of change in the case of fishing activities (Lucio-Villegas, 2006). In this previous research two powerful concepts arose: Social Change, and Transition. Social change can be defined "as the difference observed between the previous and subsequent states of an area of social reality" (Giner, 1985, p. 217). According to Rocher (1985), social change means observable changes, and this can be verified within short periods in geographical and socio-cultural areas. It is possible to derive some central elements of interest from such change. On the one hand, there is the temporary space. On the other, it is possible to stress the importance of the physical territory and the culture of the community. It is also important to stress that, according to the author, change goes beyond purely economic phenomena and extends to the way people live, their feelings and relationships. In short, the concept of social change allows us to consider the loss of cultural identities that communities – and the people living in them – are suffering in relation to their way of life and the production system associated with it.

The major change, at the present time, seems to be the unstoppable process of globalisation (Giddens, 2007). Opposed to a simplistic view – only global influences over the local – Robertson (1995, 2012) introduced the term *Glocalisation* to explain the contradictory relations between the global and the local. Robertson affirms that "one of the ways of considering the idea of *global culture* is in terms of its being constituted by the increasing interconnectedness of many local cultures" (2012, p. 196). Godelier (1987) speaks of societies in transition. This occurs when they have considerable internal and external difficulties in producing traditional economic and social relations. In the process

of transition, other forms of economic and social relationships appear. This concept is also linked to the processes of modernisation. These processes are associated with the massive incorporation of certain changes – such as, for instance, in the production system because it is considered obsolete. Accordingly, the process of modernisation is based on relegating crafts and other forms of economic trade to a kind of marginal niche – in some ways devoted only to tourism and serving as anthropological objects of curiosity.

But this craftwork is an important part of people's everyday lives and experiences. It confirms their identity and is grounded in their experience, derived as it is from their relationships with others and with the surrounding environment. Experience can be considered one of the dimensions of adult education. It is, in some ways, the result – and the process – through which an individual organises knowledge and shares it with others. Experience, from a Freirean perspective, is related to problem-posing education, and it is the foundation for organising the processes of teaching and learning (Freire, 1970). Sometimes, however, this experience is lost in the 'new' world of business (Sennett, 2000). These experiences have to be recovered as educational tools (Lucio-Villegas, 2015; Olesen, 1989).

From these experiences it is possible to establish relationships between adult education, identities, work and crafts. Gelpi (1990, p. 17) suggests as follows:

> The relationships between work and society are not only of economic and social nature. The lack of identity of a community, a country or several countries has consequences concerning the content and the quality of the work.

There is, Gelpi adds, an essential cultural dimension in reflecting on work. Based on this, Gelpi speaks of work cultures, trying to define identities and bonds that people forge around work.

Artisans and communities are intrinsically linked. In fact, as Sennett states, "in the traditional world of the archaic potter or doctor, standards for good work were set by the community" (2009, p. 25). Gramsci maintains that the artisan produces pieces of furniture, or ploughs, or knives, etc., according to the traditional taste of some village, province or region (cited in Manacorda, 1976). Traditionally, Gramsci adds, artisans create whatever they like, while trying to capture the spirit of the people. In short, it seems that these relations between culture, identity, and community life are always present in organising a part of people's everyday life and the system of production. Today, everyday life is homogenised to benefit the big companies that are dictating people's tastes. The artisans' work is lost, because it is unique and follows guidelines based on the interests of the people, rather than subjugating these interests to commercial demands. It is a fact that the organisation of work has been changed. While Gelpi's (2004, p. 111) description that "[t]he time of production is fragmentary and very diverse and the quality of work varies in regard to the content, the development and the aim" holds true of artisanal production, this new organisation throws out some of the characteristics of the crafts and craftsmen's work, such as the innovation that introduces changes in the final product, and the creativity to

adapt the final result to the tastes and necessities of the communities where the artisans work and live.

An important point to reflect on is Sennett's argument related to the loss of pride in the crafts that, in some ways, is equivalent to identity. Artisans are lost in the maelstrom of the new organisation of work, but they are people "devoted to good work for its own sake" (Sennett, 2009, p. 20). Doing a good job is the primary identity of artisans. This means a specific way of organising the work, the learning and teaching of the work, and life. A job well done means "to be curious about, to investigate, and to learn from ambiguity" (Sennett, 2009, p. 48).

The artisans' work challenges us to think about work itself and about its organisation, as well as how to learn both the work and its organisation in a very different way, far from the mainstream view defined by Lifelong Learning policy-making and characterised by the search for skills, competences and competition in order to standardise every procedure, including education, and by adult education focused only on the labour market and competitiveness. Later on, I will present some analytical categories emerging from the interviews that can help us in this reflection.

Finally, I refer to culture. According to Raymond Williams, culture, apart from being a very complicated word (1983, p. 87), is a plural word with diverse meanings. It is not possible to talk about culture but rather about cultures, and this diversity is not only related to different countries or historical periods but also to "social and economic groups within a nation" (Williams, 1983, p.89). In the end, culture is a way of life that includes, among other things, work, intellectual practices or artistic activities. In this sense, it is possible to consider the activities performed by artisans as a part of local cultures that are in danger of disappearing due to the mainstream globalisation processes in the field of production, but not only here.

Culture is also related to the system of meanings that people have to help them understand the world. Following Geertz (1987), culture is a complex system of meanings that enables people to situate themselves in a symbolic universe where things, actions, objects take on significance. When this significance is lost, people are in a society in transition, as Geertz (1987) explained when he talked about Javanese funeral rituals.

METHODOLOGY

This section includes a description of the place, some notes about the research team and the research itself – including both the main aims and research questions – as well as the methodological tools used.

Brief description of the context

C. is a town 12 km from S., the fourth most populated city in Spain. At present, C. has 30,358 inhabitants (Junta de Andalucía, 2016). The place is now a dormitory town – due to the expansion of the nearest great city. Its history, and the history of its production

system and the culture associated with it, is closely linked to the river. In fact, around 800 BC, the village was at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River, but today it is around 40 km away. Another important historical event related to the River and the history of C. is the so-called *Hasekura Expedition,* which in the 17th century brought Japanese people to the village. This event is still celebrated today and some bonds have been created with Japan – specifically with the city of Sendai.

The traditional production system was based on fishing, pottery, the fabrication of bricks, shipbuilding, trade and other activities closely linked to the River, which defined a cultural identity almost lost today. At present, C., as pointed out above, is a dormitory town with only a single brick factory in operation, and only a fraction of the population lives off fishing and other related activities.

The research team

The research team is composed of people coming from diverse backgrounds: retired adult education teachers, civil servants working in the City Hall, people coming from Social Movements and from the university – teachers and students – or from the adult education school – also teachers and students. It is important to stress that the diversity of people in the research team is, at the same time, a valuable resource and a disadvantage. Some of the members were already involved in the original project and certain problems arose during the research. These issues were dealt with thanks to a very slow process of dialogue and to a participatory approach.

Aims and research questions

As indicated above, the main aim of this research is to recover the memories of the River Guadalquivir where it passes through a town called C. The research questions are summarised as follows: How do people understand the changes in their surrounding environment, and how can adult education help people to understand these changes and recover/maintain their identity – in this case associated with crafts.

Methodological Tools

The major methodological tool used is interviews. To date, a number of interviews have been conducted – mainly with men; this imbalance will be addressed in the continuation. The people interviewed were selected by local members of the research team. The main criterion for selection was extensive knowledge of the river, the city and the crafts associated with it. According to these criteria, the individuals interviewed were, amongst others: sailors, fishermen, net manufacturers, the owner of a brick factory, and, finally, an older woman with ample knowledge of the river. The interviews were always audio recorded and, in some cases, video recorded. They were also made by the same person in order to unify the questions and discourse. The interviews were transcribed, and analysed first using speculative analysis and then by classifying and categorising the information (Woods, 1986).

FINDINGS

The research is focused on systematising a number of categories that allow us not only to classify the interviews but also to organise diverse materials such as pictures, artefacts, etc.

Below are some categories that can be extracted from the analysis of the interviews conducted.

The lost words

At the very beginning of *The Age of Revolution* (2001), the historian Eric Hobsbawm explains how this time of profound changes in Western societies can also be remembered for the new words that appeared and today are common in our languages – words such as industry, railways, working-class, etc. Similarly, traditional crafts in C. have a number of specific words for designating specific tasks. For instance, the owner of a brick factory explains the reason for calling the mud 'fish'.

> [The mud] *was collected on boards where it was cut with an 'esteron'.* [a kind of big box to recover and transport fish] *This 'esteron' was the same used to extract the fish from the boats and this is the reason that the mud* [extracted from the river] *is called "fish".*

These kinds of expression are being lost. "*Will there be things lost with the passing of time?"* wondered another person being interviewed. Thinking in terms of crafts, it is possible to find similar situations. An example could be the word 'barranquero', which referred to a man who knew how to cut the mud, making holes and extracting the mud from ravines near the river. The loss of this craft is also the loss of this word. As Saramago (2015) states, first the people leave, then the craft leaves, and finally the word is gone.

In other cases it is not possible to understand the discourse without additional explanation.

> *'Chupones'* [suckers/dredgers] *are boats, or rather, only one boat, we are going to talk about only one... so one or two, it is like a big steamer and it is ready to suck sand.*

According to Gelpi (2008), diversity is a broad concept with a lot of meanings, one of which is related to language. We have lost languages and expressions and this means, among other things, that there is homogenisation of the language, which means homogenisation of thought. It is also consistent with Labov's work (1987), which demonstrates that the use of the language in some specific contexts can also change the language. This issue will be developed further in the conclusions.

Crafts of our fathers

This could be considered the central category for analysing social changes, because the most important things are related to craft and identity, but also the confusion and

complication that family relationships cause not only in transmitting the craft but also in the organisation of the work. In traditional societies, crafts can be seen as transmitted in familial networks, e.g., *"that have been passed from fathers to sons, you know?"* This process also establishes close relationships between different crafts. *"I started to work as a carpenter with my uncle,"* a fisherman explained. In some ways, we can consider crafts as bequeathed by fathers to sons.

> *I was born in a fishing family, in C. My father died when I was young, my mother became a widow with 8 sons. My oldest brother became responsible for the family. We inherited a little fishing boat from my father. Of course, my brother started to work in it. I was 11 or 12.*

In these familial conditions the learning of a craft is a hard process without salary.

> *My father took me out* [of school] *to learn the craft with my uncle, without earning anything and I told my father, 'Dad, I work more than my cousins and much more than everyone but I don't earn anything.'*

There was also confusion about the role of father and the role of boss – which can be judged different compared to that in our societies: *"I went to work with my father. My father was the master and I was the sailor."*

Other individuals tried to escape from this situation through specialised training. *"I got a diploma as a second naval mechanic"*. It seems that this enabled people to get away from the pressures of family relationships, but it can also be considered one of the reasons for the death of the village and the birth of the city as I will present in the next section.

To conclude, it is also important to stress that the fact that crafts were linked to family relationships also means the loss of traditional crafts when these bonds are broken.

> *Look! There is my son [...] I am the end* [the son is coming] *he is an industrial engineer, and doesn't want to know anything about it.*

Or

> *No, my sons didn't want. They didn't want... So* [sigh]

Cosmopolitanism: the death of a village, the birth of a city

In 'What is Globalisation' (1998), Ulrich Beck talks about cosmopolitanism as one of the characteristics of globalisation processes. Cosmopolitanism is related to, among other things, the ease of changing the place of residence, i.e., moving from one place to another. In the case of C., cosmopolitanism becomes relevant between the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, and it is related to the construction of an important shipyard in the city of S.

> *The Gutierrez Perez neighbourhood was born from this, was it not? This is in relation to economic growth and dormitory towns, right?*

This cosmopolitanism is also related to the accreditation of some skills and competences as valid diplomas enabling movement to a wider labour market, as we have seen above. "*I left the river and went to Cadiz*", explained a person who specialised in naval mechanics. Another: "*I was in Iran, then I was in Israel too, with dredging too, I have been in France and in Morocco*". And another one explained: *"We were in Iran, we did work in Algeria, and we were in Israel."*

There was a sort of exodus of craftsmen – mainly affecting the shipyard, but also other places – that could be one of the reasons for the death of the traditional village and the traditional society – based on a local economy focused on the River – and the birth of a dormitory town where traditional identities are under threat.

The Twilight Zone

In geographical and social terms, the River is an unknown space. This can be analysed from diverse standpoints. For instance, taking into account both commerce and transportation across the river, the River has been a waterway with a high volume of people from C. going to the nearest beach at SB at the mouth of the River, or workers from C. going to the 'Island' when the rice is harvested.

> *People travelled more comfortably, you know. In those times, not every worker had money, the most important thing was to go to SB, to spend two or three days... eh! And then they returned again in the boat. You know how transportation was in the past!*

However, the most important thing was the movement of goods. In this connection it can be said that there was important trade from SB to S. – mainly salt, and goods and food going from S. and C. to the nearby 'Island'. Sometimes commerce and transportation went beyond S. further up on the river. In fact, some individuals changed their work from fishing to transporting sand or gravel.

> *Yes, it was a boat that... in the past there were no roads to the Island and then there were some little boats to take food and everything they needed on the Island because it was not possible to go by alternative means* [than the river] *... it was... I don't know... rice growers managed everything by way of the river.*

Nonetheless, in C., the River is responsible for contradictory feelings. Although it was one of the main sources of wealth and work – brick, pottery, agriculture, fishing, shipbuilding – people usually turned their backs on the River because it is a mysterious place causing diseases and death:

There were mosquitoes... so, they must work in the river to sow the rice and some tourists died because of mosquito bites, they became swollen.

Another aspect is related to the sense of a frontier with the unknown: the marsh.

Here began a physical border. From here on down the river it was the marsh [...] of the mosquito diseases.

This unknown element enabled people to create a magical consciousness about the River that is fatalist and beyond control. For instance, when the River flooded almost every winter.

Here you have your thirty cows in winter and then a flood came, and when you could get there [to the place where the cows were]*, there were no more cows.*

Perhaps the most interesting demonstration of this fatalistic view is related to the fear of the River itself. A kind of reverential fear that is present in the prohibition of bathing.

Sure! Of course, you had a sure beating.... If your father knew that you had gone to the river to have a swim, if a friend [of your father] *saw you* [bathing and told him,] *'I saw your son in the river,' the beating was certain.*

The last issue related to this is the visible lack of women in this process. In fact, in a previous piece of research on fishing villages (Lucio-Villegas, 2006), I stressed the importance of the role that women played in social and economic activities. It was very strange, in this case, that those women were invisible. When I asked individuals about relations I could interview, there were no women. I insisted and the response – including the response from people working in a municipal women's centre – was that historically women only worked in olive warehouses and factories in a nearby city called H., on the other side of the river.

There were, however, women who worked as net manufacturers.

The nets that were made, they were made by women... Then men assembled the nets because women did, maybe, the net piece by piece, and then you have to put the 'trallas', [ends] *put the weight, put the float, and mount them. These things were done by men.*

And also related to the selling of fish,

I remember that fish were taken to the fish market. We referred to the slaughterhouse [matadero] *in C. as the fish market, where we took the fish to sell. Perhaps you were not able to sell all the fish and some fish was left over. So, the women would go out to the streets* [to sell fish].

However, there are few testimonies from women up to now. Most importantly, they are not invisible anymore and it is possible to start knowing something more about their role during this time.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the current stage of the research, some conclusions can be presented.

First of all, it is significant that there are contradictory feelings that people face with regard to the river. The River is the source of life but, at the same time, it is a dangerous place and it is better not to go there. In some ways it could be affirmed that the production system is dissociated from everyday life in the sense that the River is considered an enemy more than a source of work and wealth. Perhaps this could explain the reason why the inhabitants abandoned their life on the river. Investigating these beliefs may help people to shift from a magical consciousness to a critical one (Freire, 1970) and recovering memories of the River serves as a way to recover their own history and their own identity as members of a community.

A second issue could be related to modernisation processes. It seems that some of the most profound changes that the village underwent are related to the shift from a rural society to an industrial and urban one. The involvement of the artisans in working in the shipyard in S. and in other jobs around the world was a possibility for people to position themselves in more secure jobs, increase their salaries and, in economic terms, to improve their quality of life. Now and in the past, in rural areas of Spain to have a job was one of the most important things in people's lives, because this enables individuals to escape poverty and opens other horizons not only for them but also for their families. The lack of acknowledgement, either in social or economic terms, can be considered one of the reasons for abandoning the crafts that were the pillars of the 'archaic' society.

The challenge here is to determine how to preserve a traditional production system while simultaneously guaranteeing both jobs and quality of life; and this in a globalised world that seems to have swept along the past of this community as the River would in a flood. This is additionally connected to processes of social change that have occurred in the village in the last 60 years. These are mainly related to industrialisation processes – the construction of a shipyard in the city of S., or the pollution of the river; *"fishing ended when washing machines appeared,"* explained one person.

Culture is closely linked to language. A subordinate culture is reflected, among other things, in language (Diaz Salazar, 1991). If words are lost, we lose an important part of this widespread culture that, in this case, is represented by a specific and technical oral language. But the most important thing here is that these words are in the collective memory and in the cultural identity of the communities. To preserve these words and the language associated with it is also to preserve the creativity of the community and their identity because words express the world of individuals and communities. And the question here is, how do we preserve orality in a society that always reinforces reading

and writing? And yet, grammar seems to be a political fact linked to dominant culture. As Gramsci (1985) stated: "Written normative grammar thus always presupposes a 'choice', a cultural orientation, and is therefore always an act of national-cultural politics." (p. 182). To preserve the language is to confront these hegemonic tendencies.

The processes of Popular Education have to be rooted in the interest and curiosity of the people and should produce really useful knowledge for individuals and communities. In this case, really useful knowledge is related to knowledge of history that allows individuals to preserve the present by knowing about the past. I think that this may make it possible for people to be situated in their community and society in a stance of resistance and transformation against the major tendencies of globalisation: the homogenisation of culture and the focus of the whole society on economic issues.

In a society where every procedure is increasingly standardised, to safeguard creativity seems to be an important element in guaranteeing people's development. In this sense, this research attempts to recover the creativity that is present in traditional crafts because it is a creativity that resides in the community too. Crafts are always associated with a community.

By recovering and maintaining these traditional crafts, maybe only for leisure, it may be possible to augment traditional knowledge and people's resources. This kind of adult education is totally opposed to a model of Lifelong Learning policy-making focused only on the individual as a worker or future worker without memory or history – personal and collective. To react against these policies that dehumanise people, as Freire (1970) affirms, we have to reconstruct local cultural identities that allow people to become protagonists of their life-world and their community life.

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Marta Gregorčič

SILENCED EPISTEMOLOGIES: THE POWER OF TESTIMONIES AND CRITICAL AUTO/BIOGRAPHIES FOR CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The central theme of this article is the question of whether the narrator of a witness account or a critical auto/biography can also be the (co-)author of a scientific or literary written record. Based on reflections from her own biographical research on revolutionary movements in the Global South and oppressed and silenced groups, the author has identified the characteristics of testimonies which she has positioned in relation to Santos' Epistemologies of the South. *The research is reflected through the author's contemplation of her fieldwork over the last ten years and through examples of literary written records which have empowered social emancipation; it shows how the pedagogy of testimonies can be used innovatively in learning and research as well as how testimonies can also make a fruitful contribution to much-needed considerations on silenced epistemologies in the classroom and in society.*

Keywords: *testimony, critical auto/biography, epistemologies, South, antiracism, education, research, counter-hegemonic movements*

UTIŠANE EPISTEMOLOGIJE: MOČ PRIČEVANJ IN KRITIČNIH (AVTO)BIOGRAFIJ ZA SODOBNO IZOBRAŽEVANJE – POVZETEK

Osrednja tema prispevka je vprašanje, ali lahko postane pričevalka ali pripovedovalka kritične (avto)biografije hkrati tudi (so)avtorica znanstvenega ali literarnega dela. Avtorica s pomočjo San-tosovih Epistemologij Juga *premišlja tiste značilnosti pričevanj, ki jih je identificirala prek biograf-skih raziskovanj ob revolucionarnih gibanjih na globalnem Jugu, iz izpovedi zatiranih in utišanih družbenih skupin. Na podlagi ugotovitev terenskega raziskovanja, ki ga je opravila v zadnjem dese-tletju, kot tudi prek analize najbolj odmevnih pričevanj, ki so korenito pripomogla k širši družbeni emancipaciji, prispevek pokaže, kako se lahko pedagogika pričevanj inovativno uporablja tako za izobraževanje kot tudi za raziskovanje, predvsem pa, kako lahko pričevanja prispevajo k sodobnemu razumevanje utišanih epistemologij tako v predavalnici kot tudi v širši družbi.*

Ključne besede: *pričevanje, kritična (avto)biografija, epistemologije, Jug, antirasizem, izobraževanje, raziskovanje, protihegemonska gibanja*

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INTRODUCTION

Until recently, those who were being researched – victims, *indignados*, rebellious, impoverished, marginalised social groups, ethnicities, oppressed and 'muted groups' (Ardener, 1975) – were mostly considered in the context of rationalisation, objectification and alienation. Although many disciplines[1] make use of modern biographical and qualitative research methods, espousing various forms of engagement, promoting activist, militant field research and observation, it is still common for the oppressed to be researched and treated only as objects in the research of certain phenomena, events, and processes. They are treated as objects that are unable to (equally) participate in the process of creating a scientific project even if they have provided the raw material for the analysis, or the epistemology.

When testimonies and critical auto/biographies began to appear among revolutionaries, workers, indigenous people, marginalised communities, illiterate, muted groups, and oppressed communities in the middle of the 1970s, they shook a number of scientific disciplines and, in some places, as will be seen in the third section, even some political regimes and national or global institutions to the core. The precursors to the intersection of biographical research and the social sciences were the works of Engels (*The Condition of the Working-Class in England* in 1844), the life history research on Polish immigrants by William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki in 1920, and the biographical research of Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938). 'Co-research' with the oppressed was developed also by the Italian operaismo and Autonomia movements; workers' co-research was then covered in France by the journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, and in Spain by the journals *Teoría y Práctica* and *Lucha y Teoría*, as well as numerous others. Beside the critical and engaged ethnographers, cultural anthropologists, participative researchers and journalists who tried to nurture and develop these kinds of approaches in the twentieth century (for example, Galeano (1971) or Sainath (1996)), we have seen a resurgence of examples and reflections by scholars, researchers, journalists and artists, particularly in the last few decades, who work and walk with counter-hegemonic movements (Roy, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Klein, 2007; Mato, 2000; Malo, 2004; Shukaitis, Graeber and Biddle, 2007; Hall, 2009; Vieta, 2014, to mention just a few of many).

This brings us to the key question of this paper: Can the narrator, witness, or subject who testifies about a completely unknown, muted reality become the subject and author (or at least the co-author) of the reality, history or situation she is presenting, narrating, witnessing, living, and 'consciously grasp' it (Finger, 1984)? The question is therefore twofold. First, it is based on an epistemological premise. Can the narration of oppressed subjects or groups contribute to science in a way other than as just the objects of scientific research and/or interpretation? Can statements become other than "merely vehicles for expressing

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1   Among others, sociology, ethnography, social history, philosophy, psychoanalysis, psychology, feminist epistemology, the oral history movement, and increasingly also pedagogy and adult education, such as the life history approach presented by Ollagnier (2002).

beliefs" since "they are the central bearers of epistemic significance themselves" (Lackey, 2008, p. 72)? Second, the key question is based on oppositional postcolonial studies: "Can the work of a social scientist from a coloniser country contribute to postcolonialism other than being the object of postcolonial studies" (Santos, 2010, p. 240), particularly if we acknowledge that academic work takes place in a structured and situated field of activity with its own demands and power relations, criteria of distinction and mental schema which exercise, effect, and often limit how knowledge is produced (Bourdieu, 2000)? If it is hard to answer the question, 'Can the victims, who had been silenced or even repressed and tortured for decades, speak?', it is even harder to answer the question, 'Who can speak for the victims?' and 'How?'

In the next section I will briefly present examples of how I had to face this question of (co-)authorship and (co-)interpretation on multiple occasions while working and walking with counter-hegemonic movements and why I feel it is a subject worth serious consideration. Following that I will highlight some notable and authentic examples of the testimonies of women (and their new epistemologies) and present the obstacles they and their testimonies faced both in the process of recording and following publication. In the discussion section, the characteristics of testimonies developed in the third and fourth section are proposed and the role of this newly defined testimony in critical theory and research is considered. These theoretical reflections may be innovative for pedagogy if we continue to consider the fundamental role of education to be one of social transformation (Freire, 1972, 1973), otherwise referred to as 'knowledge-as-emancipation', and knowledge conceived of as solidarity (Santos, 2010).

TESTIMONY AS A NEW GENRE AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PROCESS

I confronted the issue of authorship in scientific and literary work during my qualitative field work with revolutionary movements in Latin America and India, which I carried out in the context of my own scientific projects.[2] In combination with biographical research, I also used militant research (Colectivo Situaciones, 2003; 2005) which is not only innovative in terms of methodology but theory as well (for more on this argument, see Shukaitis, Graeber and Biddle, 2007; Hardt, 2011). When meeting, working and walking with rebels, revolutionaries, and the oppressed, I recognised that in some cases their testimonies differed from standard narratives or life stories, which I define more precisely below, as they introduce notable epistemological and pedagogical specificities. I am speaking of witnesses who are still in danger in the 21st century, with contracts put out for their 'removal'. In the short history I am familiar with (and during this time I have worked

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2   For my post-doctoral project titled Social Dimensions of Sustainability through the Processes of Dematerialization and Resocialization (Slovenian Research Agency), I researched revolutionary movements in India and Venezuela between January 2007 and December 2008, and before that in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador in 2005 and 2006. The results of the field research as well as the innovative approach of 'co-research', among other things, was recorded (Gregorčič, 2009; 2011).

and cooperated with many), these witnesses have suffered physical and psychological violence; many were arrested, tortured, intimidated, and some have already been murdered because of their work.

One such remarkable witness was the revolutionary Berta Cáceres, co-founder and leader of the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras that I worked with in 2006 in Intibucá, Honduras. After twenty-two years of libertarian work she received the Goldman Environmental Prize, the world's most prestigious award honouring grassroots environmental activists, in April 2015, only to be killed on 3rd March 2016 (for more on Berta and other women behind the myths, see Gregorčič, 2017). For decades the witnesses and creators of self-determining revolutionary struggles have been fearlessly, with dignity, and without compromise opposing the terrifying pressure of capital, organised hatred, execution by war coalitions, and neoliberal plundering and devastation (Gregorčič, 2011). They have been exposing the history of oppression *in vivo*, both in the theory and practice of their everyday battle for a life of dignity, in their narrations and in their 'conversation of humanity' (Dewey, 1966). In this sense, what this paper is concerned with is far removed from mainstream narratives, auto/biographies and, to a certain extent, even critical narrations. It strives instead to illuminate the words and thoughts, the screaming, roaring and crying of millions of 'sub-humans' (Santos, 2014) – those who do not have the *Urrecht* to be human (ibid.), those who are called terrorists because they are struggling to survive in contemporary 'societal fascism' (ibid.) which uses 'abyssal thinking' and produces 'sub-humanity' (ibid).

In order to reference my various experiences in the field and to translate these alternative rationalities I tried to bring scientific discourse (the citing of sources, observation notes, descriptions of situations, etc.) closer to literary discourse: to be consistent to the poetics, the language and the emotions of the testimonies which, to a certain extent, had already reconstructed and reinvented the scientific record itself. Examples of this are the Zapatistas' designations of governance, teaching and learning (*mandar obediciendo* – to lead by obeying; *educar aprendiendo* – learning-by-teaching) (Gregorčič, 2011), or Berta Cáceres description of the struggle to prevent the building of dams on the river Río Blanco, which has spiritual and ancestral importance to the Lenca people in Honduras and signifies lives: "When we started to fight for Rio Blanco, I would go into the river and I could feel what the river was telling me. I knew it was going to be difficult, but I also knew we are going to triumph, because the river told me so".[3]

I had a similar experience in 2011, when I found myself recording the testimony or critical auto/biography of a young Roma woman from Slovenia, Jasmina Ahmetaj, whose arranged marriage meant she was sold and sent to Germany where she experienced numerous forms of abuse. Later, when she had managed to flee back home, she became an activist for the rights of Roma women in Slovenia, and unplanned, we recorded her

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3   Berta Cáceres speaking in a profile video on the Goldman environmental prize webpage, http://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/berta-caceres/

critical autobiography, *A girl with candies* (Ahmetaj and Gregorčič, 2013), with some elements of testimony. If Jasmina had been a celebrity and not a silenced victim, no one would have seriously questioned whether this was autobiography or testimony, if the work was credible or fictitious, who wrote it, and why it was written in that way. But as a Roma co-author, she faced a number of problems and had to explain and defend the authenticity of her life story over and over again.

All the experiences from my field research and collaboration with muted and oppressed groups and individuals led me to question my own work. If they had all the necessary support, motivation and (self-)learning, could witnesses become the (co-)authors of what is being studied, (co-)interpreters of their own life experiences, events, situations and histories, as generally applies to writers and scientists? On the other hand, how could they use this to contribute to the development of science, a community that is in many ways imprinted within hegemonic globalisation and is increasingly narrow-minded, mon-olithic, and predetermined or monocultured, if we enter further into Santos' critique of hegemonic epistemology and rationality (Santos, 2014)? Could the inclusion of witnesses into the scientific research process as co-researchers be subversive to scientific discov-ery itself? Can we obtain study materials for various scientific disciplines in this way? Finally, could science benefit from this? Perhaps 'the ecology of knowledges' (ibid.) could envision testimony as another form of knowledge and criteria of rigour that operate credibly in social practice. For now, however, such approaches towards 'an epistemology of seeing' (ibid.) are, so to speak, held in solitary.

TO VERBALIZE OPPRESSION, ENVISION NEW SOCIALITY AND REINVENT SOCIAL EMANCIPATION

Two ground-breaking examples of testimonies which undermined the class, political, pa-triarchal, cultural, and racial foundations of the oppression of indigenous communities in Latin America are those of Domitila Barrios de Chúngara and Rigoberta Menchú. I first encountered Barrios' testimony in the rebel work settlements of Chhattisgarh, India, among thousands of oppressed and impoverished miners and *adivasis* (indigenous people) who, in 2007, had been fighting a thirty-year struggle against the repression of alliances between foreign capital and the Indian government (Gregorčič, 2011). The Chhattisgarh Liberation Front (CLF) is probably one of the most progressive revolutionary groups in independent India; it was created as an exceptionally creative and socially productive synthesis of self-organised miners, industrial workers and *adivasis* (diverse indigenous communities of small farmers and gatherers), forming a so-called green-red coalition (Sadgopal and Namra, 1993; Gregorčič, 2011). It was at that time that I came to know how the words of Barrios, a poor female Bolivian revolutionary, could easily be translated into the emancipatory struggles of other cultures, different societies and different political systems; how local and marginal rebel practices could ignite battles on another continent, where the oppressed who were rebelling and resisting faced different everyday realities; and finally, how inestimable the contribution of a witness could be for the creation of a

community, for the recuperation of revolutionary history and for the reinterpretation of social realities.

In 1977, when Barrios was forty years old, her first testimony on the Bolivian indigenous people, miners, mothers, and female revolutionaries was recorded by the Brazilian ecofeminist, educator and sociologist Moema Viezzer. With her book, *Let me Speak,* the flames of the radical anti-colonial struggle of the Aymara and the Quechua quickly and unexpectedly spread from the tin mines of Bolivia to indigenous people, workers, students, and activists in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, all the way to the Indian miners, *adivasis*, doctors, and trade unionists in the CLF. Barrios' testimony unexpectedly inspired numerous social movements, including socialist feminists from Yugoslavia, who listened to her at a United Nations conference in Mexico in the 1970s, and European feminists and democrats, who offered her shelter from the Bolivian dictatorship in the 1980s during her exile in Europe.

Born into the mining families' struggle for survival in Potosi, Bolivia, a city which until the 18th century had supplied most of the world's silver but is today the foundation for the global market of tin cans, she started on the revolutionary path to liberation before she was even aware of the violence of dictatorships and the global dimensions of oppression (Galeano, 1971; Zibechi, 2010). Her testimony familiarised more than one movement with Marx's *Das Kapital* and other works even before her second testimony, *Here Too, Domitila!*, which she wrote together with Bolivian journalist David Acebey, was published in 1985. As another female Indian revolutionary emphasised, Barrios' testimonies have become "a bible of the revolutionary struggle against neoliberalism in the CLF"[4], but despite being a ground-breaking libertarian *memoir*, these works were never included among important sociological and humanistic literature.

The same can be said for the testimony of Menchú, a twenty-three-year-old woman from a rebellious, autonomous Mayan community, from a revolutionary family, who with her narrative told the world a somewhat different story about Guatemala, a personal story of suffering, and a chronology of the struggle Indians faced in the middle of a bloody civil war. In 1983, when she wrote her critical autobiography together with ethnologist Elisabeth Burgos-Debray (*I, Rigoberta Menchú*, Menchú and Burgos-Debray, 1984), Guatemala was still thirteen years away from the end of its civil war, and Menchú was in exile. In four decades of terror, violence, abuse and killings, the highest price was paid by the indigenous Mayan communities who, despite colonialism and imperialism, were still autonomous at that time. A number of critics attempted to undermine the veracity of Menchú's testimony. Stoll (1999), for example, maintained that she could not have been witness to some of the murders or deaths of family members and that she could not have been physically present for all of the things that are recorded in her account. But her testimony, similar to that of Barrios, does not speak of personal experience; it

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4   From an interview with Sudha Bharadwaj, a lawyer for the Chhattisgarh Liberation Front (CLF), which I recorded in Bilaspur, India on 1st November 2007.

continually uncovers the silenced collective experience of the Indians, the poor Ladino people of Guatemala, farmers, and revolutionaries. This can be seen clearly in the formulation which is repeated throughout the entire testimony and with which her narrative begins: "This is my testimony. I didn't learn it from a book and I didn't learn it alone. I'd like to stress that it's not only *my* life, it's also the testimony of my people" (Menchú and Burgos-Debray, 1984, p. 1).

To date, several dozen books, studies, analyses, even testimonies and critical auto/biographies have been written about people who have experienced what is now referred to as 'forced disappearance' (*desaparecidos*) and about Menchú's testimony (for example, see Smith, 2003; Avant-Mier and Hasian, 2008; Lather, 2000). Regardless of whether Menchú's testimony is (sufficiently) authentic or not, her case has also shown that it is difficult or nearly impossible to silence a testimony about the reality of an oppressed people. Despite numerous attempts, critics were unsuccessful in overthrowing her testimony or in discrediting her, as her testimony was the first time the collective experience of the Mayan people had shed light on the atrocities and realities which had previously been silenced. Ten years after her first book was published, and three years before the end of the Guatemalan civil war, she received the Nobel Peace Prize and became a world-renowned activist for Mayan rights.

A number of similar witnesses could be placed alongside Barrios and Menchú, especially from Nicaragua, Cuba, Chile, Mexico and Salvador, who entered the literary and scientific world stage with force in the 1970s and 1980s. These witnesses had no special intention or even the desire to address the public, or to tell of their own personal experience, pain or knowledge. However, these written records brought the witness and her community some form of liberation. As a rule, a testimony calls for changes which most often also occur. These can be individual, collective or even wider social ones. When a witness breaks with the ordered or forced tradition of silence inherent in the dominant discourse, she establishes an alternative means of transmitting hidden messages, looks for new ways of 'placing different experiences' (Tratnik, 2008) and awakens an entire body of a silenced world which society has not yet seen. For that reason, and despite the number of qualitative research projects on modern migration and refugees, it is not surprising that science has responded unsuccessfully and weakly to the needs of victims, both in the countries of refuge for exiles, and in the countries the victims of war are fleeing from.

In the same way, we have watched the powerlessness of science in opposing the hegemonic and hostile policies governing migration issues, something which is once again pushing us towards a racist Europe in the 21st century (Balibar, 2004) and into a form of social fascism (Santos, 2014). This is why new libertarian approaches, which would more easily and with a greater sensibility for testimonies and witnesses speak in favour of humanist goals and new epistemologies (Santos, 2010; 2014), are also needed in education in order to reinvent social emancipation. The best attempt in this regard has been made by Lackey (2006; 2008), who claimed that both the speaker and the hearer must make a positive epistemic contribution to testimonial knowledge, and that "in order to make genuine progress

in the epistemology of testimony, we need to stop looking at what speakers *believe* and focus instead, on what speakers *say*" (Lackey, 2006, p. 97). As we have seen from the examples presented above, someone who testifies is someone without their own special story, someone who tells one of the many stories and experiences lived and struggled through by their peers, companions, fellow fighters, or members of the same group, collective, ethnicity, or gender. The witness screams for (self-)liberation, and their testimony, more for others than for themselves, brings a kind of social liberation, public recognition, recognisability and identification to the situation. Furthermore, these testimonies have trans-cultural potential within the marginalized or oppressed group, in relation to the state or society, and within the global context of counter-hegemonic efforts for other worlds (*otros mundos*).

INDIRECT REPRESENTATION OF LIFE: TO ENCOUNTER OTHERNESS, FIGHT FOR RECOGNITION AND REAFFIRM PLURALITY WITH AN ETHIC 'FROM BELOW'

A testimony is most commonly written by means of mediation – through or with another person, as in the case of Barrios, Menchú, and in my collaboration with Ahmetaj. For this reason, it is an indirect representation of a life, and thus an intervention. It is an intervention of experiences, memory, situations, events, or something that, for various reasons, was not able to be told, put into words, reported or revealed. The other person might write down the testimony and publish it merely because the witness is not literate or because, for a number of reasons, the witness cannot write it down herself – although she does have life experiences which must be communicated to the next generation, and she is prepared to speak about them publicly. There are many such cases of testimonies from the victims of war, the Holocaust (Frankel, 1991; Young, 1990; Stone, 2000), dictatorships, apartheid, pogroms, institutionalised violence, and more.

The witness can decide on and seek out a mediator, or the mediator may recognise the significance of a testimony and assess whether the story should be disclosed publicly, for political or any number of other reasons. It can be published posthumously, when the second person organises the written records, journals, and stories of the witness, structures them in a scientific or literary form, and reveals them to the public. Such is *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which is also particularly relevant since it stands as the classic example of critical attempts to prove that a testimony was not genuine. A multitude of literary and other critical records on Anne's diary were published. They accused it of inauthenticity because of its apparent fabrications which, seen through the eyes of a young Jewish girl, opened up a new code for viewing fascism, the Second World War, dehumanisation, and also a minority perspective, or a view from within; a view from the perspective of multiple marginalised identities and victims. Today we know that despite everything, it is included at the core of primary school literature around the world and has had dozens of successors in young girls who have borne witness to wars in Bosnia, Iraq and elsewhere (for example, see Filipović and Challenger, 2006).

Testimony is an encounter with otherness; it is part of a genre of its own (Eaglestone, 2003). As opposed to other literary genres, testimonies are, as a rule, ground-breaking in a wider context, for society, and for the community in question. They become fundamental historical, political or social sources regardless of doubts and criticism: they can no longer be silenced, as they are created with the intention of being transmitted to the public, to never again be suppressed. Since a testimony calls for a kind of encounter and cooperation between the witness and another person – a mediator, editor, or some kind of writer or translator of the story into scientific (or literary) language –, it more often than not uncovers something new, something still unsaid, unwritten, untold, long silenced, even forbidden, taboo, scandalous, objectionable or incriminating in some way (Ahmetaj and Gregorčič, 2013).

With the inability of the social sciences to counter Europe's newly emerging ethnocentrism, there has appeared a need for a reconsideration of the anti-racist perspective in various social science disciplines. In this respect, it would be useful for education to once again recall Boler's 'pedagogy of discomfort' (1999), which argues for the need to situate the often isolated and isolating work we do in education in a historical and political context, one that accounts for class, economic, and power relationships that we both identify and are identified with. Since emotions are part of the social body and political practice, they must be experienced in education – they should be used as sites of resistance instead of a form of social control. Since testimonies are a participative method which allows one "to write history from the bottom up instead of writing it from above" (Ollagnier, 2002, p. 282) and, as has been emphasised, since they are most often written through mediation, as an indirect representation (and thus intervention), they are useful in both the classroom and the field, for study and research, for the recognition of new epistemologies and linguistic hierarchies, such as the current dominance of nouns over verbs, where, according to Holloway, the active form of speaking is separated from and subordinated to nouns (Holloway, 2010). This applies to the struggle against prejudice, discrimination and hatred, to the placement of new discourses of suppressed and silenced voices into scientific and literary writing. In disrupting the "apartheid of knowledge", we move toward "developing emancipatory strategies for anti-racist social justice research" (Huber, 2009, p. 650). This applies to "learning from words", to the testimonial exchange that requires both the speaker and the hearer (Lackey, 2006; 2008), and to the need to "listen across differences" (Haig-Brown, 2003, p. 418).

In addition, though there is value for society in a wider sense, for the witness of the testimony herself there is usually no special emancipatory, political or therapeutic value, as the testimony presupposes that the witness is already an articulate, strong, emancipated person with a clearly and consistently formed position on a given reality. But this is not always the case. In this regard, a testimony also comes close to a critical autobiography, such as the work of Dolores French, who has been fighting for prostitution to be recognised as any other form of paid work (French, 1992). She writes her story herself, a prostitute who does not declare that she is a victim but bears witness to the role of a worker who lives an

emancipated life, as one of many workers who seek to legally carry on in their profession. Testimonies are, however, significantly different from critical autobiographies in that the witness rarely writes them herself. A testimony can also be about the performativity of an auto/biographical discourse, so that a witness, through the process of writing, creates her own identity and the identity of a group but no longer as a victim; instead she is like a protagonist in the social questioning of borders, identities, permissions and norms; she screams in the direction of 'postabyssal thinking' (Santos, 2014).

Some authors of testimonies, narratives and life histories also attribute (self-)therapeutic properties to the process for the narrator, either in the process of bearing witness or during writing (Gilmore, 2001); others consider it a form of self-directed learning (Pineau, 2000) or something half-way between research and therapy (de Gaulejac, 1987). If witnesses speak out on abuse, they do not just help themselves but begin to bring their plight to the attention of society in general (Urek, 2008). If we look at the hitherto most recognised examples of testimonies in world literature, it is most often strong personalities who speak out; they are not healing themselves or their communities but are addressing society as a whole, becoming the voice of an oppressed community, and are actually influencing emancipatory processes in society in general more than they are affecting their own personal liberation, which the cases of Barrios and Menchú illustrate. Unlike therapeutic autobiographies or other personal narratives, testimonies are initially created for others, for society, to make something which had been suppressed known, to break the silence, to reveal, to uncover, and to encounter Otherness through words (or in the case of Zapatistas, with the use of verbs in place of nouns).

To conclude, our analysis argues that the content of a testimony most often reveals various strategies of survival, struggle or liberation which are being pursued by the witness, the community they belong to (more often), or even by a minority within a minority community, as in the case of Jasmina, a young Roma woman from Slovenia (Ahmetaj and Gregorčič, 2013). Testimonies often sharpen the need of society at large to comprehend the injustice, the deception and the dehumanisation taking place. They achieve this with an ethic from below, an ethic that resonates among people struggling and among witnesses. The witness is not making a confession, but rather is observing social processes and demanding a realisation of what has been previously prohibited, not yet established, socially unacceptable, suppressed, silenced or oppressed. The witness does not place blame on others, does not repent and does not beg; the witness fights for the recognition of something which is hers.

DISCUSSION

In the context of Bertaux's approach to biographical research, testimonies as life histories are always the result of a life story already accompanied by its analysis, reflection, re-thinking, theoretical and political contextualisation (Bertaux, 1981). Witnesses are often not merely sources of information but the bearers of 'specific' expertise, knowledge,

and sometimes even epistemology – ways of coming to a scientific understanding. In the same way, autobiography cannot be anything other than inter-textual, discourse-responsive and inter-subjective (Stanley, 1992). Do testimonies and critical auto/biographies then not open up a new space for research and the creation of study materials and analyses which, in addition to cultural studies, social studies, and literature, profoundly affect the field of pedagogy? Here and there, this question has been raised by methodological reflections and discussions on the ethics of research in scientific works. The question of a research subject's authorship and co-authorship of a new epistemology, or at least part of an epistemology, has not. However, as we have seen in the third and fourth sections, some sociologists, educators, journalists and others have already introduced this idea, and had witnesses recorded into or directly sign the scientific and/or literary work.

The question of whether the narrator of witness accounts or a critical auto/biography can also be the (co-)author of a scientific or literary written record is relevant as the testimonies of ground-breaking libertarian memoirs and critical auto/biographies have been opening up new space for research and creating study materials since the end of the 1970s. In addition to affecting the social sciences and literature, they are also making profound headways in the field of pedagogy. When testimonies and critical auto/biographies began to spread among revolutionaries, workers, indigenous people, marginalised communities, illiterate, silenced groups and oppressed communities, they profoundly shook a number of scientific disciplines and, in some places, as seen in the third section, even some political regimes and national or global institutions.

Ignored by Western science and forgotten by Eurocentric critical tradition, "all knowledges are testimonial, because what they know about social reality (their active dimension) also reveals the kind of subjects of knowledge acting on social reality (their subjective dimension)" (Santos, 2014, p. 207). And precisely because all knowledges sustain practices and constitute subjects, testimony should be reconsidered at least as incomplete, hidden knowledges, and not actively produced by contemporary science as non-existent knowledges. Following this direction, I have structured testimonies of subjectivities, those which are embedded in self-determining revolutionary struggles and those of silenced protagonists of suppressed or oppressed groups, or ethnicities that I had researched, according to the following assumptions: first, in lieu of the dominant liberal speak and societal fascism (Santos, 2014, p. 48), the testimonies of the oppressed put forms of oppression into words. By naming the efforts for social emancipation, they are not just recuperating the loss of critical nouns (such as class struggle, revolution, dependency, alienation, fetishism, etc.) by subverting them with added adjectives (for example, 'human rights' turns into collective, radical or intercultural human rights, etc.), as noted by Santos (2014, pp. 33-34), but introduce new discourses, characterised by the use of verbs in place of nouns, which is the opposite of what Holloway (2010) noticed in our current dominant form of discourse. Two such examples have already been indicated in the Zapatistas' terminology above (for more, see Gregorčič, 2011). Such discourses began to impregnate counter-hegemonic expressions mainly after the

Zapatistas' manifestos and declarations which have been spread in intercontinental encounters, communiqués and solidarity meetings.

The second characteristic I propose is that in a descriptive way, counter-hegemonic movements are reconstructing and reinventing social emancipation as an alternative rationality, rather than renouncing it. There is a search for alternative ways of disseminating suppressed, silenced messages, emotions and insights in resonance among themselves and with other counter-hegemonic struggles, rather than accepting the current biased hegemonic discourse. These processes are appearing through 'learning-in-struggle' and 'learning-by-struggling' (Hall, 2009; Gregorčič, 2011; Vieta, 2014) that are complemented by alternative systems to primary, secondary, and often even university education, thus replacing a non-existent, dysfunctional or inadequate public education system in the countries in question (see Gregorčič, 2009), which can already be seen as an emergence of 'knowledge-as-emancipation' (Santos, 2014). Both characteristics have been discussed in the third section of this paper in the testimonies and lives of Domitila Barrios de Chúngara and Rigoberta Menchú.

In addition, attention should be paid to the next two characteristics that also go hand in hand: reaffirming community and plurality with an ethics 'from below' (Santos, 2010), and encountering otherness and the fight for recognition. Both characteristics could be theoretically explained with Santos' concepts of the 'ecology of trans-scale' and the 'ecology of differences'. The first confronts the logic of the global scale by recuperating what in the local is not the result of hegemonic globalisation and by suggesting the use of a cartographic imagination to deal with cognitive maps that operate simultaneously on different scales. The latter looks for a new articulation between the principles of equality and differences, and is predicated on mutual recognition (Santos, 2001; 2007; 2010; 2014). I was surprised that the characteristics of testimonies defined above were a distinguishing factor not only for the (indigenous) witnesses from Latin America, where surrealism has entered into the foundations of emancipatory movements and where many indigenous languages are primarily verb-based rather than noun-based, but also for witnesses and strugglers for counter-hegemonic globalisation in India and elsewhere, who (as I realised) already manifest some form of 'intercultural translation' as elaborated by Santos (2014).

Since a testimony is often the result of a life story or situation, and is already accompanied by an analysis, reflection, re-thinking, and theoretical and political contextualisation, or is inter-textual, discourse-responsive, and inter-subjective, as we argued with Stanley's notion of auto/biography, there is a strict division between scientific and non-scientific, literary, or popular writing. In this article, I showed that the narrations of oppressed subjects or groups can become a driving force for social emancipation just as cooperation between educators, sociologists, and journalists with witnesses has contributed to the epistemology of the oppressed, or in Santos' term, the epistemology of the South (Santos, 2010; 2014). I have highlighted a number of other advantages testimonies offer for education. With a testimony, which is as a rule created for society in general to break the silence, to reveal and uncover, ground-breaking realisations are opened up and they can

become, as shown by the examples, fundamental historical, political, and social sources of knowledge; they can no longer be silenced – they were created with the intention of never again being silenced, suppressed or non-existent.

It will be necessary to deal with these considerations within literary studies, the humanities and social sciences. In this respect, pedagogy has an advantage as testimonies form an integral element of education, just as education is inseparably intertwined with testimonies. Since the structures of power and knowledge are more visible from the margins, testimonies make an innovative contribution to a given context or epistemology, and simultaneously move freely from education to research and vice versa. Finally, some of the testimonies which were highlighted in this text have already been part of the educational process for decades, not only in oppressed communities but also in prevailing education systems, even though they were (co-)created by the oppressed and suppressed who did not possess the so-called 'appropriate' scientific and/or literary knowledge.

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Angela Pilch Ortega

'REWRITING SOCIALITY' – SOCIOGRAPHICITY AS A CONCEPT FOR COMPREHENDING EMANCIPATORY PRACTICE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to highlight the capacity of social actors, groups and communities to critically reflect on sociality and the question of how the spaces we live in together are created and constructed. In doing so, the contribution explores the interplay between individual and collective modes of learning. The author argues in this context that theories dealing with the dialectical relationship between structures and subjects somewhat overlook the relevance of civil spheres. Drawing on empirical research of social movements, emancipatory practices and social change, the author developed a theoretical tool which allows mapping processes of 'rewriting sociality' and its relation to biographical learning as well as community and societal learning. The article reviews biographicity as a rich and generative concept and will pay particular attention to questions of intersubjectivity and the social world as a relational sphere. Finally, the paper focuses on aspects of social movement practices and questions concerning the reproduction and transformation of social conventions and normative assumptions.

Keywords: *biographical research, sociographicity, biographicity, transitional learning, social movements, emancipatory practice*

»PREOBLIKOVANJE DRUŽBENOSTI« – SOCIOGRAFIČNOST KOT KONCEPT RAZUMEVANJA EMANCIPATORNE PRAKSE IN DRUŽBENIH SPREMEMB – POVZETEK

Namen članka je poudariti zmožnost družbenih akterjev, skupin in skupnosti, da kritično reflektirajo družbenost in vprašanje, kako so ustvarjeni in oblikovani prostori, kjer skupaj živimo. Avtorica pri tem raziskuje interakcijo med individualnimi in kolektivnimi oblikami učenja ter v tem kontekstu zagovarja tezo, da teorije, ki se ukvarjajo z dialektičnim odnosom med strukturami in subjekti, nekoliko spregledajo pomen civilnih sfer. Na podlagi empirične raziskave družbenih gibanj, emancipatornih praks in družbenih sprememb je razvila teoretično orodje, s katerim lahko opredelimo procese novega ubesedenja oziroma preoblikovanja družbenosti in povezavo tako z biografskim kot s skupnostnim in družbenim

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učenjem. Članek predstavlja biografičnost kot bogat in generativen koncept ter še posebej obravnava vprašanja intersubjektivnosti in družbenega sveta kot relacijske oziroma odnosne sfere. Na koncu se osredotoči na prakse družbenih gibanj ter vprašanja reprodukcije in transformacije družbenih konvencij in normativnih predpostavk.

Ključne besede: *biografsko raziskovanje, sociografičnost, biografičnost, tranzicijsko učenje, družbena gibanja, emancipatorna praksa*

In light of the current far-reaching developments in a world on the move, questions of democratisation, solidarity, dignity, the equitable distribution of resources, living and educational opportunities are gaining major importance for stabilising societies. In this context, social problems which appear in societies due to dramatic changes and grave social disparities are not only seen as individual problems but are also framed as supra-individual challenges which call for the creation of collective modes of coping and learning. Social movements in particular are considered to have emancipatory and innovative potential for societies and for the processes of social change. Against this backdrop, this paper will focus on civil learning, emancipatory practices and the processes of social change. The starting point is how to theorise learning processes layered on the supra-individual level and which are related to communities and societies. In this regard, the text explores the social world as a relational sphere that arises among social actors and will turn particular attention to the interplay between individual and collective modes of learning. The author argues in this context that theories dealing with the dialectical relationship between structures and subjects somewhat overlook both the relevance collective modes of learning have for social change processes, and the opportunities that civil spheres and new learning environments offer a learning society. Moreover, it is argued that theoretical assumptions surrounding the mapping of the interplay between social structure and subjects neglect the relevance of intersubjectivity and overemphasise either the structural or the individual perspective in the processes of sociation.

To this end, the author has been conceptualising a theoretical tool which allows mapping processes for 'rewriting sociality' and its relation to biographical and societal learning. The paper will specifically highlight the capacity of social actors, groups and communities to critically reflect on shared circumstances and the question of how these spaces of living together are created and constructed. These reflections involve questioning established social relationships, inherent power regimes and the impact these power-structured relations have on individuals, social groups and societies. The processes of rewriting sociality are considered to be a result of highly reflexive forms of learning and are linked with the assumption that we experience the social spheres that arise between us as shapeable through complex reflection on our socially interrelated lives. In this regard, sociographicity will be introduced as a draft concept[1]. This theoretical tool is still a work in

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1   The early stages of the draft concept have been discussed with Fergal Finnegan (Maynooth University, Ireland) in the context of a joint paper presentation at the ESREA Conference of the Life History and Biography

progress and draws on empirical research into social movements, emancipatory practices and social change processes carried out by the author (e.g. in the highlands of Chiapas in Mexico). The paper will review "biographicity" (Alheit and Dausien, 2000) as a rich and generative concept for comprehending social change processes which are layered on the specific interface of biography and society. The basic assumptions of biographicity are relevant for understanding the processes of rewriting sociality. The limits of high-lighting collective formations and supra-individual modes of learning will be discussed in this context. By introducing sociographicity as a draft concept, the paper also deals with questions of intersubjectivity and the relatedness of social spheres. Finally, the paper will focus on some aspects of social movement practices which seem to be relevant for conceptualising sociographicity, highlighting questions on the reproduction and transfor-mation of social conventions and normative assumptions on a collective level.

BIOGRAPHICITY AND TRANSITIONAL LEARNING

Biographical learning[2] is experience-based and situated in one's lifeworld, and "learning worlds are embedded within historically rooted, interactive and biographically 'produced' lifeworlds" (Alheit and Dausien, 2002, p. 16). The biographicisation of social experiences draws on the assumption that we have the capacity to "reflexively 'organise' experiences" in a way that generates personal coherence and a "communicable, socially viable lifeworld perspective for guiding actions" (Alheit, 2005, p. 209). In this context, Alheit and Dausien (2002, p. 16) emphasise the emergence of an "individual logic" through a "specific, bio-graphically layered structure of experience". Highlighting the interplay between subjects and social environments, they argue that biographical construction processes function as a creative system that responds to external influences with an "inner logic" and translate external impulses and perturbations into the "language of experiences". Coping with ex-ternal requirements is thus understood as an "intaking" rather than "inputting" process (Alheit and Dausien, 2000, p. 412). In this regard, the development of an "appropriation system" is part of the discussion which involves the "formation of supra-ordinated, gener-ative structures of action and knowledge" (Alheit and Dausien, 2002, p. 15). By doing so, individuals produce more sense structures related to themselves and their social frame-work (see Bude, 1984). This assumes that learning is not determined by the formation of biographical supra-ordinated structures but is thought to be an open structure "that has to integrate the new experience it gains through interacting with the world, with others and with itself" (Alheit and Dausien, 2002, p. 16). Additionally, "biographical background knowledge" (Alheit, 2005, p. 209) can be changed through learning (see Alheit, 1993; Alheit and Hoerning, 1989). In situations where "we find ourselves stumbling" or "we

2   What I have to leave open at this point is the relevance of embodied and emotional aspects in learning and transformation processes.

feel as if the ground is slipping away from beneath our feet" (Alheit and Dausien, 2002, p. 15) large parts of our pre-reflexive knowledge enter our awareness and can be processed explicitly. Moreover, biography involves hidden sense resources, such as the sizeable potential of "unlived life" (Weizsäcker, 1956). A far-reaching aspect is the assumption that transitional learning processes deal with social structures in a different way: they are interpreted as elements of new contextual conditions (see Kokemohr, 1989; Marotzki, 1990). Thus, not only biographical knowledge can be changed but the "structures of the entire landscape in which we find ourselves" as well (Alheit and Dausien, 2002, p. 15). Biographical background knowledge functions as an "emergent potential for changing [social] structures" (Alheit, 2005, p. 209). Given this, biographicity can be described as an "inner potential" for coping with current social realities, as a capacity for integrating new experiences and impressions with already established knowledge, and for modifying biographical knowledge in a way that gives us a basic feeling of continuity and coherence in spite of ambivalences and contradictions (see Alheit, 1994, p. 45).

There is a common understanding that learning is an interactive process which is socially mediated and structured, and that we have the capacity to experience ourselves as being socially related and contextualised. Dausien (1996), for example, describes these aspects as a form of "practical sociality" (p. 576) which has major importance in biographical processes of self-affirmation. Social circumstances are seen as fields of interaction which gain relevance for the mediation of individual and collective sense figurations. Alheit and Dausien (2000) emphasize that biographicity is a resource opening up possibilities for building new patterns of social involvement (see p. 418). In relation to the biographicity of social experience, they also suggest that learning and *Bildung* evoke the (biographical) formation of collective processes, such as social networks, collective knowledge and common practices (see Alheit and Dausien, 2002), but without giving insights into how these processes might be formed.

If we focus on the limits of the biographical research approach, Dausien and Kelle (2005) refer to an "individualising bias" within biographical analysis (p. 208). Furthermore, Dausien (1996) has criticised the assumption of an independent social self (such as Kohli's (1988) conception of a modern biographical format) as an androcentric perspective on modern life histories. The limits become especially apparent when dealing with the social embeddedness of subjects and their biographies, the practice of 'doing biography', and in general terms, with the intersubjectivity of life histories. The formation of collective processes, the emergence of collective agency as well as collective learning processes might not be highlighted sufficiently and can leave open questions, for example, how these processes in particular are shaped and what influence they have on social structures and social change. In my research on learning dispositions in confrontation with social inequality in Chiapas (see Pilch Ortega, 2018), I additionally criticised the Eurocentric perspective within biographical analysis; a high we-orientation within narratives is mostly interpreted as a premodern phenomenon (even though they are explicitly characterised by reflexivity) and not recognised as a mode of subjectivity (as a self-view

and a world-view) which has been formed as a legitimate response to current challenges. It must be noted that social embeddedness remains an important factor in this region. The shortcomings of social welfare in many areas, for instance, support for the elderly, induces a higher level of social interdependency. A collective orientation can be understood as the principal condition for the survival of social actors. In my research, different patterns of social referencing were important in understanding how people deal with experiences of social inequality and how they frame it. In this context, belonging to a social group and the corresponding we-perspective is an important aspect within biographical narratives. These kinds of patterns of social referencing create an affinity for specific types of social cooperation which function as an important resource for creating social agency. Accordingly, different modes of learning such as biographical learning, community learning and societal learning appear as highly intertwined within the narratives (see Pilch Ortega, 2016). This particular structure of learning dispositions layered on a supra-individual level as well as the 'resistance' of the empirical data to individual modes of theorising provided important impulses for developing sociographicity as a draft concept, which will be introduced next.

SOCIOGRAPHICITY AS THE CAPACITY FOR REWRITING SOCIALITY

Going beyond individual biographical horizons, learning also appears to be something which is situated on a supra-individual level. Current social issues are not only framed as individual problems but are seen as supra-individual challenges that are relevant for society and for social learning processes. Focusing on social dynamics, inequality can also be structured and framed as a collective experience, likewise experiences of liberation. Dealing with such experiences collectively also enables subjects and groups to question seemingly naturalised social relationships and inherent power regimes. They reflect the impact of these power-structured relations for individuals as well as for social groups and societies, and thus society starts to be framed as something that has the capacity to learn. In this regard, I want to introduce the idea of sociographicity as a draft concept to explain such critical reflection processes on society and to map the practice of rethinking and rewriting sociality within the interwovenness of biographical learning, community learning and societal learning.

Constructed in a comparable way to the term 'biography' ('bios' meaning life and 'graphein' writing), the prefix 'socio' refers to social relations among members of a society or societies and the suffix 'graphicity' deals with re-writing or re-shaping sociality. According to the concept of biographicity, the idea of 'graphicity' includes the assumption that we have the capacity to reinterpret our socially related life in the social circumstances within which we experience it, and to experience social contexts and relations as 'shapeable'. In comparison to biographicity, the focus lies more on the supra-individual level, on social relations and dynamics, as well as on how the spaces we live in together are created and constructed with respect to equality, dignity, social recognition, living and educational opportunities, etc. Against this backdrop, sociographicity can be

described as the capacity individuals and groups have to critically reflect on sociality, on social and power relations, and to experience social spaces and relations as shapeable. Rewriting sociality refers to complex and intersubjective reflection processes, which may lead to the creation of new patterns of interpretation as a 'product' of highly reflexive forms of learning focused on sociality. Transformed toward imagining the social world and its relations, these perspectives accompany new emergent practices. Through transitional learning, societal structures are interpreted and experienced as new contextual conditions. Rewriting sociality includes shaping the social future by reinterpreting the social past as well. The social future is thereby understood as being something shared. To understand the processes of rewriting sociality as an emancipatory practice, it seems relevant to focus on the interrelatedness of social spheres and the processual and contextual character of such processes. Various theoretical assumptions will be briefly highlighted below.

As previously mentioned, intersubjectivity plays a central role in sociographicity as well as in biographicity. Intersubjectivity seems to also be relevant for the question of where the generative structures or mechanisms lie when focusing on the processes of sociation. In general terms, intersubjectivity refers to the idea of the mutual relatedness of all beings. Mead's conception of intersubjectivity focuses on communicative relations between subjects. These relations can also be understood as a societal regime in which individuals are not isolated or atomised entities who take up a subordinated role within collectives but are conceived as 'arguing' participants focusing on a shared world (see Joas, 1980, p. 19). From this perspective, subjectivity can only be experienced through the responses of others. The concept of responsivity (Waldenfels, 2007) also underlines the assumption of responsive relations as the fundamental basis of human relationships to their social worlds. Finding creative answers to the desires of others creates moments of freedom, but mutual relatedness continues to be essential. Rosa (2016) focuses on the question of how we experience ourselves as situated in the world and related to others. In his analysis, he highlights world- and self-references as resonance relations characterized by qualitatively different modes of interaction with the world. Late modern societies damage basic resonance relations (his critique) and provoke a phenomenon which he labels "social alienation". Foregrounding the relational character of the social, Crossley (2011) argues that the social world has to be viewed as "a *process* [which is] arising *between* social actors" (p. 21). Actors are therefore "always agents-in-relation" (ibid., p. 2), underlining the fact that agency is a relational rather than an individual phenomenon. Hence society is not seen as a social thing (i.e. as an entity) "but rather a state of play within a vast web of ongoing interactions" (ibid., p. 13). In a similar vein, Elias (1976; 2010; Elias and Scotson, 2008) offers a relational view on social reality with his theory of figuration and his intention to overcome structural functionalism as well as methodological individualism. Figurations are understood as interdependent and mutually influencing webs of social relations which vary in their form and complexity. Even though historically rooted and socially produced, figurations are constantly in progress, fluid, and characterised by changing patterns of social relatedness. Insofar as figurations emerge through social

interaction, social actors have specific figuration experiences as well as reproduce and also transform the structures of interdependency and inherent social relationship regimes.

If we focus on biographical construction processes, it can be argued that the way in which we typically interact with others and experience ourselves as being socially related refers to long-term learning processes. These can be framed as a formation of "biographical relationship schemata" (Schütze, 1981) which are part of one's habitual orientation. Different types of social interaction are implicitly favoured while others are rejected or not even considered. With respect to transitional learning, not only can social bonds and relationships be challenged, but the way in which we typically interact with others, and the modality through which we experience ourselves in relation to others can be fundamentally transformed as well. This seems to be an important aspect of the practices of rewriting sociality. To a great extent, modes of social relation are reproduced by implicit knowledge structures on which individuals rely intuitively in their daily life. If such patterns enter our awareness, typical modes of social interacting and contextualising can be transformed and impact the typical patterns of figuration. Another relevant aspect is the interactive character of sense-making processes. By interacting with others, perspectives and structures of relevance are synchronised and stabilised, but also challenged. Intersubjectivity plays an important role in the negotiation of meanings and the capacity to interconnect new perspectives with sense figurations. In this regard, finding a common or shared 'language' and understanding is fundamental in order to allow for the transfer of ideas and perceptions. These processes are also essential for building a shared world. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) puts it:

> "In the experience of dialogue there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are interwoven into a single fabric […] and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator. We have here a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behavior in my transcendental field, […] we co-exist through a common world" (p. 354).

Referring to Berger and Luckman, Marotzki (1990) emphasises the emergence of the "structures of plausibility" on the basis of communication. In relation to transformation processes, plausibility also functions as an important tool for stabilising new perspectives[3]. In summary, it can be noted that sociographicity draws on the assumption that humans have the capacity to reflect on their socially related life and to rewrite this interactively produced interdependent sphere. Patterns of social referencing are characterised according to an 'inner logic' and structured according to biographical dispositions. Social relations and typical modes of interacting are largely reproduced by implicit knowledge structures, but if such typical modes enter our awareness, possibilities for transformation

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3   Marotzki's considerations are related to Fritz Schütze's conception of the trajectories of transformation and the trajectories of suffering.

become available. The following section will highlight the processes of reproduction and transformation on the supra-individual level; in connection to this, some examples of social movement practices will also be given.

SOCIETAL LEARNING AND EMANCIPATORY PRACTICE: QUESTIONS OF REPRODUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION

Focusing on the relationship between individuals and society, the meso-level, such as civil public spheres and new learning environments, can be seen as something which offers opportunities for a learning society. Smelser (1997) describes the meso-level as "the heart and the soul of our civil society" and he emphasises that "if we do not keep our eye on the meso level, we are likely to ignore the most problematic feature of society of the coming decades" (p. 48). The structures of societal organisation are "in large part 'imagined', much as societies themselves are 'imagined communities'" (Anderson, 1983, p. 46). The meso-level as a space of interaction can be seen as an important intermediary sphere, as a civil bargaining space between "macro-structures and the biographical micro-world, two spheres that are drifting further and further apart" (Alheit, 1999, p. 79). The concept of a learning society (even if not divorced from the political) focuses primarily on the civil public. Alheit (ibid.) mentions in this regard that the "legitimation for a learning society in this sense derives from the collapse of systemic integration and social integration" (p. 80).

If we focus on the transformation processes of social structures, the question of how to break the circle of reproduction must be highlighted. In this regard, Bourdieu describes social crises as "periods in which habitus fall out of alignment with the fields in which they operate, creating a situation in which 'belief in the game' (*illusio*) is temporarily suspended and doxic assumptions are raised to the level of discourse, where they can be contested" (Crossley, 2003, p. 44). Bourdieu argues that the sphere of consciously raised issues in a society is just the "tip of an iceberg" and that the "unspoken and pre-reflective or 'doxic' assumptions", as the broader and much deeper part, support the reproduction of societal structures (ibid, p. 46). In periods of social crises, such doxic beliefs enter our awareness and are generally questioned; the dissonance or misfit of subjective expectations and objective possibilities destroys self-evidence in a practical way (see Bourdieu, 1977, p. 169) and this opens up possibilities for critique and social protest:

> "It is part of how society reproduces itself. But there is also change. Conflict is built into society. People can find that their expectations and ways of living are suddenly out of step with the new social positions they find themselves in. […] Then questions of social agency and political intervention become very important" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 19).

In this context, Crossley (2003) criticises Bourdieu's theory of social crisis and his explanations of the emergence of social protest because they tend to overemphasise the temporal character of such phenomena and neglect the durability of social movements

in current societies. He argues that during periods of social crisis, and also in situations of social stability, certain parts of habitual orientation are questioned. He does follow Bourdieu's assumption that during social crisis, "critical attitudes take shape in relation to issues which increasingly matter to citizens, to the point where they will fight for them" (ibid., p. 48). The difference he sees is in the allocation of issues in periods of crisis. Doxic beliefs enter people's awareness and are foregrounded while previous assumptions and relevancies might become doxic or are dropped from public consciousness.

Social movements can be seen as an active and open-ended intervention to influence social structures (see Fuchs, 1999). Social mobilization appears as a strategy to expand influence and relatedly the power of transformation. Waves of social protest disturb public discourses and power regimes. In this regard, 'diagnostic and prognostic framing' can be seen as an innovative performance which social movements incorporate into public awareness. The power of social problems being represented by the affected individuals also involves a struggle for power in terms of definition and perspective. Social movements as reflexive learning environments deal with such doxic assumptions by foregrounding issues, and also create new perspectives by reinterpreting social relations and dynamics. Such newly generated perspectives and issues need to be translated and transferred into public discourses. This capacity of social movements gains relevance in their attempts to influence social dynamics. If issues and concerns do not receive any response from society, social mobilization processes are slowed or even grind to a halt. The rules of this power-structured process and the legitimation of media form part of a negotiation[4]. In this way, emancipatory knowledge and knowledge of collective agency are accumulated, and these resources are seen as providing a collective benefit (see Pilch Ortega, 2018).

The creation of a self-image or rather of self-understanding as a group or movement is also meaningful in order to gain recognition and to be 'taken seriously' as a collective actor. The interactively generated perspective does not represent a homogeneous understanding; rather, it represents the social reality that emerges in such a way (as a product of socially mediated perceptions), and it can be understood as individual cross-linked views focused on some common ground. According to the development of an individual biographical 'experience code', the emergence of a shared 'value climate' within the collective can be assumed. Additionally, I would argue that civil society learning environments function as an experimental field for differently imagined modes of social interaction which try to give relevance to questions of equal participation, emancipation and democratisation. These practices are also part of reflections in terms of experienced learning. Such circumstances and learning environments may offer a different quality of social recognition for the participants than, for example, neoliberally oriented systems. Another emancipatory practice focuses on the production of collective memory. The interpretation of a collective past has a strong influence on current social practices as well

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4   Here I refer to struggles for symbolic power (e.g. Bourdieu, 1985), struggles for recognition (Honneth, 1992) and struggles for difference (Fuchs, 1999), which also involve the question of the power of representation and definition.

as on the imagination of future possibilities. 'Memory framing' can be understood as a tool for influencing collective memory which seeks to give force to alternative perspectives of the past, the present and the future. As an emancipatory practice, it foregrounds the struggle to establish the meaning of historical events and their consequences as well as current problems and conflicts (see Pilch Ortega, 2018). In this context, the sizeable potential of "unlived life" (Weizsäcker, 1956) has to be regarded as an aspect which goes beyond individual life histories.

Several studies in this field show that engagement in social movement activities has a politicizing effect on those who participate and creates dispositions that may lead to further political action and protest activity. Crossley (2003) suggests the emergence of a critical habitus in this context. The public sphere by itself has to be perceived as a multiple, competing and conflicting field of interaction where different collective actors are involved. The diverse social arenas are characterised by different dynamics, field logics and power regimes.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Social structures and relations are constantly changing and in progress (see Crossley, 2003, p. 44). It could be argued that postmodern societies are characterised by a permanent crisis; hence ideas of social harmony are partially suspended and normative assumptions are constantly in question. This brings us to a situation that we as members of societies have to deal with – the doxic assumptions and pre-reflexive knowledge on which we rely in our daily life reproducing the status quo of social regimes. This in turn creates opportunities for breaking the circle of reproduction and for moments of critical reflection, which may lead to emancipatory practices and social protest. Sociographicity as a draft concept tries to map such processes of rewriting sociality. We interact with others and create the social world which arises among us. To a large extent, social relationship regimes are reproduced by implicit knowledge structures. By making specific figuration experiences, we also transform figuration patterns through critical reflections on a shared world.

If we focus on the scope of sociographicity, it can be mentioned that reflections on sociality also involve questioning current assumptions about the relations between humans and nature, including animals (as we can see on the basis of ecological movements). Additionally, aspects of space and time have to be included when thinking about the processes of sociation. As was already mentioned, the concept of sociographicity is still a work in progress. In this context, I want to emphasise that the practice of rewriting sociality consequently has to be conceived as an ongoing process which is relational, interdependent and contextualized. This has ramifications for the question of how to theorize emancipatory practices and agency in order to prevent a Eurocentric perspective on emancipation as well as tendencies to overemphasise agency as an individual phenomenon, and to rethink the collective as a figuration structure which is constantly progressing.

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