MARKETIZATION AND COMMODIFICATION OF ADULT EDUCATION

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Andreas Fejes
Linköping University, Sweden (andreas.fejes@liu.se)

Henning Salling Olesen
Roskilde University, Denmark (hso@ruc.dk)

Introduction

Marketization of education is a global phenomenon (Ball, 2007; Burch, 2009) and has attracted increased research interest during the last decades, not least in terms of research on school choice and its consequences (Lundahl et al., 2014). Marketization connects back to the emergence of neo-liberalism in the 70s and 80s, an ideology which seeks to implement basic market economic principles in all areas of social life. Many scholars of education have analysed the ways neo-liberalism influences education policies and practices. This development goes hand in hand with the introduction of the New Public Management discourse, which includes the application of market mechanisms in the public sector. Neo-liberal marketization presumes a commodification of education and training provision, so that education can be directly organized as a market exchange and so that steering and funding can be related to the principles of supply and demand in the market economy.

Adult education systems look different in different countries (Käpplinger & Robak, 2014), and there are distinctly different political systems and views on the welfare state (see e.g. Esping-Andersen, 1990 regarding the welfare state). Thus, the extent to which, and the way market principles have been introduced, differ between countries. Further, processes of marketization include many issues, ranging from more macro-oriented ones to more micro-oriented ones.

When surveying the relevant literature on marketization and commodification of adult education we mostly find a range of conceptual contributions, as well as policy analyses, that raise concerns about how neoliberalism reshapes policies and practices in adult education (e.g. Barros, 2012; Fejes, 2006; Finnegan, 2008; Griffin, 1999; Martin, 2008; Milana, 2012; Rubenson, 2004). Some of these are empirical studies focusing in detail on policy changes, while others are more political, in terms of arguing for resistance and changes to the present state of being. However, when searching for empirical contributions on how marketization and commodification takes shape in specific geographical locations, or research that focuses on the consequences of marketization and commodification on practices of adult education, there is not much to

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be found (at least in the English speaking literature). Most of the identified studies focus on higher education, and only a few on adult education (e.g. Fejes et al., 2016). This lack of studies on marketization and commodification of adult education is quite surprising, not only as there is quite much such research in relation to compulsory schooling and higher education. This indeed might raise the question how "successful" the neo-liberalist policy of marketization has been until now. Is the whole thing a political ambition, combined with a projective concern of adult educators and participants?

Hardly. Processes of marketization and commodification are in some countries quite distinct, something that is happening as we speak, and something that has direct consequences for a range of stakeholders. But it may be of importance that many areas of adult education have been based on free choice and self organized provision, so that the policy implemented commodifications that interfere with old mechanisms of free choice and voluntary work. This complexity, and the opposing trends, make the need for conceptual analysis and empirical studies even more needed. Thus, we believe that this is an important issue at stake for the education and learning of adults today in Europe and beyond, and therefore we invited contributions in connection to this theme.

Some notes on marketization and commodification

Obviously marketization has effects on provision and participation but it might not be the same in different contexts – and it might also have ambiguous effects in each case. In most cases marketization exposes established institutions to competition from alternative programmes and makes them (more) dependent on an articulated demand. In many cases this is combined with the withdrawal of subsidies and leaves activities to be funded by potential participants, their employers, or other agencies. But marketization may also mean the introduction of new services or well-known services to new users. Marketization raises especially two types of questions:

Firstly, how does the market-dependent production and distribution influence the very service (the education provision) itself? Does it lead to standardization and/or to differentiated services? Does it make use of new technologies and formats of provision? Does it support quality improvement and development of programmes? Does it introduce new power relations between school leaders and teachers/adult educators, teachers and students, as well as between teachers and teachers?

Secondly, another type of question is related to the access and availability of educational resources. Does it facilitate the access for new users, broader dissemination – e.g. international provision? Does it exclude minority groups or substantially reduce their access to education? Do the changes in funding restrict users from access, or introduce new power relations around participation, e.g. between employers and employees?

Critical conceptual research into the general trends may extract such general dimensions of marketization, but we think that the forms and effects are dependent on local/national institutions, education traditions, social and cultural organisations etc. (Salling Olesen, 2014). So we need empirical contributions as well. Researchers engaged in the field in different locations should be able to identify a range of practices where marketization and commodification takes hold with specific consequences. Does marketization have the same and/or different consequences in traditional social

democratic welfare states as, let's say e.g. traditional Christian democratic welfare states or liberal welfare states (cf. Esping-Andersen, 1990)?

Even though many consequences of the marketization for our daily lives and activities in the field, may be deemed negative or at least problematic, limiting the critique to conceptual papers and arguments does not provide a sufficient basis for a more elaborate and nuanced discussion on the topic. We believe that there is a need for more empirical research in this area.

The contributions

In this issue of RELA, we introduce five articles on the topic of marketization and commodification of adult education of which some are conceptual and some empirical. We also introduce one open article.

Thematic articles

In the first article, Borut Mikulec and Sabina Jelenc Krašovec focus on the Europeanisation of adult education policies in Slovenia, and how such processes foster marketization of adult education and commodifies valuable knowledge and desirable forms of neoliberal subjectivity. The authors make their point by exploring the parallelism between European policy and policy documents in Slovenian policy, claiming that this parallelism is due to an echoing in the national policy of the trends in the European agenda. This article, in a way, illustrates a concern that we have met broadly around Europe – seeing the soft steering implemented by the method of open coordination of EU as a vehicle for standardisation and neo-liberal policy (e.g. Fejes, 2008).

The second article, by Barry Hake, seems to have this general concern as a backdrop for a detailed historical account of the history of steering and the role of market mechanisms in adult education in the Netherlands. Hake's analysis is – for good reasons – based on document analysis, which of course always leaves a space for interpretation of the function of those documents in relation and their way of depicting and influencing political realities. However his account demonstrates how markets have, in the modernization process, for centuries been a dominant way of meeting educational needs – and in recent times with the neo-liberal policy agenda there has been a complicated interplay between the state and different social actors, in which market mechanisms have been delegated a substantial role in some phases, although a quite different one. We as editors are not able to evaluate the history of the Netherlands but we think the argument raises a similar question for Europe in general and for other countries in which there seems to be this connection between European (neo-liberal) policy agenda and national adult education reforms. For this reason we think that Hake's specific account forms a useful problematization of the whole perception of our theme.

Even though we have some reservations about the assumption that the reflection in national policy documents of European policy ideas also translates into a converging reality we still think that a study of discourses which are performed on different levels of policy and practice may be a productive way to discover the way in which marketization is operating. Cecilia Bjursell provides an analysis of meaning-making among school leaders in adult education in Sweden by focusing on their talk about their practice. Interviews were conducted within a larger study on quality work in adult

education. Drawing on theories of language as social action and metaphors as social frames, she identifies seven metaphors concerning adult education: education as administration, market, matching, democracy, policy work, integration and learning. She concludes that much of the meaning-making coincides with policy frameworks, where democratic concepts are downplayed on behalf of economic concepts. However, economic theories should not only be seen as linked to liberal ideology, but rather seen as shaping a different notion of the relation between adult education and democracy.

The fourth thematic article is conceptual. Tina Röbel analyses in what ways economic and pedagogical ideals interact in the workplace learning context. Drawing on three dimensions of ethics: applying economic theories to business ethics, integrative business ethics and analytical business ethics, she formulates an approach for empirical investigation. Based on this review, she reformulates her research question into: Which values are inherent in the decisions taken in the context of workplace learning? – arguing that business ethics should/can not be seen as something separate from decision making. In conclusion, she argues for this empirical approach to the study of ethics in the workplace in opposition to more normative studies on the topic. Without such empirical approaches, she argues, there is a risk that the research is of little value for practice.

In the fifth thematic paper, Jeffrey Zacharakis and Jessica Holloway elaborate on the marketization and commodification of adult education within universities in the US. Their example provides a thought-provoking alternative picture to European adult education. Although some of the concerns are similar – related to the authenticity and educational quality of adult education – the article also shows that some of the relations we in Europe may take for granted may look entirely different over there.

Open papers

In the last paper in this issue, Trish Hafford-Letchfield and Marvin Formosa focus on the potential for lifelong learning and learning interventions from which co-production with those using social care service in later life might be better facilitated. Drawing on research on social care and research on educational gerontology, the authors identify a number of issues that act as barriers in the process of achieving co-production. As a solution and way to bridge the gap, lifelong learning in its critical form is proposed. This could for example mean that by "utilising learning within the ways in which we interact and intervene in our everyday practice with older people and the decisions made together with social care users permits reflection on the real meaning of co-production".

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Marketising Slovene adult education policies and practices using mechanisms of the Europeanisation of education

Borut Mikulec
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (borutmikulec@yahoo.com)

Sabina Jelenc Krašovec
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (sabina.jelenc@guest.arnes.si)

Abstract

This article addresses the issue of marketisation in the field of adult education by reflecting on the Europeanisation of education currently taking place through the establishment of European adult education policies. The article argues that Europeanisation fosters marketisation of adult education and commodifies valuable knowledge and desirable forms of neoliberal subjectivity. An analysis of Slovene adult education policies from 2004-2015 reveals how a European economised vocabulary is being implemented in Slovene adult education policies and practices. The main argument of this article is that these practices are shaped through financial mechanisms that marketise the adult education field. This results in new relationships between governing bodies within the field, the unstable and decreasing role of public adult education institutions and the prevailing role of private providers of adult education, who offer training programmes to meet labour market needs.

Keywords: Europeanisation of education; European adult education policy; Slovene adult education policy and practice; marketisation of adult education

Introduction

Debates about marketisation and commodification of education are highly connected to the impact of globalisation processes and neoliberal ideologies on education. Because of the globalisation process, education policies have become internationalised and a product of supranational political organisations, such as the European Union (EU), and international organisations, such as Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Burbules & Torres, 2000; King, 2007; Mundy, 2007). These organisations are new actors in the policy-making process or 'neo-empires of knowledge in education'

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(Klerides, Kotthoff & Pereyra, 2014, p. 6) who endeavour to enforce precisely defined neoliberal norms, ideas and market values, which shift the field of adult education (AE) towards market strategies and mechanisms (especially performativity, accountability and effectiveness of education, human capital theory, evidence-based educational practice, outcome-based education, lifelong learning, competences, etc.) (Barros, 2012; Fragoso & Guimarães, 2010; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Wildemeersch & Olesen, 2012; Milana, 2012a). In this way, a global education policy field is being established (Ozga & Lingard, 2007; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), and a coherent range of themes and discourses, which policymakers are using to transform education systems, is being created.

Globalisation is not a homogeneous process but one that is associated with distinct forms of regionalisation, each with its own policies and mechanisms (Dale, 1999). The focus of the current research is on comprehension of how these policies and mechanisms influence European education, which has been labelled the 'Europeanisation of education' (Alexiadou, 2014; Dale, 2009; Lawn & Grek, 2012; Pépin, 2007) and is developing through the establishment of European educational space and policy (Dale, 2009; Nóvoa, 2010) or European adult education policy (Holford & Milana, 2014; Rasmussen, 2014). This means that member states are no longer developing autonomous policies and that education is increasingly governed by new public–private partnerships and networks among different nations (Dale, 1999; Milana, 2012b). In this context, different authors have emphasised that the creation of European AE policies are predominantly driven by vocational goals and shaped by neoliberal economic policies (Holford, Milana & Mohorčič Špolar, 2014; Holford & Mohorčič Špolar, 2012).

In this paper, the effects of Europeanisation on the formation of AE policies and practices in Slovenia, which has been an EU member since 2004, are addressed. By analysing European AE policies, it will first be argued that Europeanisation fosters an instrumental understanding of AE, knowledge and subjectivity; here, AE and knowledge are seen as market commodities that can be produced and sold for market purposes without any intrinsic value. It will also be shown how indicators, tools and concepts used in European AE policies are influencing and penetrating Slovene AE policies and how a European economised vocabulary is being implemented as a regulatory ideal by Slovene decision makers. Then, by analysing Slovene annual programmes for AE, it will be shown how AE practices are being shaped using financial mechanisms that marketise this field. New forms of financing are establishing partnerships between the governing bodies of AE, e.g., the European Social Fund (ESF), and are playing major roles in the realisation of Slovene AE policy goals. Due to the economic crisis and austerity measures, the state, especially the Ministry of Education in this context, is increasingly reducing public funds for AE. Moreover, resources for general, formal and informal AE are being reduced in favour of short vocational training programmes, and because of changing financial schemes, public AE institutions are facing an inability to plan long-term, allowing private organisations to become the most common providers of AE.

Europeanisation of Education

The concept of Europeanisation first appeared in the 1980s in political studies literature and achieved greater recognition in the 1990s (Klatt, 2014). As noted by Lawn and Grek (2012), Europeanisation includes complex processes, including transnational networks and flow of ideas and practices across Europe. The direct influences of EU policy, using the open method of coordination (OMC), are reflected in the establishment of benchmarks, quality indicators and comparisons of statistical data and effect international institutions and globalisation (Lawn & Grek, 2012). In this context, Europeanisation also means successful integration, by candidate countries with EU memberships, of set European standards in various fields. During the 1990s, Slovenia was, for example, included in the EU's Phare programmes, which aimed to reform vocational education and training (VET) systems. With the modernisation of curricula, certifications and assessments, i.e., the MOCCA programme, in vocational education for youths and adults, Slovenia successfully reformed its VET system to agree with European standards. The two main objectives of the MOCCA programme were to assist the Slovenian government in developing a LLL system based on modernised and integrated VET for youth and adults and to develop a certification system for professional education to achieve a flexible and responsive adult vocational infrastructure ('Phare Ex-Post Evaluation', 2003).

Discussions of Europeanisation in education began around 2000, with the majority of authors identifying the Lisbon Strategy as a key turning point (Alexiadou, 2014; Dale, 2009; Lawn & Grek, 2012; Nóvoa, 2010), which sets specific objectives for education systems, e.g., recognition of qualifications and learner or worker mobility, raising the quality of education and participation in LLL (Fredriksson, 2003; Žiljak, 2008). The OMC is used to achieve these objectives 'as a means of spreading best practices and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals' (EC, 2000, paragraph 37). The OMC provides soft laws using guidelines, indicators, benchmarks and expert opinions to, encourage discourse about the measurability of education and help member states formulate education policies in agreement with predefined objectives (Alexiadou, 2014; Rasmussen, 2014). However, Europeanisation of education should be understood as a multidirectional process that incorporates member state policies at the EU level to exchange these policies among networks throughout Europe (Klatt, 2014).

The Lisbon Strategy was implemented in education through "The concrete future objectives of the education systems" and the "Education and Training 2010" programme and in the post Lisbon period (2010–2020) in a strategy known as the "Education and Training 2020" being part of the broader framework of the "Europe 2020" strategy (Nóvoa, 2010).

Formulating AE Policy

At the EU level, AE policies have been developed slowly. Since 1996 the EU has paid more attention to the field of AE (Milana, 2012a), and in 2000, the EU issued *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (Commission of the European Communities [CEC], 2000), which began the debate for LLL in Europe (Gravani & Zarifis, 2014). In the same year, the EU established the Grundtvig programme, which provided financial support for activities linked to AE (Rasmussen, 2014). The turning point for AE occurred in 2006, when the Commission issued *Adult Learning: It Is Never too Late to*

Learn, which was followed a year later by *Action Plan on Adult Learning: It Is Always a Good Time to Learn* (CEC, 2007). AE was conceptualised as a vital component of LLL and considered a significant contribution to European 'competitiveness and employability' and to the 'social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development' of adults (CEC, 2006, p. 2). With adopted documents AE is becoming a 'political priority' (European Parliament [EP], 2008, paragraph A) where 'the importance of adult learning in order to achieve the goal of creating better jobs in Europe as well as improve quality of life and promote individual development, personal fulfilment and active citizenship' (paragraph 29) is emphasised.

The ten years allocated to Europe 2020 are based on AE policy in the *Council Resolution on a Renewed European Agenda to Adult Learning* (Council of the European Union [CEU], 2011). The resolutions outlined here are aimed at 'enabling all adults to develop and enhance their skills and competences throughout their lives' (CEU, 2011, p. 3). On the one hand, AE should significantly reduce education and training dropout rates to below 10%, starting with 'literacy, numeracy and second-chance measures as a precursor to up-skilling for work and life in general' (CEU, 2011, p. 3), but on the other, AE could significantly contribute to economic development by strengthening 'productivity, competitiveness, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship' (CEU, 2011, p. 3). By the end of 2020, this resolution should contribute to new approaches based on 'learning outcomes and learner responsibility and autonomy' and to the development of 'effective lifelong guidance systems'. These systems validate informal learning and aid development of education and training aimed at 'acquiring key competences or leading to qualifications' and ensure 'flexible arrangements' adapted to the various training needs of adults (CEU, 2011, pp. 3-4).

Although commitment to LLL improves the status of AE in the EU (Holford & Milana, 2014; Fejes & Fragoso, 2014), it is strengthened primarily by economic goals and changing perspectives of education to lifelong learning, which are both ideas linked to "*economisation of social life*" (Fragoso & Guimarães, 2010, p. 22). Factors that have 'colonised' (Deakin Crick & Joldersma, 2007) European AE policy occur at least on three levels: 1) the marketised purpose of AE, 2) commodified valuable knowledge and 3) the formation of desirable forms of neoliberal subjectivity. Below, these factors are shortly described in more detail:

1) "Marketised purpose of AE". AE as part of broader economic, social and employment policies plays a key role in addressing socio-economic, demographic, environmental and other challenges facing the EU. By enabling greater productivity, competitiveness and entrepreneurship, AE is significant for achieving the objectives outlined by the Europe 2020 initiative. Although the promotion of personal development, social cohesion and active citizenship are also highlighted as goals and substitutes for historical commitments of AE related to democracy, social justice and emancipation (Holford et al., 2014), these are background factors of the fundamental objective of competitiveness and employability. As a result, functional goals and measurable outcomes of AE prevail, resulting in important statistical and internationally comparable data for education (Borer & Lawn, 2013).

2) "Commodified valuable knowledge". Knowledge is expressed within a knowledge-based economy and the provisions for skills that are essential to promoting the growth and competitiveness on which the productivity of Europe depends. Knowledge is understood as an investment to ensure the right skills for

the economy; the emphasis is on knowledge that can be measured, conceptualised as 'learning outcomes' supposed to ensure that adults have the skills and competencies required by the European labour market. Despite severe criticism to shift from knowledge to the concept of learning outcomes, supported by qualifications frameworks (Cedefop, 2015), learning outcomes are now being provided for European education policies and for all educational subsystems. As critics emphasised (Hussey & Smith, 2008; Luke, Green & Kelly, 2010; Young & Allais, 2011, 2013), the concept of learning outcomes contains false clarity, precision, objectivity and measurability of knowledge and reduces knowledge to standard units that hinder in-depth and creative learning, the epistemological diversity of knowledge and leads to a negation of the importance of powerful knowledge.

3) "Neoliberal subjectivity". European AE policy endeavours to establish a new form of subjectivity: flexible subjectivity that adapts rapidly to the labour market, precarious forms of employment, growing cultural diversity and LLL. LLL seeks to optimise each individual's economic, psychological and social potential to produce subjects who know and defines the normal learner, good worker and active citizen. When LLL is the responsibility of the individual, the subjectivity of a European citizen, i.e. lifelong learner, is also established (Edwards & Nicoll, 2004; Nóvoa & Dejong-Lambert, 2003).

In what follows, we will explore the AE field in Slovenia focusing in particular to marketization, commodification and commercialisation of AE and knowledge. Marketization is being understood as 'the process of organising market forces' in education (for example encouraging competition of public and private AE institutions) instead of hierarchical provision and coordination of education by government, commodification as the process where education is 'treated as a commodity, and foremost in terms of exchange value instead of a kind of (intrinsic) use value', and commercialisation as a process 'where private, for-profit agencies and commercial transactions have an impact on or become part of the scene of education' (Simons, Lundahl & Serpieri, 2013, pp. 419-420). We assume that Europeanisation, imposed through European political documents, fostering above mentioned processes, strongly influences and defends introduction of marketisation in AE field in Slovenia.

Impact of the Europeanisation of Education on Slovene AE Policies and Practices

Research description

The analysis reported here is based on the study of national policy documents, implemented for AE practices in Slovenia and on the collection of data from diverse sources. To analyse changes in financing schemes, data from the Resolutions on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia (ReMPAE), annual programmes of AE (APAE) and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURS) were primarily used.

AE is defined as education, training and learning for acquiring, updating, enlargement and deepening of knowledge, and includes both vocational and general education for personal development, cultural enlightenment and social needs. It can be formal, informal and incidental, based on LLL as a basic principle of education for all in

Slovenia. However, low level of regulation and formalisation of AE ensure its flexibility, important particularly for supplementing and adjusting skills and knowledge for changing needs of economy and society, but low level of regulation at the same time cause lower transparency and measurability of results of AE. Lately AE is more important for stimulating productivity and competitiveness, which also became an important goal of public AE (Krek & Metljak, 2011). Before the independence of Slovenia in 1991, providers of AE were public educational institutions, mostly 'Workers Universities' (Folk High Schools, now called Adult Education centres [AEC]), schools (which had units for AE) and Education centres in companies. In times of transition to market economy (after independence), the network of AE institutions gradually changed; the number of public AEC decreased rapidly, most of education centres in companies decayed (due to bad financial situation in companies at that time), and private AE institutions appeared as a result of changed needs and potentials of economy. Today, private AE institutions strongly prevail in the network of AE institutions in Slovenia.

AE is regulated by several acts[1], and the Adult Education Act defines public interests determined by the Adult Education Master Plan (AEMP). Since 2004, two resolutions were adopted: ReMPAE 2004–2010 (approved in June 2004) and ReMPAE 2013–2020 (approved in October 2013). To foster equality for adult access to education through the appropriate distribution of funds, resolutions defined priority areas, goals and measures for implementation (National Assembly, 2004, 2013). Priority areas include I) informal AE, such as programmes for acquiring key competences and literacy skills, education for active citizenship, social cohesion and information and communication technologies (ICT) programmes, II) AE for improving formal education attainment, such as programmes for completion of primary or secondary school or short-cycle higher vocational education and III) AE for the labour market, such as active employment and vocational training. Analyses in this paper cover priority areas in both resolutions and realisation of the APAEs.

For this reason, the APAEs from 2005–2015 were analysed to determine concrete implementation of the resolutions' goals and priorities. APAE defines educational programmes that are financed from public funds and determines the amount of ESF funding based on the scale and type of activities provided. Qualitative and quantitative indicators for monitoring implementation of resolutions for priority areas, activities and results are also set. This analysis focused on realisation of the financial goals of the APAE for both general education and vocational training in Slovenia. It should be noted that reports on the realisation of the APAE goals are unsystematic and unclear, making it difficult to analyse and compare data. Therefore, some data presented might be slightly different from data presented from official calculations.

Following this framework, we will first show how European marketised purpose of AE and knowledge treated as a commodity is being applied in Slovene AE policy, and secondly how AE programmes, institutions and AE as a public good, are being shaped by the processes of marketization, commodification and commercialisation. The European, and not the global education policy framework was chosen for analysis, as a direct references to the European AE policy documents and concepts can be found in Slovene AE policy. Moreover, Slovenia needed to adapt to various EU demands when joining the EU in 2004, although these could also be a part of a more global discursive shift in education promoted by international organisations around the globe. The main units of empirical investigation are the following ones: the purpose of AE, public and private AE providers and financing schemes of AE. For understanding the results of the analyses it is necessary to add that priority areas, defined in ReMPAEs, in itself do not

reflect market influences; they were actually defined as a kind of regulation and protection for AE from marketisation processes. However, analyses show how through policy it is possible to bypass it with financial mechanisms, consistent with European priorities.

Results

Indicators and tools from the European AE policy that shape Slovene AE policy

The general framework of both resolutions recognises that globalisation processes and socio-economic changes, such as the economic crisis, unemployment and an aging population, make it necessary for Slovenia to invest in human capital. LLL is seen as the primary method for all individuals in a society to gain employability. In this context, the ReMPAE 2004–2010 emphasised that Slovenia must contribute to goals outlined in the Lisbon Strategy that highlight interdependence between levels of educational attainment, economic growth and employment. Education has no value in itself, but it serves as an instrument for active social integration of individuals, mainly in the labour market (National Assembly, 2004, p. 8582). Similarly, the ReMPAE 2013–2020 contributes to the implementation of recommendations and goals from the ET 2020 and Europe 2020 strategies, with emphasis on common European indicators and measurable outcomes that enable comparisons between EU member states in the field of AE. The resolution identifies three main groups of problems, which are congruent in Europe 2020 and the Council's resolution (CEU, 2011): the level of education and its quality, participation and justice in AE and systemic issues, such as inadequate financing of general informal and formal education, low achievement for formal and informal learning and weak interdepartmental cooperation. The role of the ReMPAE is to introduce systemic regulations to AE in Slovenia, minimise development errors, especially for the basic vocational skills and competencies of adults and foster involvement in LLL in accordance with EU goals.

A closer look at the APAEs shows that, from 2008–2011, references to the European AE policy are more explicit, particularly in relation to *Adult Learning: It Is Never too Late to Learn* (CEC, 2006) and *Action Plan on Adult Learning* (CEC, 2007). Both documents influence Slovene AE practices; for example, tasks and projects are tailored to cover all priority areas of the *Action Plan* and are preferentially supported by the ESF (APAE, 2008, 2009, 2010). Taking into account the European agenda, the APAEs in Slovenia address all five priority areas of the *Action Plan* (CEC, 2007):

1) To measure progress in the field of AE,
2) To provide continuous training of professional workers and organise training for quality assurance during development for implementation and evaluation of AE,
3) To contribute to quality provisions,
4) To set up programmes for improving education attainment or qualification levels and recognise informal learning with the certification of national vocational qualifications (NVQ), and
5) To monitor the AE sector (APAE, 2010).

Since 2012, direct reference in APAEs has been made to the *Council Resolution* (CEU, 2011). Following this framework, the APAEs stated that substantial additional effort is required to ensure second-chance measures and key competencies, such as reading,

numeracy and digital literacy, for different target groups. New approach to AE, based on learning outcomes and learner responsibility and autonomy, should be a priority. References to the European and national qualifications framework and the development of national systems for validation of informal learning are also made (APAE, 2012, 2013).

Although correspondence between European and Slovene AE policy cannot be understood as a causal relationship, as European (or global) agenda is always filtered through national, political and cultural traditions (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), we argue that European AE policies function as a 'regulatory ideal' (Nóvoa & Dejong-Lambert, 2003, p. 51) that influences Slovene AE policies through common goals, concepts, indicators and tools. Despite strong criticism in research literature regarding competency-based programmes, a shift to learning-outcomes-based qualifications and frameworks for validation of informal learning, leading to the economisation, commodification and instrumentalisation of knowledge and education (Andersson, Fejes & Sandberg, 2013; Barros, 2012; Fragoso & Guimarães, 2010; Nicoll & Olesen, 2013), they have been incorporated into Slovene AE policy without serious reflection of the concepts and ideologies involved. How the employability regime (Nilsson & Nyström, 2013) and privatisation increasingly shapes Slovene AE practices will be discussed in the last section of this paper, in which financial schemes and problems connected to funding are analysed.

Marketisation and Commodification of Slovene AE Using Financial Mechanisms

The ReMPAEs 2004–2010 and 2013–2020 contain four basic goals for AE: to increase the educational level and key competencies of the adult population, to improve the general education of adults, to provide opportunities for learning and participation in education and to ensure employment opportunities for the active population. These goals are being implemented in three priority areas that should provide balanced AE for social (social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue), cultural (personal development) and human resource (labour market) development; accordingly, funds provided by the state and the ESF are shown in Table 1. For the first resolution, the highest percentage of funds was dedicated to the second priority area. For the second resolution, funding was not defined, and percentages are blurred due to the partition of financing among different ministries. However, the highest share of funds is in the third priority area.

Table 1

Planned budget and shares, according to priority areas for AE, in ReMPAE 2004–2010 and 2013–2020.

Priority Area	**Budget**			
	ReMPAE 2004–2010		*ReMPAE 2013–2020*	
	EUR	%	% Ministry of Education & Ministry of Labour	% Other ministries
I. General informal education of adults	70.165665,00	26.46%	20%	37%
II. Education to improve the educational attainment of adults	103.430979,00	39.01%	20%	0%
III. Education and training for labour market needs	48.703890,00	18.38%	46%	38%
IV. Infrastructure	42.820480,00	16.15%	14%	25%
Total	265.121014,00	100%	100%	00%

Source: Personal resolutions analysis.

Evaluation of the APAEs during 2005–2008, after adoption of the ReMPAE 2004–2010, show that plans from the first resolution were only partly achieved (Table 2). The share of funding for general informal AE (Priority Area I) was lower than planned, and goals were not reached (a 20% realisation, instead of 27%). The share of funds spent in Priority Area II was close to the budgeted amount, but funds for Priority Area III were exceeded (with 16.1% planned and 28.7% realised) (Beltram, Drofenik & Možina, 2010; National Assembly, 2013). During 2007 and 2008, the rate for achieving NVQs was close to the predicted 10%. Promotion of goals and support of employment and labour market competency were important factors, which was a trend that became even more obvious in subsequent years. Slovenia took the recommendation (EP, 2008) to draw attention to the importance of labour market requirements seriously, especially the recommendation that 'content of education must be tailored to vocational and practical requirements' (paragraph 29). The structure of planned funding and approved funding for ReMPAE 2005–2008 is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Structure of funds according to priority areas in ReMPAE 2004–2010, and funds approved by the APAEs 2005–2008.

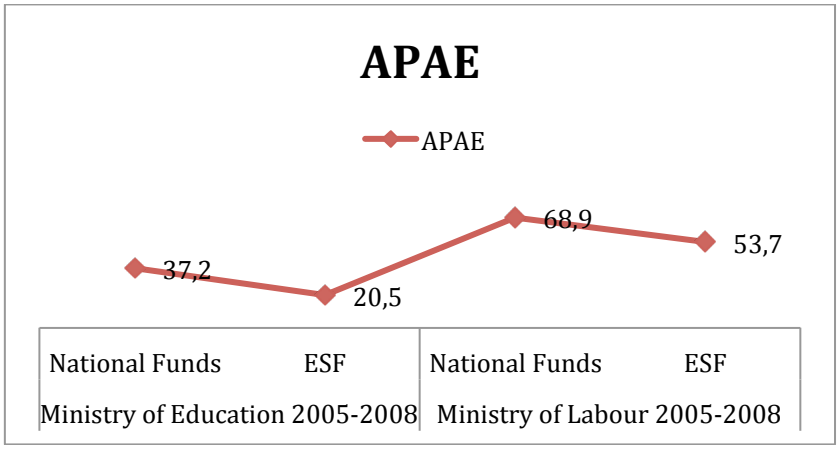
	Planned ReMPAE2005–2008		Approved APAEs 2005–2008	
	Eur	%	Eur	%
I.	45.066.349	27.9	36.025.326	20.1
II.	63.811.968	39.5	69.133.865	38.5
III.	26.521.449	16.4	51.562.764	28.7
Infrastructure	25.986.897	16.1	22.916.154	12.8
Sum	161.386.663	100	179.638.109	100

Source: APAE 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 in Beltram et al., 2010.

The realisation of goals set in the ReMPAE 2004–2010 was extensively supported by the ESF, which comprised nearly 50% of all funds for AE in Slovenia (Graph 1).

Graph 1

Annual planned budget for AE (2005–2008) based on sources in million Eur.



Source: Beltram et al., 2010, p. 18.

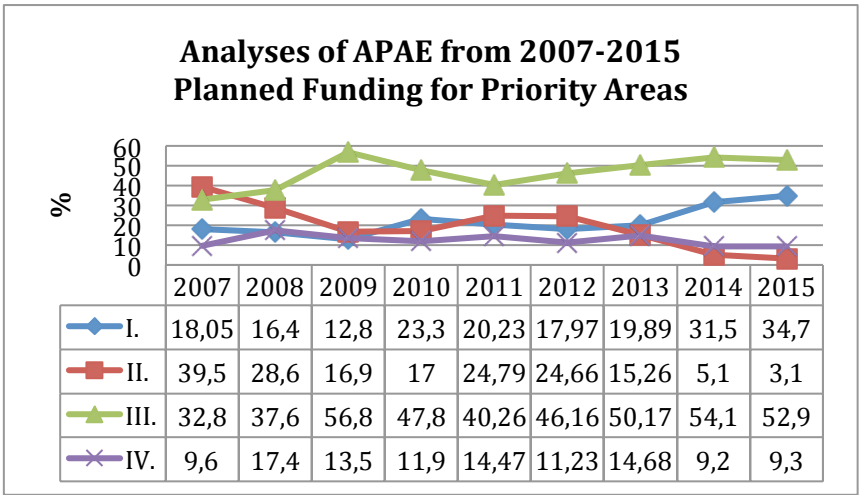
Data show that funds from the Ministry of Education were less than funds from the Ministry of Labour and that other inconsistencies occurred in the structure of financing. Funds from the Ministry of Education were meant to cover activities and programmes in Priority Area I, particularly in education for social and cultural goals, participation of vulnerable groups and social inclusion of adults. Education for the public good must have stable financial support from the state and should not be market driven or dependant on short-term financing schemes. Organisations offering non-profit educational programmes not connected to the labour market are mainly public institutions for AE. Contrary to expectations, educational programmes for vulnerable groups in Priority Area I were predominantly financed by the ESF and not by the national budget (Pangerc Pahernik, 2009), mainly through developmental projects to improve higher education achievements and employability, literacy, training of adult educators, quality, information and guidance for adults. General AE (community education, education in NGOs, libraries, etc.) was in this sense marginalized (Ivančič, 2011). Using the ESF was a very complicated process, which contributed to low

spending of the offered funds. In contrast, the ReMPAE 2004–2010 explicitly stated that education of employees should be financed by employers and not by the national budget, which was primarily meant to finance education for endangered occupations. However, because this area was substantially financed by the ESF, when national co-financing was needed, considerable national funding was used for education and training of employees. Consequently, the needs of employers were supported by public funds, which indicate privatisation of the policy and the initial attempt to blur the boundaries between public policy making and the private sector. Public institutions for AE were, on the contrary, confronted with uncertain long-term planning, based on project financing from the ESF. In the initial years of the implementation of the ReMPAE in Slovenia and because of influences from EU (global) directives, new modalities of privatisation and marketisation of education have occurred.

Graphs 2 and 3 show that since 2009, funds for AE have decreased. Compared to 2011, in 2012, funds were 26% lower, in 2013, funds were 37% lower, in 2014, funds were slightly higher but still 15.5% lower than in 2011 and in 2015, they dropped again. Decreases in funding were connected to the global financial crisis, which strongly affected Slovenia from 2009 onwards. As in many other countries, Slovenia accepted recommendations from European and global institutions for austerity measures and reduction of public expenditure in the educational field. Non-compulsory AE was also affected by marketisation and privatisation, as well as reductions in public expenditure. During this process, Europeanisation, in the form of policy recommendations, indicators and the requirement for the comparability of results, was adjusted according to the demands of supranational organisations, such as the EU and OECD, who explicitly defined austerity measures for education. In Slovenia, cuts to public funds and the interventions of these measures allowed privatisation, competition between public and private organisations and the invention of ‘entrepreneurialism as new public ethos’ (Grimaldi, 2013, p. 427). However, changes were warranted because of the necessity for an agreed-on direction in the priority areas. In addition to cuts in the national budget for AE, there were also changes to the distribution of funds between ministries (Graph 3, Table 3) and priority areas (Graph 2). Regarding priority areas, distribution of funds was in favour of Priority Area III (Education and training for labour market needs). This proves that the measures mentioned above influenced the content and orientation of AE and training.

Graph 2

Analyses of the APAE from 2007–2015, according to the planned funds for priority areas.



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
I.	18,05	16,4	12,8	23,3	20,23	17,97	19,89	31,5	34,7
II.	39,5	28,6	16,9	17	24,79	24,66	15,26	5,1	3,1
III.	32,8	37,6	56,8	47,8	40,26	46,16	50,17	54,1	52,9
IV.	9,6	17,4	13,5	11,9	14,47	11,23	14,68	9,2	9,3

Source: APAE 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015

Finances for Priority Area I varied from 12.8-34.7%; however, due to a lower share of the funds from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, during 2014 and 2015 (Graph 3), even higher aggregate funds did not guarantee the realisation of set priority goals. The highest share of funds was obtained in 2015 from the Ministry of Health, although the share of funds for education and training for labour market needs consistently increased, reaching 52.9% of all funds for AE in Slovenia (in 2015). In 2015, the most neglected area (according to set priorities) was Priority Area II (Education to improve the educational attainment of adults), for which the planned share of funds was at its lowest point since 2007 (3.2%). This decrease resulted from the transferring of money to market-driven activities, such as business-to-business training centres (entrepreneurship centres in secondary schools, connected to certain line of business, involving secondary school youth and adults), which were established to stimulate vocational training and apprenticeships. This is another sign of 'endogenous privatisation', which is based on commercialisation of public education and the introduction of private market and management techniques in schools, with the intention to create a more business-oriented public sector (Ball & Youdell, 2008). As Ball and Youdell (2008) stated, public-private partnerships (PPP's) create various types of money transfers between the private and public sectors. However, business-to-business training centres are co-financed by EU funds and are an example of how the EU influences the economisation of AE using financial mechanisms at the national level.

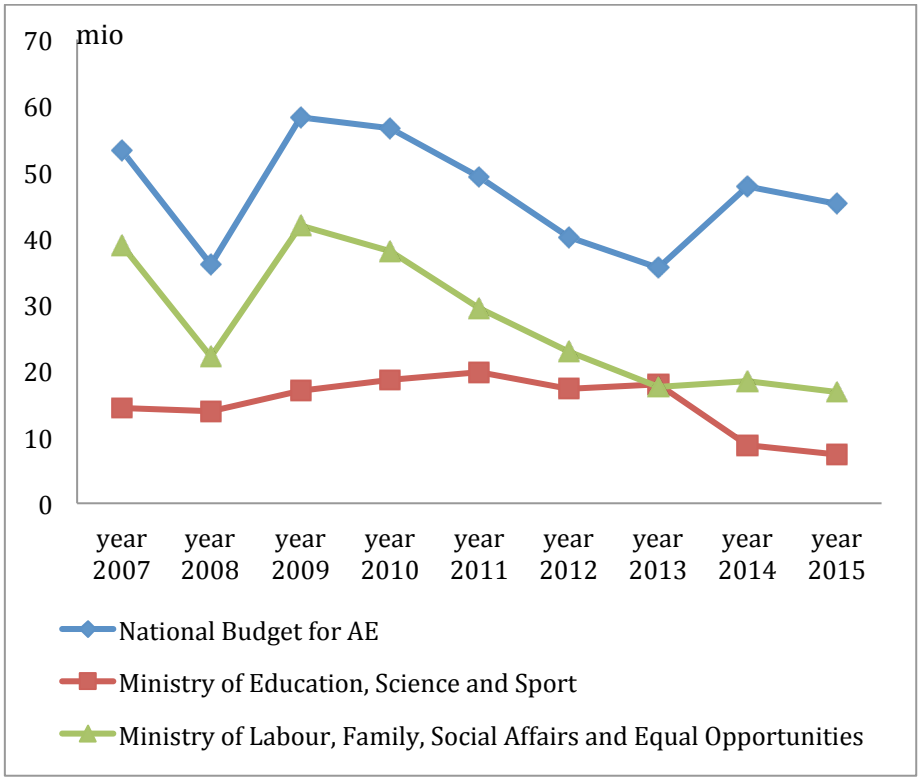
The distinction between the role and financing of private and public AE organisations is blurred in Slovenia. In practice, public AE organisations, such as Adult Education Centres (AEC) and schools with units for AE, are founded by individual municipalities. The role of public organisations is to fulfil public interests in the field of AE, but due to decreasing funds for general informal AE, these types of organisations are endangered. Data from the annual analyses of educational performers and programmes for AE, for the years 2014 and 2015, provided by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE, 2015a), show that private organisations are the most prolific providers of AE (62 organisations, offering 1508 programmes). In comparison, the number of municipal AEC has decreased (from 42 in 1999/2000 to 32 in 2007/08 and 30 AEC in 2014/15, offering 1602 programmes). Data from SURS (2015) are slightly

different, showing that in 2013 and 2014, there were only 28 AEC compared to 133 'specialised' (private) AE institutions.

The data presented in Graph 3 show that per annum (particularly after the austerity period after the financial crisis), the share of funds from the Ministry of Education decreased to the lowest amount, with decreases in Ministry of Labour funding also found.

Graph 3

Funds from the national budget for the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour (in million Eur).



Source: APAE, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Since 2014, interdepartmental cooperation between ministries was introduced in congruence with European recommendations (CEU, 2011), and new ministries contributed 42.9% of all funding for AE in Slovenia. In itself this might be desirable, but analyses of the programmes financed by other ministries, e.g., health, agriculture, environment, culture and public administration, show that it is not clear whether funds were meant for AE, as defined in the ReMPAE or for other activities directly related to these ministries. The financing scheme is now blurred and one can suspect that the measure was introduced and used as a mean for lowering budget of Ministry of Education. However, funds of other ministries are not meant for dealing with social inequalities in the field of AE, which was supposed to be main responsibility of the Ministry of Education. As a result, activities of many successful AE projects (some of them were model for development of AE elsewhere in Europe) with more than 20 years' tradition (for example Project Learning for Young Adults, Adult Education Guidance Centres, Learning exchange, etc.), which were important offer of informal education and learning for marginalized adults and were financed (also) by public funds, are seriously endangered. Public funds are allocated to (public) institutions with delay,

longer than half a year, and it is uncertain, if funds will be given at all. Some public organizations, conducting most of these projects, are consequently strongly hit by these measures and uncertainty.

It seems that the interdepartmental approach creates inconsistencies in the actual funding for the development and support of AE. Related to a lower national budget in 2015, the share of funds from the Ministry of Education is now minor. The share of funds given by different ministries, according to the APAE 2015, is presented in Table 3.

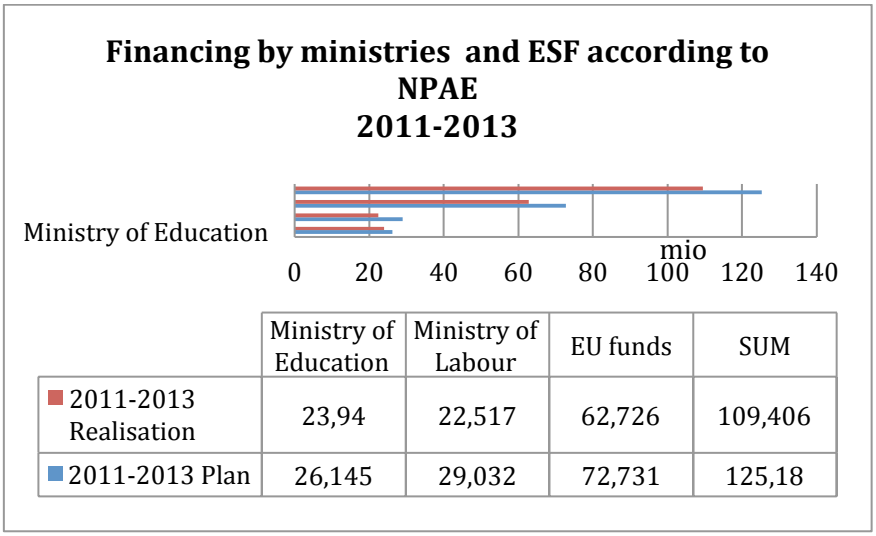
Table 3.
Budget users, as indicated by the APAE 2015 plan, according to funds and shares.

Budgetary Users	**Funds in EUR**	**Share (%)**
Ministries for Education, Science and Sports	7.360.643,28	16.3
Ministries of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	16.783.221,81	37.2
Ministries for Agriculture, Forestry and Food	8.330.680,00	18.4
Ministries of the Environment and Spatial Planning	104.708,00	0.2
Ministry of Health	10.532.206,00	23.3
Ministry of Culture	2.011.640,18	4.5
Ministry of Public Administration	56.756,92	0.1
Sum	**45.179.856,19**	100.0

Source: APAE, 2015.

In 2015, the largest share of funding for AE came from the Ministry of Labour (37.2%), the second largest share came from the Ministry of Health (23.3%), the third largest share came from the Ministry of Agriculture (18.4%) and the fourth largest share came from the Ministry of Education (16.3%). Since 2013, the funds from the Ministry of Education have continuously decreased (2013: 17.929 mio, 2014: 8.814 mio and 2015: 7.360 mio Eur). This will have a significant influence on further imbalances between priority areas in AE. However, realisations of the APAEs 2011, 2012 and 2013 (Graph 4) show that the EU funds remained important to the Slovene budget for AE and that there were gaps between planned funding and the realisation of the APAEs.

Graph 4
Financing, according to APAE, by ministries and the ESF, from 2011–2013.



	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Labour	EU funds	SUM
2011-2013 Realisation	23,94	22,517	62,726	109,406
2011-2013 Plan	26,145	29,032	72,731	125,18

Source: SIAE, 2015b.

ESF funds have decreased over the years; thus, national funds should increase over time and substitute missing ESFs, especially for the nationally important goals for education. High shares of the ESF should by no means encourage the Ministry of Education to reduce funding, although this occurred in Slovenia. However, after 2014 ESF funding scheme '2007-2013' came to an end in Slovenia, and most of the projects, relying besides ESF primarily on funds of the Ministry of Education (mostly general informal education), are now endangered. Analyses show that funds for training for labour market could still be found (graph 2, table 3); therefore emphasising flexible subjectivity for labour market needs (learning to update skills, find employment, to obtain desired forms of self, e.g., flexible workers, self-actualised individuals), which is in congruence with European AE policy, became a priority in Slovenia.

Conclusions

In this paper we presented an analysis of how tools and concepts in the European AE policy influence Slovene practices, how marketisation and economisation are reflected in Slovene AE policies and practices and provided evidence of the effects of Europeanisation on education in Slovenia.

Analyses of financing schemes defined by Slovene APAEs have shown that, since 2009 and the beginning of the financial crisis, public funds for AE have continuously decreased. In accordance with EU recommendations, austerity measures affected the educational system and were used as an excuse to introduce certain changes to the financing mechanisms and privatisation processes of Slovene AE (Simons et al., 2013). Europeanisation has influenced objectives for several measures and was imposed during systemic and financial changes in Slovenia, which resulted in the following. First, public funds from the Ministry of Education gradually diminished and now present a minor share of the funds allocated for AE compared to other funding options from the ESF and Ministries of Labour, Health, and Agriculture. Second, the ESF formed a substantial part of the budget for AE, which influenced erosion of financial stability for public AE institutions. Third, general informal AE programmes to strengthen social

equality, social justice and inclusion of target groups are treated as second-rate AE fields. Fourth, the highest priority was devoted to education and training for labour market needs, with 52.9% of all funds in 2015 allocated towards this type of AE in Slovenia, particularly short vocational training programmes. Fifth, public institutions for AE were forced to compete with private institutions, which are now the main providers of AE in Slovenia, although these institutions do not have to meet quality standards or goals or define education as a public good.

The system of AE in Slovenia is in principle well organised and regulated by the state (Ministry of Education) with special legislation on AE, AE resolutions and APAEs, however it is not immune to the labour market forces and marketization of AE that invade the field along with financial crisis and austerity measures. Thereby, when the state failed to provide sufficient funding of AE and shifted its responsibility to other actors and mechanisms (ESF, other ministries not primary responsible for AE, private organisations), it allowed market mechanisms to enter the field through the 'backdoor'. Consequently, the number of public AE organisations that should fulfil the public interest in the field of AE is decreasing; they have to compete with each other for sufficient number of adults, compete with private for-profit organisations representing majority of AE institutions, and compete for ESF projects – adjusting to the European AE agenda – in order to 'survive' in Slovene AE market. In this market, AE responding to the labour market is becoming just another commodity for sale.

Aligning with European standards played an important role in modernising and reforming educational systems after Slovenia gained its independence in the early 1990s. Of interest is how policymakers, during the past ten years, have taken an uncritical approach to adopting European concepts and tools, thereby influencing Slovene AE practices in a direction that primarily enforces vocational training of adults for labour market needs. Recent changes in Slovene AE discard national traditions, such as an innovative nature and socially oriented education, which developed in the decades leading up to 2000. By slowly accepting various imposed European 'standards', such as LLL, reforms to the VET system, deregulation, privatisation and commercialisation of public education, AE in Slovenia is losing its former orientation towards social justice, personal and social development and empowerment of adults through education. It seems that through Europeanisation, AE in Slovenia is becoming a tool for profitability in a market-oriented society.

Note

[1] Slovenia is one of the rare countries with special law for AE, adopted in 1996. The Adult Education Act regulates informal AE, while other areas are regulated by the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (of the Republic of Slovenia) and other school and employment acts.

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Regulatory governance of 'training markets', 'market failure', and 'quasi' markets: historical dimensions of the post-initial training market in The Netherlands

Barry Hake
Independent researcher, The Netherlands (eurolearn.hake@gmail.com)

Abstract

This article examines regulatory governance of the post-initial training market in The Netherlands. From an historical perspective on policy formation processes, it examines market formation in terms of social, economic, and cultural factors in the development of provision and demand for post-initial training; the roles of stakeholders in the long-term construction of regulatory governance of the market; regulation of and public providers; policy responses to market failure; and tripartite division of responsibilities between the state, social partners, commercial and publicly-funded providers. Historical description and analysis examine policy narratives of key stakeholders with reference to: a) influence of societal stakeholders on regulatory decision-making; b) state regulation of the post-initial training market; c) public intervention regulating the market to prevent market failure; d) market deregulation, competition, employability and individual responsibility; and, e) regulatory governance to prevent 'allocative failure' by the market in non-delivery of post-initial training to specific target groups, particularly the low-qualified. Dominant policy narratives have resulted in limited state regulation of the supply-side, a tripartite system of regulatory governance by the state, social partners and commercial providers as regulatory actors. Current policy discourses address interventions on the demand-side to redistribute structures of opportunity throughout the life courses of individuals. Further empirical research from a comparative historical perspective is required to deepen contemporary understandings of regulatory governance of markets and the commodification of adult learning in knowledge societies and information economies

Keywords: market mechanisms; market failure; policy narratives; post-initial training; regulatory governance; stakeholders

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Introduction

Recent contributions to the literature have expressed reservations concerning the transformation of 'adult education' into a marketplace (Barros, 2012; Biesta, 2006; Boshier, 2012; Fejes, 2013; Milana, 2012). Such reservations are formulated in terms of the emergence of markets for educational goods and services, commodification of 'adult learning', and construction of subjectivities of adult learners as consumers. Largely regarded as new phenomena on the adult education landscape since the mid-1980s, both markets and commodification are interpreted as signifying change in policy vocabularies from 'education' to 'learning'. Explanations focus on globalization, neo-liberal policies, declining importance of nation states in governance of adult education, cuts in public expenditure, and individualization of responsibility for learning. While markets and commodification are widely regarded as manifesting the 'new educational order' (Field, 2000) characterized by diversification of 'learning arenas' towards non-formal and informal learning (Hake, 2006), most attention has been devoted, however, to policy discourses articulating lifelong learning as 'learning for earning', employability, work-based learning, and post-initial training markets as key policy arenas in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Riddel, Markowitsch & Weedon, 2012; Aspin, et al. 2012).

This article adopts a longer term historical perspective on markets and commodification in an analysis of shifting historical contexts which have shaped the development of the post-initial training market in The Netherlands. Historical evidence emphatically demonstrates that markets and commodification have long been significant phenomena on the broader landscape of adult 'learning' in European societies. From a comparative historical perspective, this landscape is characterized by the social organization of adult learning—by others for adults, or by adults themselves—in terms of the cultural processes of disseminating and acquiring knowledge, skills and sensitivities. From the Protestant Reformation onwards, on the one hand, non-formal adult learning was organized on a non-profit basis by ecclesiastical authorities, philanthropic organizations, voluntary associations, corresponding societies, mutual improvement societies, and reading circles, etc. (Hake, 2011: 15). On the other hand, however, the invention of printing, growth of the book trade, and formation of reading publics opened up a market for the commercial provision of learning materials serving the informal learning needs of adults. These cultural practices of disseminating and acquiring knowledge, skills and sensitivities throughout Europe, and indeed elsewhere, have long been dominated by market forces, commodification of adult learning materials, and understandings of individual learners as consumers of commercially distributed learning materials. Given this emergence of capitalist systems of knowledge production and commercial distribution in printed form, the social relations of cultural production and consumption have been dominated from the seventeenth century onwards by tensions concerning the role of markets in disseminating cultural artefacts as commodities for sale (Hake, 2004; Johns, 1998; Raven, 2007). From this historical perspective, non-formal and informal adult learning have been organized at quite significant social distances from the historically specific cultural practices associated with state-funded forms of adult education in welfare capitalist states in the twentieth century. Hegemony of neo-liberal policies in the cultural arena constitutes an historically specific development of capitalist social relationships in the political economy of cultural practices involved in dissemination and acquisition of knowledge, skills and sensitivities (Fuchs, 2015).

Historical studies of early forms of adult learning have predominantly focussed on the production, commercial dissemination, and consumption of printed texts, such as encyclopaedias, self-help books, and the earliest forms of distance learning through correspondence learning (Burke, 2013; Darnton, 1979; Yeo, 2001). From the seventeenth century onwards, itinerant book-pedlars and colporteurs knocked on doors to sell bibles, prayer-books, guides to good manners, almanacs, and popular reading materials for entertainment—especially tales of travel to 'exotic places' (Batten, 1978; Brophy, 2007; Fontaine, 1996; Salman, 2003; Spufford, 1985). Following the first commercial offer of a correspondence course in the American colonies in 1725, the market in correspondence learning expanded rapidly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries based upon railway networks and regular public mail systems (Kett, 1994; Wedemeyer, 1981). From the early nineteenth century, industrialization was accompanied by vocational and professional training courses for adults provided by employers, commercial providers of face-to-face and correspondence learning by public institutions, such as universities (Pittman, 2013), and 'proprietary correspondence schools' (Freeman, 1974). A Swedish newspaper carried an advertisement in 1833 offering the study of composition through the medium of the post (Oliveira & Rumble, 1992). The late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries witnessed rapid expansion of commercial provision serving adults' learning needs focused on vocational training together with self-help literature (Harrison, 1957; Rimke, 2000). In Sweden in 1898, Hans Hermod, who had initiated correspondence courses to learn English in 1886, established what is now known as Hermods NKI Skolan, one of the world's largest distance-teaching organizations (Rumble, 1989).

In addition to printed learning materials, the distance learning market expanded significantly in the early twentieth century when radio increasingly provided a technological basis for commercial mass media learning, while in the 1960s television and video cassettes stimulated the further development of multi-media distance learning (Collins, Hammond & Wellington, 2002; Casey, 2008). Since the 1990s, the market for self-help literature has enjoyed a renaissance (Field, 2000; McLean, 2013; McLean & Vermeylen, 2014), while internet and social media serve the commercial distribution of distance learning resources supporting 'personal learning environments' based on smart phones (LeNoue, Hall, & Eighmy, 2011). These cultural practices signify the rediscovery of the autodidact or self-directed learner as key consumers in the commodified e-learning markets of the twenty-first century.

Adult learning markets and commodification of learning, however, have not been uncontested historical phenomena. In different historical periods, some stakeholders questioned adult learning markets and called for regulation of commercial activities. Arguments favouring intervention were variously formulated in terms of moral standards, ethics, quality, exploitation, access, equity, consumer protection, or indeed straightforward political opposition to capitalist interests and profit-making in the cultural arena. This gave rise to issues of 'regulatory governance' of for-profit and non-profit organizations, accreditation of commercial and public providers, quality assurance, and protecting consumer rights of individual learners (Jordana & Levi-Faur, 2004). A recurring question raised by stakeholders in different historical periods has been market failure resulting in inequitable allocation of learning resources to specific groups of adult learners excluded from the marketplace. Interventions included measures to strengthen the demand-side of the market through consumer protection, and direct financial support, such as vouchers and learning cheques, for individual learners (Levi-Faur, 2011).

From this broader perspective of comparative historical analysis of markets and commodification of adult learning in terms of modernization processes in European societies, post-initial training markets have been fundamentally influenced by socio-economic development of urbanization, industrialization, labour markets, occupational structures, and changing skill-formation processes. In different European countries, policy formation processes have been influenced by long-standing national differences in political, constitutional, and legal arrangements with regard to centralized and decentralized regulation by the state, and regulatory governance of public and commercial providers in initial and post-initial training of the work-force. This article examines these historical processes in the specific national context of the development post-initial training in The Netherlands. As a national case-study of regulatory governance of learning markets, this article comprises historical description and analysis of how diverse stake-holders have influenced policy-formation processes with regard to the development of post-initial training in The Netherlands. More specifically, the historical narrative seeks to offer a critical reconstruction of policy discourses with reference to the development of regulatory governance of the Dutch post-initial training market. Drawing on policy narratives of stakeholders, this article constitutes a case study of the specific historical tensions that have been inherent to self-regulation of the market, hesitant emergence of regulatory governance, and the framing of state interventions to correct for market failure.

Different terms and definitions of post-initial training can be identified in the Dutch literature (CBS, 2010; SEO, 2010, SER 2012). Most commonly used are *post-initiël onderwijs* [post-initial education], *post-initiël scholing* [post-initial training], and *post-initiël beroepsonderwijs* [post-initial vocational education] (van der Meer & Smulders, 2014). The term 'post-initial training' is understood here as including: a) training activities at secondary and tertiary levels following completion of initial (vocational) education and training; b) acquisition of qualifications recognized by occupational organizations in different economic branches, including continuing professional development of practitioners, for example nurses, doctors, medical specialists, lawyers, etc., in the self-regulated professions; c) participants are engaged in paid employment or are seeking to join the labour market; d) training activities take place on a part-time basis in conjunction with paid work and/or other forms of social participation including unpaid work in households; e) providers include publicly-funded providers and commercial organizations; and f) adult learners are regarded as individual consumers who are charged tuition fees at market prices.

The article is based upon published sources in the public domain that address policy narratives of stakeholders articulated in parliamentary debates, legislation, reports of advisory commissions, policy documents and lobby work by interest groups. It is organized as follows. Section two examines the absence of state intervention during the early development of the post-initial market in The Netherlands. In section three, attention focuses on hesitant forms of market regulation through state intervention from the 1960s onwards. Section four looks at the impact of neo-liberal narratives articulating market deregulation, employability, emphasis on individual responsibility, and regulating the supply-side during the 1980s and 1990s. In section five, attention is focused on contemporary policy debates involving measures to strengthen the demand-side of the market in order to correct for allocative market failure. The conclusions argue the need for further empirical research to foster more informed understandings of the complex historical factors that impact on adult learning markets in the twenty-first century.

Historical origins of non-intervention by the state and market self-regulation

As a consequence of the comparatively retarded industrialization of The Netherlands until the late nineteenth century (Griffiths, 1979), (re-)training the workforce long remained the preserve of Dutch employers and private (philanthropic) initiatives, together with the emergence of commercial training providers (Honingh, 2008). Post-initial training developed as an unregulated market served by employer-led work-place training, *mondelinge onderwijs* [courses of oral instruction] involving courses provided by self-employed teachers, and commercial correspondence courses organized by proprietary correspondence schools (Backx, 1994). Stakeholders regarded state intervention as both unnecessary and a threat to flexible provision of training in response to rapidly changing skill requirements resulting from technical innovations in production processes (Prak, Lis, Lucassen, & Soly, 2006). From the 1890s onwards, commercial providers became particularly dominant in providing correspondence courses to meet the post-initial training needs of the Dutch workforce (Wierdsma, 1990). Although the first law on industrial training in The Netherlands in 1919 introduced a system of government subsidies for initial vocational training schools, state support remained limited, more subsidies were requested than were honoured by the government (Wolthuis, 1990). Post-initial training continued to be the preserve of employers and commercial providers as major players in the post-initial market during the 1920s (Backx, 1994).

Photograph: Managing correspondence courses: Office of the Instituut voor Schriftelijk Onderwijs [Institute for Correspondence Education], Amsterdam, 1921

Publishing companies increasingly recognized correspondence courses as a potentially profitable market for their books serving as instructional materials. Furthermore, expansion of commercial and business administration services together with invention of the typewriter resulted in new occupations and significant growth of correspondence courses and oral instruction in type-writing, short-hand, foreign languages, book-keeping, and office management.

Photograph: Adult learners attending oral instruction in stenography by the commercial provider Instituut Schoevers, Amsterdam, 1915

During the economic crisis of the 1930s, limited Dutch state intervention focused on work camps for low-qualified unemployed men on social benefits, while employers and trade unions abstained from stimulating re-training programmes. Mass unemployment, however, provided a significant motivation for adults to enrol in correspondence courses to improve their chances of remaining in, or gaining, paid employment. This resulted in further unregulated proliferation of commercial providers in the Dutch market up to the Second World War. Occupation of The Netherlands by the German Third Reich in 1940 provided the foundation of the first state intervention in the post-initial training market. In 1942, the occupying forces ordered the Dutch government to implement compulsory registration of providers of correspondence courses. This measure was intended to control provision of correspondence courses by Jewish organizations, and, as a consequence, 3000 private providers, serving 150,000 fee-paying customers, were registered (Backx, 1994). Jewish organizations and individual Jewish teachers involved in correspondence learning were first registered, subsequently prohibited, and individuals eventually deported to concentration camps.

Hesitant steps towards state intervention

In the immediate post-Second World War period, the Dutch state did not include post-initial training in its programmes for economic recovery and social reconstruction. Although the 1942 system of registration remained formally in operation, government concluded that no further regulatory measures were required. Other stakeholders, however, argued that mere registration of commercial providers of correspondence

learning was inadequate given their growing numbers and diversity. It was left to commercial providers themselves to propose a system of self-regulatory governance comprising inspection, quality criteria, and accreditation of recognized providers. In 1947, the Foundation for Inspection of Correspondence Education was established as a private self-regulating organization granting certificates to accredited commercial providers. Regulatory stakeholders involved were representatives of correspondence course providers, the association of Dutch local governments, and consumer organizations; the government belatedly appointed an official representative in 1949. Of 124 commercial providers seeking recognition in 1947, 37 were recognized by the Foundation. However, those refused recognition together with those who had not even bothered to seek recognition were able, nonetheless, to continue operating in the commercial market place (Backx, 1994).

During the early 1960s questions were voiced about this self-regulated governance of accreditation (Curzon, 1977). Confidence in self-regulation by the market was undermined by cases of abuse by some providers with regard to the ethics of their marketing strategies, misleading advertising, and high drop-out among fee-paying consumers. Commercial providers together with the Ministry of Education and Parliament expressed needs for quality criteria and consumer protection (Backx, 1994). This resulted in the 1973 Law on Accreditation of Correspondence Education Institutions which introduced regulatory governance based on public accreditation of commercial providers of correspondence learning. The Education Council, established in 1919 as the advisory body to the Dutch government, became responsible for accreditation.

Rapid development of 'second-chance' and 'second way' forms of adult learning during the 1970s and early 1980s led employers', providers' and consumers' organizations to demand that accreditation should be extended to include all forms of commercially-provided education and training, including oral instruction courses and increasing use of audio-visual mass media. The state-funded Foundation for Educational Research funded two large-scale research projects on correspondence learning and oral course instruction which focused on organizational forms of provision, motivations of adult learners, and market failure addressing in particular high levels of drop-out among enrolled adult learners. Given social-democratic inspired expansion of public funding for multi-media distance learning—the Open School and Open University—the state increasingly shared the need for further regulation of the supply-side of the market, and evaluative research projects were instigated. Discussion of regulatory interventions focused on the protection of consumers to ensure quality standards of all types of courses by commercial providers. A 1985 Law on Accreditation of Educational Institutions replaced the 1973 law governing only correspondence courses. Key areas of new accreditation processes involved quality standards for qualifications of teachers, methods of recruiting fee-paying consumers, contractual arrangements between providers and consumers with particular reference to tuition fees charged, transparency of examinations, and recognition of diplomas granted.

Traces of neo-liberalism: competition on the supply-side of the market

Despite the 1985 law on accreditation of commercial providers, centre-right governments manifested continuing reticence concerning regulation of post-initial training. Following the economic crisis of the early 1980s, this was reinforced by neo-liberal questioning of public intervention in training the workforce. Issues raised

included neo-liberal themes of New Public Management (NPM) such as deregulation, autonomy, decentralization, privatization, and self-regulation by the market of supply and demand.

Resultant policy discussions focused, however, on the respective financial responsibilities of the state, social partners and individual learners for funding post-initial training. A 1983 report by the Wagner Commission (Wagner Commission, 1983), on innovation in the Dutch economy, emphasized a tripartite division of responsibilities between the state, social partners, and individuals in promoting 'employability' of the workforce. Tripartite governance was again stressed in a 1990 report (Rauwenhoff Commission, 1990) which argued that state responsibility for initial vocational training should be limited to a so-called 'start qualification' as a guarantee of entry to the labour market, while the social partners and individuals should be responsible for investments in post-initial training.

In terms of policy practices, priority was given to regulatory measures to increase transparency of the supply-side, stimulate public providers to operate in the market place, and create an equal playing-field for free competition between public and private providers. A 1987 report by the Social-Economic Council (SER, 1987), stressed the role of publicly-funded higher education institutions in providing post-initial for-profit 'contract training activities' for local employers. Legislation in 1989 enabled publicly-funded institutions to compete with commercial providers in order to expand the post-initial market. At the instigation of the social-democratic Minister of Education, the tripartite division of financial responsibilities formed the core of the 1993 policy paper, *Continue Learning* (Min. O&W, 1993). It argued that the state was responsible for initial vocational 'start qualifications', and that social partners and individual learners should bear an increasing share of investments in post-initial training in order to promote 'lifelong learning'. In 1995, a law implementing 'start qualifications' involved integration of initial vocational training and adult education and established Regional Educational Centres. These publicly-funded institutions were allowed to compete with commercial providers in the post-initial market place by providing for-profit 'contract training activities' for local and regional small and medium-sized companies. Furthermore, the 1995 law introduced a Central Register for Adult Education and Vocational Training involving accreditation of both commercial and public providers in the post-initial marketplace. Accreditation criteria included quality control, organization of provision, and consumer protection.

More importantly, within the newly established national qualification framework, courses provided by accredited commercial providers could henceforth lead to recognized public diplomas with civil effect, including higher education degrees, which were traditionally the preserve of publicly-funded educational institutions. Government assumed that competition between public and private providers would ensure quality of provision, while contributing to expansion of the post-initial training market. Other arguments for the Central Register included the government's objective of raising the training level of the Dutch workforce, while it hoped that accreditation of more commercial providers would reduce the need for public investments in additional publicly-funded providers. Furthermore, government assumed that commercial providers would engage in self-regulation of their sector in order to utilize new opportunities available to them. This was indeed the case, and a self-regulating platform of accredited providers, Platform for Accredited Private Educational Institutions [Platform van Aangewezen/Erkende Particuliere Onderwijsinstellingen], was immediately established. In effect, the 1995 law established a tripartite division of responsibilities between government, social partners, and training providers in the

expectation that competition between commercial and public providers would serve the expanding post-initial training market. New Public Management policies with regard to post-initial training in The Netherlands did not implement a neo-liberal project to hollow out the Dutch state. On the contrary, they contributed above all to new forms of state intervention in regulatory governance of the supply-side of post-initial training markets by promulgating competition between commercial and public providers, as was increasingly the case elsewhere in Europe.

Employability, lifelong learning and strengthening the demand-side of the market

From the mid-1990s into the early twenty-first century, dominant social-democratic policy narratives on post-initial training re-formulated employability in the language of 'lifelong learning'. In January 1998, a cabinet committee report, *Lifelong Learning: The Dutch initiative* (Min. OCW, 1998), marked the integration of labour market policies, post-initial training, and lifelong learning with employability as its core concept. This report utilized 'employability' on 43 occasions in 12 pages as the government's primary argument for lifelong learning. 'Employability' was defined as the: '*…individual capacity to find and keep jobs*' (Min. OCW, 1998, 7). Key ministries in the Inter-Departmental Employability Committee and the Labour Foundation—representing the social partners—subsequently refocused Dutch employability discourse in terms of lifelong learning. In December 1998, the social partners committed themselves to an Employability Agenda Platform, and the *Employability Agenda* was agreed in June 1999. Following reports by the Social-Economic Council (SER, 2002;) and the Education Council (Onderwijsraad, 2003), the social-democratic cabinet announced an *Action Plan on a Life Long of Learning* in 2004 which was followed by the appointment of a Task Force on Life Learning with responsibility for concrete policy proposals.

However, since the 2004 shift to centre-right cabinets, led by Christian Democrats and Liberals respectively, less attention has been given to the broader implications of lifelong learning for training the Dutch workforce as a whole. Policy narratives have turned towards integration of the low-qualified employed and unemployed in the Dutch labour market by improving their participation in post-initial training. Such phenomena are not new, but have been repeatedly identified as structural problems of the Dutch system of post-initial training by OECD, independent research, and advisory committees serving Dutch policy-makers. These structural problems have increased in intensity as consequences of the impact of demographic change, the pension crisis, and raising the age of retirement to 67; together with the identified growing gap between the higher-qualified and the low-qualified in Dutch society in the context of lifelong learning policies.

Lifelong learning narratives now address this growing body of evidence of market failure in delivering post-initial training to significant sections among low-qualified employed and job-seekers. In particular, these include employees in small companies, the low-qualified, and older workers over the age of 45. Although successive governments Dutch governments in the past twenty years have employed diverse policy instruments to involve these target groups in the post-initial training market, such measures primarily involved stimulating employers to invest more in the training of their low-qualified and older employees. Measures focused on tax incentives and reducing the social costs of employing these groups of workers and retaining them in

the force work through retraining. Fiscal incentives, such as tax deductions of personal costs of training, also targeted individuals to encourage their own investment in training.

Policy narratives addressing reintegration of low-qualified employed and unemployed in the labour market have increasingly articulated demand-side interventions to encourage participation in the post-initial training market. In 2005, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Work jointly established a Project-Directorate on Learning and Working to undertake projects to this end. Appointed for 2 years, the Project-Directorate focused on local initiatives combining training with reintegration in the labour market, and it established a system of accreditation of prior learning. In 2008, the Project-Directorate established a *Think-tank Learning and Working*, which produced a report entitled *Time for Development* (Min. OCW, 2009). The report proposed legal recognition of rights to training for low-qualified individuals who should be provided with personal training budgets, individual learning accounts, vouchers, or training cheques. It marked a significant reminder of policy debates about paid educational leave during the 1970s and educational vouchers during the 1980s, while similar arguments played a significant role during social-democratic experiments with individual learning accounts (ILAs) during the early 2000s. The Project-Directorate was disbanded in 2011.

With accession of the current Liberal/Social Democrat government in 2012, policy narratives have focused increasingly on demand-led approaches (Onderwijsraad, 2012; SER, 2012). Emphasis is placed on tailor-made funding of individual participants in training among low-qualified, unemployed, and older workers. Recent reports have repeatedly reiterated arguments for vouchers, individual learning accounts, and learning cheques (SER, 2012). It is argued that potential individual learners should be able to choose post-initial training courses they themselves wish to follow independently of employers' priorities, and that these preferences should be activated with self-managed 'learning credits'. It is significant that commercial providers in the training market support such instruments to strengthen the demand-side, but regard them as the government's responsibility, and thus a question of public funding (SEO, 2010).

While the 2012 report by the Social-Economic Council argued that individual workers should be able to express their needs for training, it also pointed out, however, that they themselves as consumers need to be more aware of the importance of the personal returns to training (SER, 2012). This is a clear reminder of both the rights, but also duties, of individuals to engage in a 'learning culture' as expressed in the 1998 policy report *Lifelong Learning: The Dutch initiative*, which argued that

> All people, young and old, are firstly and naturally responsible for themselves. You have to learn to take care of yourself, and, therefore, you must want to acquire the knowledge and skills to do that. Those who do not participate will be reminded of their responsibilities. (Min. OCW. 1998: 9).

In response to an advisory commission report (Min OCW, 2014a), the current cabinet announced a package of demand-side measures in October 2014 to strengthen the 'learning culture' among adults, including vouchers, to increase levels of participation in the post-initial training market. It specifically referred to encouraging higher levels of flexible part-time participation in post-initial training courses provided by publicly-funded higher education institutions. (Min. OCW, 2014b). In 2015, the government indicated to Parliament its willingness to consider financial support for part-time adult learners in higher education (Min. OCW, 2015a). On the same date, the Minister of Education invited the Socio-Economic Council to continue in providing her department

with advice concerning a 'long- term agenda devoted to skills and learning' (Min. OCW, 2015b). In terms of the political economy of a 'lifelong learning culture' and structures of opportunity to participate in the Dutch post-initial training market, the Het Financieele Dagblad [The Financial Daily] suggested, in March 2015, that lifelong learning in The Netherlands is a 'hollow phrase' and in practice 'bankrupt'; '*while lip-service is given to it, when something does happen it concerns minor adjustments on well-known territory*' (FD, 2015).

Regulatory governance of post-initial training: free or quasi-markets?

What have been the results of long-term transformations of the post-initial training market from its laissez-faire origins in the nineteenth century towards the current context of regulatory governance involving key stakeholders as regulatory partners? From the early 1990s into the early 21st century, a policy repertoire of strategies, measures and instruments regulating the Dutch post-initial training market was constructed by a 'grand coalition' of the state, employers, trade unions together with commercial providers. Cumulative results of measures to encourage competition between private and public providers has resulted in a supply-side of the market where 84% of provision is in the hands of commercial providers with for-profit motives, while 16% is provided by publicly-funded institutions. Together these providers serve a post-initial market with an annual turnover of € 3.4 billion. On the demand-side of the market, 15.7% of Dutch adults aged 16-64 participate annually in post-initial training compared to the European Union average of 9%, while the government has set a target of 20% within the Europe 2020 programmes. This involves 1.5 million participants per annum among the employed, self-employed, and unemployed adult population.

The overall consensus articulated in recent policy statements, advisory committees' reports, and independent research is that the Dutch post-initial training market on the whole performs well. In particular, it is argued that the supply-side of the market offers an adequate and varied range of provision in order to satisfy the need for post-initial training in the labour market (SEO, 2010). This is seen as a result of an adequately functioning supply-side with minimum government regulation and without the need for public funding of the post-initial training effort. Approximately 8000 private providers are members of the National Council for Training and Education (NRTO), the national platform for recognized commercial providers of post-initial training. These accredited providers range from large—increasingly multi-national—companies offering correspondence education, management consultancy firms, small training companies and self-employed trainers. Publicly-funded post-initial training activities are organized by higher education institutions—universities, especially the Open University, and higher professional education institutes—and in very small measure the Regional Education Centres. Their activities range from providing part-time Bachelor degree courses, post-initial Master degrees, dual courses combining part-time study with work, and associate degrees.

NRTO, representing private providers, claims that it successfully meets the post-initial training needs of young working adults. Empirical evidence suggests that this may indeed be the case, but is also indicative of one of the key sources of allocative market failure. It is evident that the market is failing to deliver adequate training to those who are employed by small companies, are low-qualified, or older than 45, although they are increasingly regarded as in serious need of such provision. With regard to age, it is clear that younger workers are far more likely to participate in post-

initial training than older workers. While 34% of the 25-34 age group participate in training, this is 7.6% among those aged 55-64. Despite arguments that the post-initial training market is on the whole in a healthy condition, there is adequate statistical data indicating that it is characterized by a serious degree of allocative market failure (Buisman & van Wijk, 2011; SEO, 2010; SER, 2012). This has raised questions as to why the operation of the post-initial training market has not resulted in the expansion of the supply-side in order to meet the demonstrated unmet 'needs' on the demand-side of the market (Golsteyn, 2012).

In addressing the supply-side of the Dutch post-initial market, current policy-related narratives are largely articulated in terms of potential market failure arising from barriers to free competition between private and public providers. This is regarded as a question of establishing a level playing-field for all providers and transparency of free competition in the market place. On the one hand, commercial providers endeavour to create maximum freedom of manoeuvre in securing as large a share of the market as possible. This undue influence of commercial providers can result in 'regulatory capture' of the market by societal stakeholders participating in the system of regulatory governance. They regard themselves as hampered in this endeavour, however, by public providers operating without the need to realize profit. Despite their dominance in the marketplace, commercial providers express reservations about false competition by public providers because these misuse public funding of their regular educational activities as 'hidden subsidies' thus enabling them to reduce their operating costs and under-cut commercial providers. It is also questioned whether public providers demonstrate the entrepreneurial mentality needed to operate effectively in the free market.

Public and private providers compete, furthermore, for sizeable publicly-subsidized contracts to serve 'public' objectives rather than pursuing 'private' interests. On the one hand, this involves European funding to support interventions in the labour market including training initiatives supported by the European Social Fund and the Regional Fund. There is potential misuse of these funds by providers with both private and public providers having been found guilty of serious fraud, while more stringent controls have been introduced to prevent this in future. Furthermore, availability of ear-marked government subsidies for projects providing (re-) training for specific target groups is also a major cause of concern with regard to free competition. The Project-Directorate for Learning and Work was an example of this specific mechanism with reference to activities focused on local projects to promote training schemes for reintegrating the unemployed in the labour market, and the establishment of a national system for Accreditation of Prior Learning. Both were organized on market principles involving a system of accredited public, private non-profit organizations, and commercial providers in competition for contracts to carry out the work involved. The supply-side of the market is regarded as potentially distorted by this extensive subsidy landscape which comprises a maze of more than 1400 different regulations governing such subsidies. This can have significant consequences for the pricing policies of public and private providers in the market and undermine free competition for government contracts. These issues give rise to questions about the so-called level playing-field where competition between public and private providers has effectively been orchestrated by state intervention, despite traditionally professed reluctance to intervene in the market. By seeking to regulate the market, state interventions to create market conditions may indeed have contributed to market failure.

Within the long-standing framework of the 'polder-model' for social dialogue, with shared but divided responsibilities between different regulatory actors, the most

significant development has been the growing emphasis on stimulating the demand-side of the training market and individual responsibility for investments in employability. Questions are increasingly raised, however, with regard to growing confusion between 'individual demand' as expressed by consumers of post-initial training and the organization of 'collective demand' by the social partners. When the social partners are increasingly regarded as responsible for collective expression of individual training needs, the interests of consumers are not necessarily voiced by individual consumers themselves. While provision of post-initial education is directed at individual consumers, the Training and Development Funds organized by different sectors of the economy are very important collective purchasers of post-initial education. Jointly organized by the social partners, these funds are governed by collective bargaining agreements. With regard to funding of individual participants in post-initial training, for example, the costs of 61% of participants are paid for by third parties, more specifically by their employers, rather than by individuals themselves. This also involves the availability of paid educational leave in working time for employees with 42% of participants in training having access to paid educational leave for an average 5.4 hours per individual per annum. Funded by a compulsory pay-roll levy contributed by employers, this system is largely based upon purchasing the services of commercial providers often in the form of tailor-made training activities especially for large companies.

Although policy narratives persist in asserting that the post-initial training market is a free market, recent advisory committees and independent research have questioned this argument. The post-initial training market in The Netherlands manifests the key characteristics of 'quasi markets' introduced elsewhere in Europe during the last two decades to implement regulatory governance of education and social-welfare systems (for example: Blom, 2001; Bradley & Taylor, 2002; Struyven & Steurs, 2005; Maroy, 2009; Bradley & Taylor, 2010; Denters et al, 2013). These quasi markets are designed to secure the benefits arising from the supposed efficiency of free markets, while retaining the benefits of equitability of individual rights guaranteed by public responsibility. However, both the supply and demand-sides of these quasi markets manifest potential market distortions arising from the very system of regulatory governance established in order to stimulate competition in meeting training needs (Honingh & Karsten, 2007). The tripartite system of regulatory governance of the post-initial training market in The Netherlands has constructed a 'quasi market', which gives rise to the question as to whether the quasi post-initial training market itself is a source of market failure, thus inhibiting appropriate interventions by regulatory actors to correct for market failure. This perhaps identifies the ultimate conundrum of neo-liberal policy practice which conflates public and private interests into individual responsibility for lifelong learning in the marketplace, while regulatory governance in practice is orchestrated by political actors in quasi post-initial training markets.

Conclusions: The pursuit of knowledge under difficulties

This article addressed the historical development of the post-initial training market in The Netherlands. Within the broader context of modernization in European societies from the industrial revolution to post-industrial information economies of the twentieth-first century, historical description and analysis in different historical periods focused on regulatory governance of this market. Primary findings of this study demonstrate that policy formation processes have long been characterized by questions concerning the free market, commodification of learning, and problems associated with market failure.

The article has argued that the post-initial training market in The Netherlands, has not been primarily inspired by the implementation of neo-liberal policies since the 1980s. The evidence provided by this specific national study demonstrates that markets and the commodification of adult learning are long-standing historical phenomena, which have characterized diverse and manifold forms of post-initial training since the early eighteenth century during the historical transformation from correspondence learning, to distance learning, and e-learning.

Key findings demonstrate that regulatory governance in The Netherlands has been characterized by distinct periods of contestation between conflicting interest-groups, shifting coalitions between societal stakeholders, and political settlements supporting marginal state regulation in order to correct for potential market failure. Throughout the nineteenth century, retarded industrialization of the Dutch economy contributed to a *laissez-faire* period dominated by a free market and the total absence of state intervention. It was only in the 1960s and 1970s that state intervention in the market was hesitantly recognized in response to the rapid expansion of multi-media distance learning, accreditation of commercial providers of correspondence learning, and consumer protection to prevent market failure. During the 1980s and 1990s, neo-liberal policy narratives primarily focused on market deregulation, employability, and the responsibilities of individual learners as consumers in the post-initial training market. In practice, this resulted in a tripartite system of regulatory governance that encourages competition between commercial and public providers in a quasi-post-initial marketplace.

The results also identified convincing empirical evidence that the post-initial training market fails to deliver the appropriate goods and services to meet the demand-side needs of low-qualified and in particular older workers who are now expected to remain longer in the labour market. In the past decade, potential market failure has returned to the agenda in policy narratives addressing evidence of systematic allocative failure by the Dutch post-initial training market to deliver training to specific groups. These comprise those who have been targeted by government policies articulating demand-side interventions to strengthen unmet individual needs in gaining access to the labour market via participation in the post-initial training arena. Despite reiteration in successive policy reports of the important role played by the Dutch post-initial training market in delivering lifelong learning, it is perhaps necessary to pose more fundamental questions about regulatory governance and responses to the problematic role of the post-initial training market in lifelong learning policies in The Netherlands.

Within the overall modernization process in European societies and the social organization of adult learning, markets and the commodification of learning have been characterized by the commercial availability of learning materials—print, audio-visual, digital—serving diverse formats of non-formal and informal learning. Although this particular study has focused specifically on longer-term development of the post-initial training market in The Netherlands, the implications of these findings suggest the need for further empirical research into the historical and contemporary dynamics of markets and the commodification of adult learning on the broader landscape of adult learning beyond the world of post-initial training. Five key areas of further research can be identified that address the commercial character of diverse forms of adult learning serving the learning activities of autodidacts and self-directed learners.

Firstly, research needs to investigate historical and contemporary dynamics of markets in the commercial provision of learning resources in serving non-formal and informal self-directed learning activities undertaken by adults in order to acquire knowledge, skills and sensitivities for their personal, social, and vocational development.

Such research can serve to recover the world of independent and self-directed learning efforts undertaken by autodidacts which is fundamental to understanding the historical and contemporary dimensions of independent self-directed learning, correspondence study, distance education, and distributed personal learning environments in Web-2 society (Atwell, 2007; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). Secondly, historical research should address implications of technological innovations for the social and economic organization and delivery of non-formal and informal learning in different historical and societal contexts. These include activities of publishers in producing self-help and self-improvement literature, developments in the infrastructure of correspondence study, significance of the type-writer, radio, and television for the development of multi-media distance learning, and, more recently, the impact of internet on e-learning and smart-phones for commercial delivery of personal learning environments (Moores, 2012; Fang, 2014). Thirdly, research needs to address historical and contemporary dynamics of regulatory governance of learning markets with special reference to the responsibilities of for-profit, non-profit private and public providers of learning materials for adults. Research should address state regulation of providers, but also explore the involvement of societal stakeholders, in particular the social partners, in regulatory regimes based upon self-regulation and co-regulation of markets (Maroy, 2008; Ozga et al, 2011). Fourthly, further research is required that examines in greater detail key historical questions as to how regulatory stakeholders have constructed understandings of 'market failure' in different historical periods, and how this influences contemporary regulatory policy repertoires for interventions in learning markets. Such research should focus on the political economy of how public authorities have historically intervened and continue to intervene in the marketplace in order to correct for allocative failure of markets. This should address the limited and contingent delivery of education and training by commercial providers in the market, and explore state responsibilities for structures of opportunity enabling equitable access for all to lifelong learning (Tuijnman, 2003; Watts, 2008; Stern & Ritzen, 2012; Nijhof & Streumer, 2012). Finally, research is also needed which explores the 'cultural materiality' of the 'commodification' of adult learning. This involves studies of the social organization of disseminating and acquiring knowledge, skills and sensitivities manifested in cultural practices associated with historical and contemporary cultural forms of commercially provided adult learning with particular reference to correspondence learning, multi-media distance learning, and personal learning environments based on Web-2 technologies and social media (Selwyn, Gorard, & Furlong, 2006; Lee, 2008; Fenwick & Edwards, 2013; Zürcher, 2015).

The comparative historical perspective can contribute significantly to more empirical understanding of the social, political, economic and cultural factors that have historically shaped the emergence of learning markets, commodification of learning resources, and calls for state intervention to regulate the market. In the late eighteenth century, classical liberal economists, such as Adam Smith, may have advocated the workings of the marketplace for the efficient distribution of goods and services including education, but they were also convinced of the need for appreciable government intervention in the learning marketplace by way of subsidies or vouchers (West, 1982). This was based on their empirical observation that while the poor may have been convinced of the benefits of education for both themselves and their off-spring, they were too poor to purchase learning in the marketplace (West, 1964).

In 1830, a prominent spokesman of self-help learning, George Craik, reported several hundred biographical sketches of individuals involved in '*…pursuit of knowledge under difficulties*' who were engaged in '*…self-education without a master*', and who turned to any learning materials they could lay their hands on, including the

marketplace (Craik, 1830). Almost two hundred years later, much remains to be recovered of the history of commercially-provided learning materials in the marketplace. Further empirical research is vital to establishing more nuanced historical and contemporary understandings of markets, commodification and learners' subjectivities in the digital world of adult learning in the twenty-first century, where capitalist forms of cultural production and consumption pervade the world of personal learning environments and the cultural practices of autodidacts in learning to live their lives.

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When theories become practice—a metaphorical analysis of adult-education school-leaders' talk

Cecilia Bjursell
Jönköping University, Sweden (cecilia.bjursell@ju.se)

Abstract

Marketization has changed the education system. If we say that education is a market, this transforms the understanding of education and influences how people act. In this paper, adult-education school-leaders' talk is analysed and seven metaphors for education are found: education as administration, market, matching, democracy, policy work, integration and learning. Exploring empirical metaphors provides a rich illustration of coinciding meanings. In line with studies on policy texts, economic metaphors are found to dominate. This should be understood not only as representing liberal ideology, as is often discussed in analyses of policy papers, but also as representing economic theory. In other words, contemporary adult education can be understood as driven by economic theories. The difference and relation between ideology and theory should be further examined since they have an impact on our society and on our everyday lives.

Keywords: metaphors; adult education; school leaders; marketization; education management

Images of adult education

'The way we see things is affected by what we know and what we believe' (Berger, 1972). Though Berger was speaking about art, could the same be said about our everyday perceptions in organizations? In this paper, I will explore metaphors in school-leaders' talk to paint a portrait of contemporary adult education as a collage of co-existing meanings.

Adult education is an integrated part of society, so it changes with the cultural tides. As pointed out by Wildemeersch and Salling Olesen (2012), both policies and market forces have influenced the understanding of adult education and lifelong learning. The consequences have been shifts in meanings and in the ways central concepts are used. Policy transformations initiated by think-tanks of transnational agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, WTO, the OECD, and the European Union were found to influence such change in the direction of increased market orientation (Milana, 2012; Wildemeersch & Salling Olesen, 2012).

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In today's policy discourses, the language is dominated by an economic ideology. The knowledge economy and human capital theory are found as the predominant discourses embedded in policy documents in Canada (Gibb, 2008). Several authors have identified how the responsibility for education, in policy writing, is shifting from the state to individuals, and they contend that this represents the demise of the nation state as a guarantor of social justice (Barros, 2012; Milana, 2012). In an analysis of policy language concerning career development as a part of adult education, Bergmo-Prvulovic (2012) also finds the economic perspective to dominate, followed by learning and political science perspectives. These changes at the transnational level are reflected at national and local levels.

In the twentieth century, the Nordic model became a well-known concept in the field of adult education. The Nordic model of education is used to refer to the similarities in reforms and systems in the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden (Lundahl, 2016). Equality, inclusion, enlightenment, and the enabling of 'second chances' for all adult citizens are values connected to the Nordic model, but recent studies have questioned the fit between the model and (adult) education practice in the Nordic countries (Filander, 2012; Lundahl, 2016) and discussed the commodification of education (Antikainen & Kauppila, 2002).

In Sweden, change has been more pronounced than in many other OECD countries: its formal education system has been radically and extensively transformed to imitate a market (eg. Lundahl, Erixon Arreman, Holm & Lundström, 2013). In national regulatory documents concepts such as welfare, equality, *bildung*, and citizen have been displaced by concepts such as compliance rates, results, competition, growth, education system, legal security, and efficiency (Bergh, 2010). Discourses on New Public Management are pervasive in organising and governing public institutions and the government can be said to operate through the freedom of the individual (Fejes, 2016). In a study of teachers and students in municipal adult education, it was found that the responsible, motivated, and goal-oriented students were positioned as desirable, and students were seen as responsible for their own success (Sandberg, Fejes, Dahlstedt & Olson, 2016).

Within the Swedish education system, adult education has undergone the largest changes in the wake of marketization. In 2014, 45.7 percent of all students participated in courses delivered by non-public providers (Fejes & Nordvall, 2014). It should be noted that it is a quasi-market, where students can choose their schools and the municipality pays with vouchers to the schools chosen. This design to imitate a free market has brought private sector models for control into education organizations (Carlbaum, Hult, Lindgren, Novak, Rönnberg & Segerholm, 2014). Such marketization challenges institutional norms and values in adult education (Runesdotter, 2011; Fejes, Runesdotter, & Wärvik, 2016), and one effect is that school leaders, as mediators between policy and classroom practice (e.g. Runesdotter, 2011), become occupied with quality systems (Bjursell, Chaib, Falkner & Ludvigsson, 2015). Thus, there is a growing body of knowledge about the effects of marketization, but we still need to know more about school leadership because it is an important factor in improving student achievements.

This paper sets out to explore how school leaders in adult education talk about their practice. Interviews from an empirical study of quality work in adult education provide material for the analysis. In the analysis, metaphors that are at play when an individual describes his or her everyday work are mapped. The purpose is to identify metaphors as frames of reference and to discuss what these mean for adult education. Before

describing the metaphors that are identified in the empirical material, a section describing language as social action and metaphors as social framing is presented.

Language as social action

To change an organization, a change of language is often needed, and a change of language has consequences for performance in an organization. It has long been recognized that to say something is to *do* something (Austin, 1962). While Austin's, and later on Searle's, structuring of language had a linguistic focus, Cooren (2000) points out that the theory of speech acts connects different disciplines that treat of the social dimension of language. The performative function of language underlines the organizing dimension of communication, and the organization can, accordingly, be regarded as a collaborative discourse (Bjursell, 2007). In that discourse, the focus is on language's constructive effects (Hardy, 2001), and the act of communicating is the way in which we constitute experience (Barrett, Thomas & Hocevar, 1995). This means that language moves beyond being mere content to providing a context and simultaneously being a way to recontextualize content (Boje, Oswick & Ford, 2004).

To take a closer look at language as action, the concept of frames and framework can be useful. Goffman (1986) describes framework as schemata of interpretation applicable to a recognized event[1]. These frames function as guides to recognizing a situation, and they call for particular styles of decision or of behavioural response (Perri, 2005). The frameworks, or frames, of a particular social group constitute a central element of its culture, but frames vary in their degree of organization. While some are neatly organized as systems with postulates and rules, others are less organized and more of an approach than a system of explicit rules. Goffman's ideas about frames have led to a heated debate as to whether or not Goffman was a structuralist (e.g. Gonos, 1977; Denzin and Keller, 1981; Goffman, 1981; Johnson Williams, 1986). Sociologists wanted to position Goffman's ideas within the structuralist rather than interactionist school. But Czarniawska (2006) points to the revival of Goffman's work in recent studies and argues that, while the dramaturgical metaphor should be used less literally, the strength of Goffmans work is the focus on action. Czarniawska also comments on how concepts such as frame and framing have been adopted and developed in relation to ideas about the construction of meaning. In a literature review by Benford and Snow (2000), the authors say that framing processes have come to be regarded as one of the central dynamics in understanding the character and course of social movements.

To talk about frames and meaning construction in the organization of experience, the verb *framing* is employed (Benford & Snow, 2000). An understanding of language as social action also entails recognition of the co-existence of multiple, competing or complementing frames within a group. Furthermore, an individual can apply several frameworks simultaneously during any one moment of activity (Goffman, 1986). To understand why framing succeeds in some cases but not in others, Snow et al. (1986) described two sets of factors at work. The first concerned the degree of frame resonance with the current life situations and experiences of the potential constituents. The second set of factors involved the configuration of framing hazards, as, for example, when an organization fails to uphold the core values and beliefs it has highlighted. The move between frames can be described either as a process initiated by equally powerful individuals or as a process in which some individuals have more power over the process than others. Palmer and Dunford (1996) have pointed to the first approach as risky due

to its underlying voluntarist and idealist assumptions. To identify social frames in language, metaphors can be a useful tool. They help to bring out underlying assumptions and frames of reference—what we know and what we believe.

Metaphors as social frames

A metaphor provides a way of seeing or representing one thing in terms of another and thus suggests an analogy or likeness between the two (Van Maanen, 2005). To recognize metaphors as social frames means to recognize that they are ways of seeing, thinking, and learning and that they have implications for practice (Hatch & Yanow, 2008). Metaphors are powerful because they allow people to apply familiar knowledge structures to new settings (Walsh, 1995; Cardon et al., 2005) and because they unite reason and imagination (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). A metaphor can provide a means of categorization, and if an appropriate metaphor is found it can help the reader see things in a new way, but it also requires the reader to stay critical, as some insights can become distortions. Metaphors can be contradictive: they can be at once enlightening and confusing, highlighting and obscuring, attractive and seductive, and emotional and imprecise (Bjursell, 2015). Additionally, metaphors require that the writer and the reader share meanings connected to the chosen metaphors. If many individuals share powerful metaphors, those metaphors can contribute to shaping the social worlds in which we live (Docherty, 2004).

In addition to using metaphors straightforwardly, root metaphors can be traced through the use of certain vocabulary. A root metaphor reflects implicit beliefs that shape an individual's understanding of a situation. For example, when Van Maanen (1995) finds terms such as replicable, teachable, transferable concept, and method in a text, he sees these as indicating the root metaphor of industrialization. Morgan (2006) suggests that different metaphors expand insights and can contribute to a complementary understanding of an organization, such as the currently well-known metaphors of organization as a machine or organization as a brain (Morgan, 2006). Analysing root metaphors in an organizational context can reveal tacit information hidden in narratives and can thereby provide insight into the philosophies of practices in everyday contexts (Steger, 2007; Wilson, 2011). As described, metaphors can work as research tools, but it should be acknowledged that they come in different shapes. Metaphors can appear in research in four different ways: (1) metaphors that have become a natural part of language and are no longer thought of as metaphors, (2) metaphors that are used for inspiration and creativity during analysis in the research process, (3) metaphors that are encountered in field work, and (4) metaphors that are used as a communicative device when writing up research (Bjursell, 2015). Of particular interest in this paper is the analysis of metaphors in the empirical material. Working from the assumption that language is social action, metaphors provide a way to explore frames of reference in an empirical setting. In this study, the metaphors are understood as representing frames that guide school leaders' orientation in adult education.

A field study of adult education in Sweden

In this section, the field study will be presented. The empirical material was collected in a study of work on quality in adult education (Bjursell, Chaib, Falkner & Ludvigsson,

2015). The empirical material gathered in the field study consists of 9 case studies of municipalities in Sweden and responses from 162 municipal representatives to a survey about quality in adult education. In this paper, only the 19 interviews from the case studies are the subject for analysis since they are richer in content than the other material. The nine municipalities were selected to represent differences: they include the three largest cities in Sweden (seven interviews), one suburb of Stockholm (one interview), three midsize cities (six interviews), and the municipalities of one region (five interviews). We did not interview representatives of small municipalities because they usually outsource their adult education. There was also a spread in terms of geographical location, and we interviewed both men and women. The people interviewed were in leading positions, with different areas of responsibility depending on the size and organizational structure of the municipality. The interviews were performed in a narrative style, as the main purpose was to pursue a natural flow in interviewees' talk about their practice, to avoid interruptions, and to support their narrative through follow-up questions. There was an emphasis on quality and on managing quality, since the issue of quality and evaluation is topical on all levels of education, but the interviews also included a broader discussion about adult education. Since Swedish law states that school leaders must work on quality, the topic represents a link between policy and practice.

The analysis of the transcribed interviews was carried out in two steps. The first step was to get to know the material by reading the interview transcripts several times, and I have written a broad summary, together with colleagues, of how school leaders work on quality. For this particular paper, I wanted to move deeper into the material and see what assumptions and frames could be identified when analysing school leaders' talk about what they do. I knew that the market aspect was in the material, as I had noted it during the interviews when a school leader called the adult learners customers. This was only an impression, however, and I wanted to do a structured analysis of the text. To highlight different understandings of the empirical material as well as to discuss the consequences of perspectives, I chose metaphors as an analytical tool that I have worked with before and have found useful. To find metaphors in the material, I started out with my 'preconceived notions' of the texts. That is, I listed different aspects that came to mind when thinking about the empirical material, which I was quite familiar with at this point. I came up with nine areas/metaphors: administration, market, care, socialization, matching, democracy, policy, integration, and learning. These were possible metaphors that might be found, and I used them as pre-defined categories for a new reading of the interview transcripts. In this reading, I coded the text according to the pre-defined categories. Two of the categories, or metaphors, were left 'empty': education as socialization and education as care. The quotes that could have been coded as socialization were about the reception of students, but in reading them closely I determined that they were more about measuring student satisfaction than about engaging in socialization. Education as care was only mentioned once as something that belonged to another profession:

> Sometimes you see teachers that start to act as therapists, all with the ambition to do good, but then we have to clarify that it is not our role. There is care and there is social service, and we are educators.

Because of the lack of content, socialization and care were excluded as metaphors found in the text. The next step in the analysis was to search for patterns and themes that characterized the content of the texts coded to one of the remaining seven categories.

What each metaphor highlights is presented below, including non-attributed quotes from the interviews as they are seen as examples of frames of reference rather than representing individual's views.

When doing this kind of research, reflexivity is key. An awareness of the effect of the researcher, combined with a systematic approach to the material and to the context of knowledge construction, has guided the process. The question is not whether these are the only metaphors that can be found in adult education but whether they bring something to our understanding of school leaders' ideas about their work. These metaphors highlight certain aspects of adult education, while others are kept in the dark. When I refer below, for example, to education as a market, it is merely to allow the reader to consider education as if it were a market. By so doing, metaphor asserts similarity in differences and, less obviously perhaps, differences in similarity (Van Maanen, 2005). Taken together, they allow us to discuss nuances of adult education and consequences of one metaphor or the other.

Education as administration

Adult education as administration brings out the aspect that has to do with management and control of an organization. Since the interviews were about quality management, it is not surprising that this aspect was dominant in the material. It is nevertheless a relevant aspect considering the general debate about increased managerialism in education.

Working on goals, measures, budgets, and quality systems is a must in public administration: '*It is natural to have a budget and work on quality in a politically governed organization, and the national rules form a basis for all formal education*.' Each organizational unit is expected to set goals; for the adult-education organization this means combining goals from the national curriculum, the municipality's goals, and the organization's own goals.

> We work with goals such as being an attractive employer, being an attractive workplace, reducing sick leave, and reducing the areas we use in buildings—which doesn't work for us because we are growing. But there are no explicit goals for adult education [on the municipality level]. We try to find them, but it is hard.

In the interviews there are discussions about goals, measurements, and systems for administration. Many school leaders struggle with finding key figures and goals, and the purpose is to satisfy national and municipal requirements and to satisfy 'the system'. Administration can also be about finding tools to improve operations and to gauge performance level in relation to other adult-education organizations. Some organizations work with a broad spectrum of different goals. One school leader mentioned that they had more than 60 goals for the organization. Others have tried a reductionist approach, working with only one measure in a qualitative way to understand and manage the organization. An example of such a focus is to look at reasons for drop-outs. The quantitative approach to data, measurement, and goals is dominant, however. Depending on the size of the municipality, there are different approaches to quality management. In urban areas, which have more adult education organizations, there tends to be more focus on solving problems through the setting up of systems and rules, whereas in rural areas, with fewer inhabitants, the school leaders are closer to the

everyday educational activities and want to involve the personnel in quality improvement.

The school leaders mention some negative aspects of the heavy focus on administrative work and evaluation, such as the problem of finding relevant goals, the weak quality of national statistics concerning adult education, and the low response rates on surveys. The rigid approach from the national inspectorate is also mentioned, and the school leaders get the impression that they are working with a system created for basic education of children rather than a system fitted to adult education organizations. This way of working creates tension; working systematically is often interpreted as having a homogeneous system in place, and this is in contrast to the sometimes chaotic and ever-changing daily reality of adult education. '*This [the system] gives the impression that everything is neatly ordered, but it's partly a chaotic process, and when you look, for example, at drop-outs, you get one picture one day, and the next day it has changed*'. Another problem can be that quality work is perceived as a paper tiger; that is, there are extensive systems and plenty of ambition, but they do not have any effect on daily conditions for students in adult education.

Education as a market

Adult education as a market brings out aspects that have to do with economics. Economics in general concerns topics such as supply and demand, goods and services, prices and negotiation, and production and distribution.

In the interviews with the school leaders of adult education, words such as customer, customer choice, customer service, customer satisfaction index, supplier, and price comparison hint that concepts and possibly models from economics have penetrated adult education. In one municipality, the politicians have developed an 'act of conduct' (the English words 'act of conduct' are used in the Swedish language), and they want to work according to a quarterly economic cycle with follow-ups and to have customer surveys to get input from the learners.

> We have worked a lot with focus groups with our customers, or should I say pupils [pupil is the word used in the regulatory national documents for adult learners], and then asked them what they think is important in education.

The school leader comments that the tempo of the quarterly cycle does not work well because of the continuous starts and flexible character of adult education, where one of the major goals is to meet individuals' needs.

The market orientation is not surprising given that more than 40 percent of adult education offered in Sweden involves external providers of education. In Sweden this means that private companies offer education and are paid by the municipality. There has been a wave of privatization the last 20 years, and one of the school leaders thinks that the government was quite naïve when they thought they could expect small scale organizations, teacher influence, and quality when they permitted private entrepreneurs in education. Instead, the venture capitalists came running: '*In Swedish naiveté, they let loose market forces, and the big companies came and eliminated the small cooperatives*' because the large companies could work with economies of scale. The situation is different from municipality to municipality, however; in some municipalities all adult education is offered through the municipality, and in other municipalities it has

been outsourced to entrepreneurs. But the language of economics is not restricted to the municipalities with large proportions of external providers of education.
A rural municipality might be forced to buy adult education from others in order to provide a complete range of offerings to its citizens. An alternative solution is that rural municipalities collaborate when offering adult education. In urban regions, market forces are used to try to keep costs down.

> In (an urban area) it is not hard to find private suppliers of education, but I can tell you that it looks very different in different parts of Sweden. I am part of a national group for adult education, and we have a representative from Lapland [a province in northern Sweden], and there it is not as easy to find suppliers that are willing to offer education, except for distance education. There is not enough volume.

Many municipalities have had negative experiences when competition was based solely on price, and now they try to include other demands to get higher quality education: '*When municipalities have used price as a single basis [for buying education from private entrepreneurs], it has created enormous difficulties with low quality*'.

The customer perspective is a way to involve the learners in evaluation to improve education, but viewing the learner as a customer means taking a service and supplier perspective. In the surveys, there are often questions about the target group's satisfaction with education to find out whether they are pleased with what was offered, not whether they have learned something. If an organization gets good results, the results from a customer satisfaction index can be used in the organization's marketing (this holds for both public and private actors). One of the school leaders interviewed said that they had used it in marketing towards politicians as well.

Education as matching

Adult education as matching sets the focus on adult education as a third party that offers intermediation between the learner and an employer. The idea of an intermediary is to offer added value that would be lost by direct trading. In adult education, providing learners with the knowledge that the employers are looking for is often referred to as the matching function. Matching theory is a theory in economics, which means that the matching metaphor connects to the market metaphor.

The Education Act states that one goal of adult education is to find, recruit and support those who are furthest away from the labour market. On the municipal level, adult education has been moved in many cases from the education council to the labour-market council, or new hybrids that might be called 'competence and labour market councils' have been formed: 'Adult education is moving towards the labour market area'. One progressive municipality works from the basis of the municipality's business needs when it develops its education programmes.

> Build relationships to business so you can connect your education to what businesses need. Our schools have started with that business logic. They start by building a relationship with an employer that needs to recruit people, and then they define the competence need in a curriculum for adult education, and then we recruit learners. The employer is active in the recruitment of learners, and if the learner gets in to the course or programme, they get a job.

This municipality is not representative of other Swedish municipalities, but it has a very clear idea of what it wants to achieve with its adult education—to have a matching function. There are also other municipalities that collaborate with the business sector to provide educational programmes that match the competence needs of business and the employment needs of learners. This group includes both politically left- and right-oriented municipalities, so it is not necessarily a question of ideology. Rather, pragmatism might explain the choices.

There is an increased demand from the learners to get study counselling: '*They ask for contact with study counsellors. This demand is increasing.*' This could be an expression of learners' seeking specialized study plans to match a future labour market, but it might also be an indicator of an increasingly complex system.

Education as democracy

Adult education as democracy brings out the task of adult education to support the active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and in civic life. This implies strengthening the fulfilment of the human rights of all citizens through education.

Words or views that are connected to this metaphor are scarce in the material, but there are a few who speak about citizens rather than learners, students, pupils, or customers. Words or views about the values of democracy, such as equality and active participation, are still important as they are stated in the national goals for adult education.

> We have some targets for a supportive learning environment, like increasing the number of pupils who think that democracy and people's equal rights are highly valued at the school. Other targets are to increase gender equality and to increase the number of students who feel safe at school. We should increase these rates by five percent.

To achieve these goals and targets, the schools try to arrange forums where the learners can practice citizenship and influence how education is organized and performed. This influence is exercised through councils, surveys, meetings, and through transparency in decision making and internal processes.

One of the school leaders interviewed feels strongly about adult education as a basis for people's participation in a democratic state. This person sees adult education as a key to ensuring that citizens have the knowledge and skills to participate in a democratic society. Literacy, as a minimum, should be ensured for adults who have the right to vote because otherwise we could see a situation where those who have education might question other citizens' democratic rights: '*I would rather speak about democracy because, for me, education is the way to a democratic society. It's about people, power, tools, and influence*'.

Education as policy work

Adult education as policy work refers to the activities performed to make sure that the adult-education voice is heard on national, regional, and local levels. The municipalities are responsible for adult education, among many other things, and the interviewees express the need to educate politicians on the role and possibilities of adult education.

The attitude towards adult education differs between the municipalities represented in the interviews. In one, the politicians see education as a basis for developing the local community, while in several others, the school leaders of adult education work actively to inform politicians about what adult education is, what the current needs are, and what they have achieved.

> We have to continuously educate and influence our politicians about rules, regulations, and needs. … If we were to remain silent, we would fade into the periphery.

Several school leaders state that the situation is similar on the local and national levels as well as in urban and rural areas. Despite all the people involved throughout the country, there seems to be a lack of knowledge about what adult education is and what they do. The increased proportion of immigrant learners in adult education is, however, fuelling interest in the role of adult education in integration.

Education as integration[2]

Adult education as integration concerns the process of becoming a citizen after immigrating to the country. It is a dual adjustment as immigrant learners adapt to Swedish society and Swedish society adapts to the new composition of the population.

This is an everyday reality for adult education, which has seen these changes for several years now and has realized that different methods and new ways of working are required. The population of adults needing competence development has changed from a homogeneous group of Swedes to a heterogeneous group of people from all over the world.

> When you come here, it's the world in one building. We have 30 nationalities, and about 1200 people come here every week. In a single year we have between 4000 and 5000 learners in different courses.

There is also heterogeneity in terms of previous levels of education, from illiterate groups to groups with university degrees. The composition requires new forms of competence on the part of adult educators. A group of immigrants may need new skills and knowledge, but they also need to learn the Swedish language and how Swedish society and culture work. Values that are taken for granted by Swedish citizens, such as the position of women in an equal society, may have to be clarified because people need to know the laws and norms to be able to function in society. The learning culture may also differ. Some people come from countries where they are expected to learn a text by heart, and this can pose a hindrance when they enter the Swedish learning culture, where they are expected to take responsibility, to analyse, and to think critically. In response to the changed situation, there has been some adaption of the structure of adult education. One example is the development of courses that combine teaching language and a profession at the same time. Sometimes this is even performed at a workplace.

One of the school leaders is very pleased with how they have handled the new situation: '*If the world was a learning centre, we wouldn't have wars. We have so many religions and nationalities together, and we connect through lifelong learning. And it works.*'

Education as learning

Adult education as learning emphasizes the process of acquiring or modifying knowledge, skills, and values. The learners that participate in adult education are the core of education.

> The most important thing is the pupils' learning and well-being. They should be uplifted. That's a basic quality criterion. And of course that's an individual's experience and not something I can put on paper.

This school leader wants to highlight that quality is something that is hard to measure or register in a document. It might rather be understood as a craft: a skilled craftsperson knows when things are working well. To achieve learning and well-being in adult education, many of the school leaders interviewed come back to two areas that they actively work on: flexible ways to offer education and the level of competence among teachers.

Flexibility in the ways education is offered is a requirement in the national regulatory documents and curriculum for adult education. The national goals are very clear about the goal to individualize and make education flexible to help individuals grow and move towards further education or work.

> I think of flexibility in terms of space and time. We're not a school—we don't use that vocabulary at all. This is an all-year-round operation, and people have the right to study. And that can be during the day, at night, here, or by distance, and we have learning labs to support them.

Distance education has a long tradition in adult education and is sometimes used to provide flexibility in terms of courses available to the learner and in terms of what time works best for the learner during the day. The experience among the adult education providers, however, is that 'pure' distance education might not be as effective in terms of learning and achieving grades, so many of them work with hybrid courses that include both distance and on-site education.

> Rather than distance education, we choose to procure flexible education that has teacher support on-site because it is needed among the learners. They need to meet the teachers.

The level of competence among teachers is the other major area that emerges in the interviews in relation to learning. New, growing, and changing groups of learners mean changed requirements regarding teacher competence. Teachers in adult education know how to work with motivated and skilled students, but they may need more skill and competence to work with groups that might consist of illiterate adults or adults with mental disabilities. Special education is a new but welcomed perspective in adult education.

> We need the perspective of special educators on all levels: organization, group, and individual. We must understand why people don't pass the courses. Why do they quit? Why do they get an F? How can we support them in the classroom? And so on.

Another area where there are competence needs in relation to ongoing changes is the use of IT in education to work in flexible ways with online and distance education. Other areas that are mentioned in the competence development of teachers are working

with formative evaluation and teacher authorization as well as competence networks and communities of practice to share ideas on leadership, culture, and values as a way to improve the adult learner's experience.

Adult education as learning is thus about the learners in adult education as well as about the education of teachers to acquire skills and knowledge for a changing situation.

Discussion: Frames of reference in adult education

Our frames of reference, what we know and what we believe, affect the way we understand a phenomenon, and the words we use interact with our understanding. The metaphors identified in this paper can be said to represent different social frames that were expressed in the interviews. The discussion around metaphors in an empirical analysis of school leaders' talk provides methodological and empirical contributions to the existing literature on adult education. When school leaders talk about education in market terms, for example, this represents (part of their) understanding of education, and it influences how they act. The metaphors identified in this paper provide a rich illustration of coinciding meanings.

The seven metaphors identified are: education as administration, as market, as matching, as democracy, as policy work, as integration, and as learning. Of these metaphors, education as administration, as market, and as learning were dominant in the empirical material, while the others had fewer examples. This corresponds to previous research on tensions between co-existing institutional logics in adult education in the Swedish context (Runesdotter, 2011; Fejes, Runesdotter, & Wärvik, 2016). It should also be noted that both the metaphors market and matching represent economic theories. The downplay of democratic concepts and domination of economic concepts is in line with changes in the language of policy documents (Milana, 2012; Wildemeersch & Salling Olesen, 2012). The metaphors hint at what has already been discussed in research: democracy and social rights are not the centre of attention these days, and policy language expresses market-force ideals (i.e. Barros, 2012; Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2012). But one could also ask what democracy does mean in contemporary adult education. Society changes, and adult education practice has to adapt to those changes, but critiques of the current situation often implicitly suggest returning to what used to be, rather than proposing new ways of understanding a phenomenon. Maybe being employed and able to support oneself might be one way to feel like an independent and active citizen in today's society. In other words, perhaps using a customer voice is the way to influence contemporary society. This brings us back to the dominance of economic language. Economic language is sometimes interpreted as representing liberal ideology, but the market and matching metaphors bring out that this language also represents economic theory. Economic theory thus provides an important frame of reference for understanding contemporary adult education.

The metaphors in this paper represent current topics in adult education, but these topics need to be further explored in future studies. The study is furthermore performed in a Nordic context with its specific character (eg. Lundahl, 2016; Fejes & Nordvall, 2014; Filander, 2012; Antikainen & Kauppila, 2002) but we need additional knowledge about how school leaders act in other countries. One emerging image of adult education is that there is much concern about how to work in relation to the labour market. Supporting participation in society could thus be interpreted as supporting individuals on their way to future employment. This is in the interest of the adult learner as well as

of future employers and society, but we need to know more about how this can be done in a way that supports individuals, employers, and society on a long-term basis. The changing competence of adult educators is another interesting venue to explore, as there are fundamental changes in the composition of the groups in adult education today. The two metaphors that directly concern governance—administration and market—are not unexpected, but they are interesting because they are contradictory. The two metaphors actually indicate two contradictory governance models. The market metaphor represents free market ideas and relationships based on negotiation. The administration metaphor represents a planned economy in which activities are embodied in a systematic and long-term action plan. The combination or competition between the two should be further explored. An additional aspect that needs to be explored is the division of work between the state and the private sector. The original idea was that the free market should be disciplined through governmental regulation, but what happens when the government offers the free market as an alternative solution to regulation? What then will be the institution guiding the market economy and addressing inequalities? Are we seeing an increased market for private evaluators as a consequence of governments introducing market solutions in the public sector? Might it even be that the lack of regulatory responsibility among governments is an opening for private actors to capitalize on creating regulations for organizations? Finally, since two of the metaphors directly represent economic theory, the difference and relation between ideology and theory should be further examined since they have an impact on our society and on our everyday lives.

Notes

[1] Goffman makes a distinction between two broad classes of primary frameworks, natural and social, but here I talk only about social frameworks.
[2] The interviews were conducted before the 2015 wave of *refugees in Europe,* which has made this aspect even more relevant.

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The interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals in the context of workplace learning in Germany: a framework for empirical research – inspired by business ethics

Tina Röbel
Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany (tina.roebel@hu-berlin.de)

Abstract

As an effect of marketisation, the importance of workplace learning in Germany has increased. The article follows up on the long-standing discourse around the question of how economic and pedagogical ideals interact in this context. In order to develop a theoretical framework for empirical research, three major positions of the discipline of business ethics are introduced. Business ethics in more abstract ways deals with the very same question, namely how do ideas such as profit orientation interact with other norms and values? The new perspectives show that the discourse has been hitherto based on a specific understanding of economy. In order to derive an empirical answer to the research question, the question is re-formulated as follows: Which values are inherent in the decisions taken? Consequently, it suggests using the concept of 'rationalities of justification' for empirical research. The article shows how this concept can be applied by conducting a test run.

Keywords: workplace learning; ethics, program planning; rationalities of justification; Germany

Introduction

Marketisation refers to the phenomenon of the state withdrawing from social functions and 'corporate power' becoming more important (Finnegan, 2008, p. 56-57). The results of the Adult Education Survey (hereafter AES) for Germany show that 70% of the reported learning activities belong to the segment of workplace learning (BMBF, 2014, p. 21). Public funding has shifted from general Adult Education (hereafter AE) to workplace learning in small and medium-sized enterprises (Käpplinger, 2013). As defined in the AES, workplace learning comprises all organised learning activities that take place during paid working hours and/or are (partially) paid for by the employer (BMBF, 2014, p. 19).[1]

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Workplace learning by definition takes place in institutions with other primary goals than the provision of AE (Gieseke & Heuer, 2011). For those of us who wish for pedagogical ideals to be considered outside of theoretical discussion, the question of how economic and pedagogical ideals interact in this context holds particular interest. As an example, looking at the levels of participation in workplace learning for different social groups leads to the impression that ideals that might be considered as pedagogical – such as social equality and redistribution of power – are not the main concern. German-born employees are more likely to participate than migrants (39% vs. 20%), while employees with A-levels participate more than those holding a certificate of secondary education (43% vs. 27%). Further differences regarding participation can also be found depending on income, full- or part-time employment and position (BMBF, 2014; Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2014).

At the same time, the interaction of economic and other ideals not only holds interest for AE research. The scandals around VW and the manipulated emission tests or Barclays, the Royal Bank of Scotland, UBS and Deutsche Bank and the manipulation of the libor rate prompt the question of what kind of economy we want to live with.

In this article, an ethical perspective will be adopted (regarding the need for research on ethical aspects of AE see Schrader, 2014, p. 25 and Sork 2009, p. 28). The intention of the author is to be critical without being biased. This means that 'economic' will not be seen as *evil* per se.

In fact, workplace learning is a rather complex field of research. There are a number of different stakeholders within the corporations, including the employees, the department in charge of workplace learning, general management as well as line managers and the workers' council. Usually several stakeholders are involved in the decisions regarding program planning and participation. Each of these stakeholders ascribes different functions to workplace learning. These functions include more obvious aspects such as qualification or motivation function as well as less obvious ones such as an image and acquisition function for the company, a profiling function for the human resources department or even potentially critical ones such as selection function and function of reproducing social disparity (von Hippel & Röbel, 2016).

It is important to understand that despite acting in an environment characterised by a focus on costs and benefits, program planners of workplace learning have leeway in their decisions (Bäumer, 1999, pp. 67; 138). The Anglo-American debate has recognised this leeway (e.g. Cervero & Wilson, 1994) and encourages practitioners to take different objectives (educational, management and political) into account in the process of program planning (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 160).

Practitioners themselves are asking for a pragmatic approach. An article in a common journal among practitioners in the context of workplace learning titled 'Organisational Development' suggests: 'The idea is, to become an agent of and within those discrepancies. Human resources development becomes – as the entire human resources management – the "conscience" of the organisation regarding the fact, that what is needed is workforce and what is there are human beings' (Looss, 2012, p. 45).

In conclusion, the interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals holds both theoretical and practical interest. Moreover, it is also the research interest of the author's dissertation. In this article, a theoretical framework for empirical research will be developed. For that three major positions of business ethics will be introduced. Business ethics in more abstract ways deals with the very same question, namely how do ideas such as profit orientation interact with other norms and values? The aim is to derive an empirical understanding of the interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals in the

context of workplace learning. The suggested framework will be applied in a test run, whereby first results and theoretical implications can be discussed.

State of research

The review of the state of research covers two aspects: previous works on the interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals in the context of workplace learning as well as a brief exploration of ethics in AE. For the first part, mainly German scholars will be cited in an exemplary way, whereas the second part covers both English and German literature. The aim is to show the need for empirical research.

The question of how pedagogical and economic ideals interact in the context of workplace learning has been dealt with in a number of publications in recent decades. The discourse evolves around the terms education (*Bildung*), qualification and competence, which are used to represent different understandings. Faulstich and Zeuner (2015) point out: 'It seems that the discourse around 'Bildung' cannot be completed. It is always raised – at least in Germany – when the focus is turned towards more humane perspectives' (p. 27). In the English discourse, there seems to have been a comparable development regarding the terms used to speak about AE: 'A shift has occurred from speaking about education to speaking about learning' (Fejes, 2010, p. 90, in an article on the division of responsibility for employability between citizens on the one hand and state and employers on the other).

The German discourse focused on the context of workplace learning has been very comprehensively summarised in three theorems by Gonon and Stolz (2004). They will be briefly described as they still serve as a good orientation to understand the different theoretical assumptions regarding the interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals.

The first theorem suggests a convergence of both kinds of ideals. The assumption is that changes in the organisation of work that require more autonomy and reflexivity from the workforce are reflected in the topics, goals and approaches of workplace learning. These are seen as signs for a reduced potential for conflicts of interests (e.g. Arnold 1995, 2002; Arnold & Steinbach, 1998; Dehnbostel, 2010; Käpplinger, 2016). While some of the authors assume that technical, social and economic changes will automatically lead to the convergence, others see the changes as an opportunity for 'active pedagogisation' (Gonon & Stolz, 2004, p. 15).

The second theorem advocates the idea of divergency, its proponents claim that a fundamental difference exists between pedagogical and economic ideals (see Käpplinger, 2016). The convergence theorem is criticised for being 'illusionary', including the warning that AE research might be turning itself into a 'provider of terms for any kind of modernisation within the neoliberal mainstream' (Faulstich & Zeuner, 2015, p. 29). Changes regarding new competences addressed in workplace learning are described as a 'strategy for rationalisation, that by putting learning into service through pedagogy, makes the subjectivity of the employees accessible as a new dimension for rationalisation' (Dobischat & Düsseldorff, 2010, p. 924, see also Hartz & Stachowski, 2002, pp. 160-161).

The third theorem – the transformation theorem – is least commonly discussed. Similar to the first, it concludes that convergence is possible, although the argumentation is different. The primary concern relates to the revaluation of informal learning. As informal learning becomes more important, workplace learning is constantly changing (Behringer, Kampmann & Käpplinger, 2009, p. 47; Gonon & Stolz,

2004, p. 16). The focus is on self-organisation and the individualisation of learning processes that are 'not necessarily bonded to the company or educational establishment' (Gonon and Stolz, 2004, p. 17).

All three theorems have been criticised for their lack of empirical foundation:

> Unfortunately many scholarly works in the field of pedagogy often only have a normative-teleological focus, e.g. they end with the formulation of theses, while there is a serious deficit regarding the empirical examination and validation of those theses. To a varying extent, it is true for all three of the theses presented that they 'oscillate between description and normativity' (Gonon & Stolz, 2004, p. 17) and that is where they end at or at best there is some minor empirical research (Behringer et al., 2009, pp. 48-49).

At the same time, empirical research is challenging: given that 'the question of economic and pedagogical perspective is an analytical distinction, there are no two physical or material units that can be separated' (Harteis, 2004, p. 284). Furthermore, answers cannot be universal but rather only context-specific (Dollhausen, 2008, pp. 118-119).

Before exploring the discipline of business ethics for help, one might wonder what the discourse on ethics in AE has to offer. While ethics certainly has not been one of the core themes of AE research, there still are a number of contributions, a few in the German and some more in the Anglo-American debate.

The body of work available in German is described by Schrader (2014) in three areas: ethically justified goals of AE that take political contexts into account, the interaction of AE practitioners and adult learners as well as the interaction of research and practice (Schrader, 2014, pp. 18-24). Schrader concludes that further research is needed in all three areas. Moreover, in AE practice, only the first steps towards developing ethical standards have been taken. Some institutions and professional organisations have formulated ethical standards (Bernhardsson & Fuhr, 2014, p. 55). There remains a lack of coordinated action and a need for research on those professional ethics that supports practitioners in the reflecting process and allows for orientation (Bernhardsson & Fuhr, 2014, p. 56).

The international discourse – especially the Anglo-American discourse – seems to be some steps ahead in addressing ethical issues, although empirical approaches remain rare. The two main areas of research are codes of ethics and models of ethical decision-making, with the later often comprising sets of questions to 'help practitioners reason their way to sound ethical choices' (Sork, 2009, p. 26, see also Lee, 2005). More specifically, there are some publications that deal with ethical aspects of program planning, as well as those focusing on human resource development and training (an overview can be found in Sork, 2009, p. 19). However, Sork underlines the need for further research taking the different contexts of AE into account.

In addition to the broader discourse around ethics in AE, there is a body of work on "Critical Human Resources Development". For example, Elliott and Turnbull suggest adopting a critical perspective, for which 'HRD theory […] subsequently needs to open itself up to, and equip itself with, a broader range of methodological perspectives and theoretical interpretations' (Elliott & Turnbull, 2005, p. 2). Although emancipatory and critical AE can be seen as general ethical positions in AE (see Brookfield & Holst, 2011 as an example), they have neither been developed to a sound theory (see Wilson & Kiely, 2002) nor do they cover the specific question of the article, namely the interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals in the context of workplace learning. Nonetheless, they provide useful insights into what pedagogical ideals might specifically mean.

The review of the state of research leads to three conclusions: first, the research question at stake has been previously discussed, which is seen as a sign for theoretical relevance; second, there is a need for empirical research; and third, existing works on ethical aspects of AE do not cover the interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals in the context of workplace learning.

Business Ethics: A broader perspective on values vs. profit

In order to reach an empirical understanding of the research question, this chapter offers a step back by introducing three major positions of the discipline of business ethics. Business ethics is an applied ethics that – as the name suggests – is focused on the business context. It deals in more abstract ways with the very same kind of question as this article, namely how do ideas such as profit orientation interact with other norms and values?

Within business studies, the discipline of business ethics has only slowly gained some recognition since the first chairs at universities have been granted, starting in the 1970s in the United States (Herold, 2012, p. 26) and Germany following in the 1990s (Göbel, 2013, pp. 5-7). There is a body of literature offering both normative suggestions, theoretical reflections and some empirical findings. The three positions that will be subsequently presented are less formulated around specific ethical dilemmas, but rather seek to answer in different ways whether and how business can be done in an ethical way. They coincide in the belief that the ethically problematic consequences of current economic actions are linked to the generalisation of an instrumental economic rationality. Each proposition will be discussed regarding its helpfulness for the development of a theoretical framework for this paper.

Homann: applying economic theory to ethics

Karl Homann is considered the most prominent representative of the idea of 'economy as the continuation of ethics with different means' (Homann, 2002).[1] At the core of his argumentation is the idea of the homo oeconomicus, who always seeks for the best choice to maximise his or her benefit. To understand interactions with several stakeholders, he uses the prisoners' dilemma to show that it is only rational for the stakeholders involved to cooperate if they can be certain that everybody will cooperate/act in an ethical way (Herold, 2012, pp. 128-131). Ethical business – or ethical behaviour in general – will only happen if the right set of regulations is put in place. This means that only market rules that make ethical behaviour the rational choice can ensure ethical business.

> Ethical principles [such as human dignity, solidarity, freedom, justice; *TR*] are open concepts, that cannot guide action on their own – there is always a need for a translation to specific societal conditions and an institutional design of incentives. Ethics becomes the heuristic for economics (Homann, 2002, p. 21).

Changes in the outcome of interactions are explained by the changing actions of those involved, which in turn can be explained by a change in the relevant conditions or restrictions (Kettner, n.d.). In conclusion, the economy will always work with the logic of maximising the individual profit, the arena for ethics is legislation and there is no need for moral appeals towards individuals or companies (Göbel, 2013, p. 76).

Comparing Homann to the state of research presented in chapter two, it seems that the methodological assumption of the homo oeconomicus seems to be mirrored in the three theorems presented. Applying Homann to AE research might lead to questions such as: What kind of legislative change is necessary so that it becomes rational

(meaning: beneficial in terms of profit) to – for example – grant opportunities for workplace learning to all employees?

Ulrich: integrative business ethics

By contrast, Ulrich rejects the idea of two different logics (ethical logic that needs to be translated to the logic of rational choice) as every kind of decision is based on an understanding of what is legitimate and what is not.

In his book on "Integrative business ethics" first published in 1997, Ulrich strongly criticises the argumentation put forward by Homann. The differences start with the basic assumptions: while Homann suggests that 'rational choice' in the sense of profit maximisation is free from ethical considerations, Ulrich points out that every choice and every idea of rationality comprises a certain understanding of what should be done and thus is ethical (Ulrich, 2008, p. 101). The distinction between economy and ethics in practice leads to the implicitness of economic ideals, whereas ethics is reduced to a compensatory or corrective role (Herold, 2012, p. 135). By contrast, integrative business ethics aims at an understanding of rationality that equally serves all human beings by sustainably providing goods for all, allowing the individual to live a fulfilled live and find purpose (Ulrich, 2008, pp. 221-250).

As Thielemann (2003, p. 110) – a scholar of Ulrich – states, the role of business ethics research is 'to show which norms and values are involved in specific contexts of discussion, which normally are overlooked or ignored' to allow for an informed discourse among the stakeholders. Taking the perspective offered by Ulrich, relevant questions for AE research might be: What are the values inherent in the decisions that are being taken? What are the values that fit into the concept of a social-economic rationality?

Küpper: analytical business ethics

In contrast to Homann and Ulrich, Küpper (2006, p. 140) does not suggest another viewpoint, but rather calls for a less normative and more empirical discourse. His critique regarding Ulrich is centred around the claim that the idea of a social-economic rationality is as normative as the suggestions regarding regulations put forward by Homann. Furthermore, he argues that Ulrich's proposition is constructed upon the enemy image of a strictly liberal economic system, while the reality is much more pluralistic (Küpper, 2006, p. 155). In conclusion, he advocates reconsidering the role of business ethics research.

> Research is unable to free him [the practitioner in charge; *TR*] from the choice between norms, values and/ or rules. The purpose of research is, to provide the knowledge that helps him to understand the ethical or value-based dimension of his decision and to act responsibly (Küpper, 2006, pp. 164-165).

The empirical analysis of conflicts of values as Küpper envisions it forms the basis for a discourse that takes the ethical dimension into account, allows for the implementation of certain values and makes visible where further legislation is needed. In this sense, the approach of analytical business ethics can be seen as the integration of Ulrich and Homann:

- Which values are being referred to?
- Which conflicts of values can be described?
- Is there a need for a change in legislation?

Küpper himself describes a four-step approach for analytical business ethics: first, relevant ethical questions and the norms and values referred to need to be described; second, the effects of management decisions on those values and vice versa the effects of personal and moral values as well as regulations on management decisions should be analysed; third, relations and conflicts between economic goals and ethic norms should be uncovered; and fourth, the values referred to should be analysed regarding how they are being justified (Küpper 2006, pp. 172-176).

Summary and conclusion for the next steps of the research

The three viewpoints of business ethics allow for different perspectives on the research question of this article.

The idea of economy as the continuation of ethics formulated by Homann seems to be closest to the current state of AE research as it assumes two different logics, namely economic and pedagogical. Questions for further research could be: What kind of legislative change is necessary so that it becomes rational (meaning: beneficial in terms of profit) to – for example – grant opportunities for workplace learning to all employees? Alternatively: What kind of societal changes make the "good" choice the rational choice (see "convergence theorem" presented in chapter two)?

More promising – in the sense of being less similar to existing work – is the perspective of an integrated business ethics offered by Ulrich. He underlines the implicit ethical dimension of all kind of decisions, which he subsequently measures against his conception of a social-economic rationality. Regarding the question of how economic and pedagogical ideals interact in the context of workplace learning, a re-formulation of the research question is necessary: What are the values inherent in the decisions that are being taken?

The analytical business ethics proposed by Küpper suggests a four-step approach for empirical research. Using his approach could be a starting point to integrate both Ulrich and Homann, possible questions for further research could be: In the context of workplace learning, which values are inherent in the decisions taken? Which conflicts of values can be described? Is there a need for a change in legislation?

For this paper, the perspective of Ulrich seems most fruitful as it represents a new perspective. An empirical description of the values inherent in workplace learning brings about an innovative role for AE research. If we seek to truly understand the interaction of different values in the context of workplace learning and if we aim at providing useful knowledge for practitioners so that they can take ethically informed decisions, we need to open our understanding of "economic", stop limiting ourselves to a normative discourse and start to take a closer look. Accordingly, the following chapter suggests a way towards doing so.

Applying business ethics to adult education research on workplace learning

Inspired by business ethics, the initial research question of this article has been re-formulated to: Which values are inherent in the decisions taken in the context of workplace learning?

This question tells us what to look for, but not where to find it. One might analyse participation levels, the different steps of the planning process or the learning situation itself. Here, the object of research is a different one: based on the assumption that the

question raised in this article is not only a theoretical one but also a practical one and that 'the answer or rather the solution is being discussed critically in all stakeholder groups' (Lisop, 1998, p. 46), the object of research will be the 'communicative framing', the way in which the stakeholders talk about workplace learning (Harney, 1998, p. 140). The research question can be specified as follows:

- What kind of decisions are being taken regarding workplace learning?
- What is being justified? What is not?
- Which values are being referred to? Which values are not mentioned?
- If decisions are justified by practical constraints, what are the inherent values?
- What is 'a happy by-product' and what is 'an end by itself'? (Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2012, p. 166).
- Are there examples of decisions that can be justified by both practical constraints and pedagogical values? (see "conditions for convergence", Harteis, 2004, p. 285).

Design of test run

The sample used in the test run for this article comprises two expert interviews with the heads of the workplace learning departments of two different German companies. They were conducted during a research project on program planning in workplace learning, financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The project ran three case studies with nine to twelve interviews each and an additional analysis of the training programs (von Hippel & Röbel 2016, von Hippel forthcoming). The two interviews analysed again for this article were the first within the respective case study. They have been chosen owing to the differences between the two companies' approaches to workplace learning.

The data were analysed following the qualitative content analysis as described by Mayring & Brunner (2013) and Kuckartz (2012).

Operationalisation: Rationalities of justification

In order to answer the research question, a set of categories is needed that reflects the theoretical framework. It should make values visible as well as practical constraints or any other kind of justification of decision. For this test run, "rationalities of justification" are suggested as three main categories. They have been developed deductively based on work by Wittwer (1981), Pohlmann (2015), Cervero and Wilson (2006) and Sork (1990):

- value-based justification (pedagogical / societal)
- "rational" choice justification (cost / benefit / profit / growth / demand)
- (micro-)political justification (interest of stakeholders)

Value-based justification: This category is intended to grasp any referral to values such as 'democracy, social justice, sustainability, freedom, responsibility, equality and solidarity' (Wildemeersch & Salling-Olesen on the role of AE, 2012, p. 101). It includes values that one might understand as pedagogical as well as societal. Wittwer (1981, p. 231) describes this category with the terms 'idealistic-anthropological orientation' and 'political orientation' in his dissertation on the legitimatisation of goals in workplace learning. Both orientations are understood as a reference to normative values and orientations for actions (Wittwer, 1980, p. 231). 'Political orientation' refers to ideal conceptions of society. Similar terms are used by Pohlmann, who – in the context of a study on educational leave in Bremen (a federal state in Germany) – interviewed

program planners with the aim of describing the logics of decision-making (Pohlmann, 2015, p. 82): 'pedagogical principals' and 'societal demands' (Pohlmann, 2015, p. 100). She refers to them as 'contexts of justification' or 'strategies of legitimatization' (Pohlmann, 2015, p. 100).

'Rational' choice justification: In contrast to the first category, this one aims at justifications described as "rational" choice. Put very simply, this category reflects what commonly has been understood as "economic". The focus is on justifications that refer to costs and benefits, profit, growth and demand: in other words, justifications that refer to alleged 'empirically-verifiable consequences' (Sork, 1990, p. 3). Nonetheless, this does not imply that whenever there is a rational choice justification, there is no room for values. This category is the necessary first step to ask for the values inherent in decisions that are justified as "rational" choice by the stakeholders. That second step of the analysis differs from Wittwer (1981) and Pohlmann (2015), who refer to this category as 'economic-technical orientation' (Wittwer) and 'economic criteria' (Pohlmann) without analysing the inherent values.

(Micro-)Political justification: The third category reflects the fact that workplace learning takes place in a social context. Different stakeholders are involved and negotiate their interests and power relations (Cervero & Wilson, 1994; von Hippel & Röbel, 2016). Cervero and Wilson claim that in terms of program planning, 'planners need to recognize that people's political objectives are as much a part of the planning process as their educational and management objectives' (Cervero & Wilson 2006, p. 140). Here, 'political' refers to micro-politics and the interests of the stakeholders. Again, the assumption is not that values are excluded whenever a decision is justified by micro-political interests, but rather that it is necessary to ask which values are implied.

Initial results of test run

The full transcripts of both interviews were coded according to the three categories by the author. In a next step, summaries were written for both interviews in each category.

Case description: Interview 1 was selected from a company that operates in the utility sector, interview 2 from a retail company. Both companies have more than 15,000 employees. Company 1 has been facing organisational restructurings and cost-cutting measures, whereas company 2 is expanding. Expert 1 – Ms One – and her team are responsible for the organisation of workplace learning and receive conceptual input from other stakeholders. Expert 2 – Ms Two – and her team are in charge of conceptual tasks, while the organisation of the learning activities is executed by regional learning and development staff.

Value-based justifications: In five of seventeen coded statements, Ms One refers to the position of the workers' council, which campaigns for the protection of privacy, equality and the right to learn. Her own statements are mainly ambiguous; for example, she highlights the importance of personal development of the employees, to ensure the continuous success of the company. Two aspects that might truly be seen as values are gender equality and physical safety.

By contrast, in the thirty-eight statements that have been coded, Ms Two describes the following as important: enabling employees for self-directed learning, providing support for daily business tasks, strengthening the awareness for informal learning and individual learning competencies and needs, respecting individuality as well as fostering a corporate culture of cooperation, transparency and understanding.

> But there is a precondition: I need to have an idea, how self-directed learning works, or self-caring learning. (.) And that is our task, to put emphasis on those topics, how does

> reflection work, what is it good for, why is it a good starting point to move forward. [Mhm] And also to tell them: You are already learning anyway. I mean, we can't stop anyone from learning in his everyday life. [Mhm] But we want to show you how you can get more of that when you do it consciously.

For a more detailed analysis, a number of sub-categories are conceivable: among others, equality, cooperation and respect can be found in the data.

'Rational choice' justification: In the forty-eight coded statements in the first interview, Ms One speaks a lot about rational choices and practical constraints. Training that is compulsory is conducted. Leadership trainings are strongly discussed, because a lot of money is spent there. Different groups of workers (blue- and white-collar) receive different training (mainly compulsory vs. other). She seems to mainly focus on two aims: reducing direct costs as a department and company, as well as reducing indirect costs, in the sense of reduced time investments. Therefore, learning activities are split into parts, with the idea that people gain exactly the knowledge that they need. One problem regarding the goal of reduced costs is that trainings should be booked via the training department, although often the external market is used, which means higher costs. They try to prevent this by customising trainings more to the specific demand of the internal customers. Interestingly, even relationships are described as being dependent on practical restraints:

> It's important to know for how long we should offer it [a training/ workshop; TR] or hold it available, will I still need it in a year. Do I need to nourish my suppliers or can I cross them off the portfolio and say, ok this will end in two years?

Again, interview 2 is very different, in which fifteen statements were coded. Ms Two makes very few comments in the sense of rational choice or practical constraints. One comment is made regarding change that happens anyway owing to changing products. In another statement, she highlights that very long trainings are difficult for part-time workers and in a third comment she speaks about a small number of compulsory trainings. The other coded statements in the category 'rational choice' refer to the managers (store head, area head, regional head), who – as Ms Two describes them – are very heterogeneous in their focus on economic criteria and their understanding of or appreciation for learning.

Again, a detailed analysis would allow for sub-categories to be developed inductively, such as cost reduction, internal demand and time saving.

(Micro-)Political justification: In both interviews, four statements were coded. Whereas Ms One mainly speaks about how her involvement in the planning processes depends on the hierarchical level of the internal customers, Ms Two is interested in making visible that what her teams offers is high value (little internal promotion, exclusive paper used for printed program).

Possible sub-categories are gaining influence, sharpening profile and increasing the budget of the department.

Discussion and reflection on methodology

This chapter had two aims: first, a suggestion for the operationalisation of the theoretical framework developed in chapter 3 was made; and second, it was applied by way of trial in a test run. On the way towards answering the research question of the values inherent in decisions regarding workplace learning, the rationalities of justification can be seen as a vehicle, which allow for a necessary detour.

As stated in the design of the test run, case 1 and 2 were chosen due to the differences between the two companies' approaches to workplace learning. These differences were also reflected in the primary rationalities of justification: Ms One used more "rational choice" justifications, whereas Ms Two mainly brought-up value-based justifications. Nonetheless, both of them referred to other stakeholders within their companies as ambassadors for the respective other kind of justification. Apparently, all three kinds of justifications can be found in the context of workplace learning. What might be interesting to observe in further analysis is the importance that they are assigned.

Regarding the methodology of future analysis, several recommendations seem promising.

First, given that both interviewees refer to other stakeholders, it will be important to let those stakeholders have their say. Second, the categories need to be refined, one option is to develop sub-categories inductively (which values do interviewees refer to, to what extent can they be found in other interviews) and another is to use the state of research as a start; for example, regarding values that might be referred to (see thoughts on limitations below). Third, the central question of the values inherent in rational choices remains largely unanswered. It is conceivable to analyse the coded statements under the aspect of what is "seen as acceptable". Fourth, given that the range of decisions justified by the interviewees is very broad, to make the attempt at adding complexity by including other stakeholders more achievable, it might be fruitful to focus further analyses on specific decisions such as needs or needs assessment in the context of workplace learning.

Regarding the limitations of this approach, it seems important to highlight that the analysis cannot stop with what is found in the data; rather, a link back to the normative discourse in AE on how workplace learning should be is necessary. As stated above, this can even be undertaken in the process of the analysis by developing sub-categories to the value-based justifications, such as democracy, freedom and equality.

Conclusion

One effect of marketisation in Germany is the (relatively) increased importance of workplace learning. For several decades, discourse has emerged around the question of how economic and pedagogical ideals interact in this context. While some authors claim that both kind of ideals converge due to changes in the organisation of work, others describe a fundamental divergence of economic and pedagogical ideals, whereas a third group focuses on the increasing importance of informal learning. What all three theorems have in common is that an empirical foundation is missing. Furthermore, the body of work on ethics in Adult Education does not provide help in terms of how to reach an empirical understanding of the interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals in the context of workplace learning.

In order to better understand the existing discourse and offer a new perspective, three positions of the discipline of business ethics have been introduced. In conclusion, this has led to a re-formulation of the research question. Accordingly, rather than asking for the interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals – which implies perceiving business and ethics as being separate – the question now is: Which values are inherent in the decisions taken in the context of workplace learning?

The assumption is that even though a decision is justified as a "rational" choice or beneficial for the micro-political interests of the stakeholders, it still shows what is

considered as "ok" or "not ok" in terms of values. For the test run presented in chapter 4, three deductively developed categories have been used for the analysis: value-based justification, "rational" choice justification and (micro-)political justification. These three contexts of justifications are not mutually exclusive, but analytical perspectives. The results of the test run indicate that this approach allows for differences between companies to become visible. Suggestions for further research have been elaborated, such as including more stakeholders, refining the categories, developing sub-categories, focusing on one kind of decision – for example, needs assessment – and above all a methodological solution concerning how to make values inherent in rational choices visible.

The intended contribution of this article is a first step towards an empirical answer concerning how pedagogical and economic ideals interact. The author believes that if AE is to adopt a critical position that is heard and considered as helpful by practitioners of workplace learning, the empirical approach is needed as an addition to the normative discourse. Accordingly, a detailed description and critical discussion of the values reflected in workplace learning can form the basis for ethically informed decisions.

The adaptation of business ethic research seems fruitful, although some methodological challenges remain open (see Randall & Gibson, 1990, for a review of methodology in business ethics research). For example, additional research will need to explain the connections between individual, social and company values (see O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005, for a review of the empirical ethical decision-making literature that covers both individual and organisational factors). Furthermore, ethical dimensions of workplace learning cannot only be analysed on the level of singular corporations as conducted here, but rather on multiple levels, including the role of the state and the public. Longitudinal studies that – for example – analyse both changes in participation and justifications will be especially interesting.

Finally, it seems important to underline again that this article does not mean to argue in favour of marketisation; rather, the aim was to contribute to the understanding of one of its effects, namely the interaction of economic and pedagogical ideals in the context of workplace learning. The suggested framework will be used by the author for further empirical research, which will hopefully lead to an empirical understanding of the research question at stake, eventually supporting practitioners of workplace learning in taking ethically informed choices or leading to changes in legislation.

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Notes

[1] Workplace learning as a term is also used to describe the part of initial vocational education and training that is taking place at the workplace. In this article the term refers to education and training taking place after the first vocational training, as part of human resources development.
[2] The citations refer to the publication in German. English publications by Homann and Ulrich are included in the references (Homann, Koslowski & Lütge, 2007; Ulrich, 2008).

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The murky waters of neoliberal marketization and commodification on the education of adults in the United States

Jeff Zacharakis
Kansas State University, USA (jzachara@k-state.edu)

Jessica Holloway
Kansas State University, USA (jhollow@k-state.edu)

Abstract

We approach marketization and commodification of adult education from multiple lenses including our personal narratives and neoliberalism juxtaposed against the educational philosophy of the Progressive Period. We argue that adult education occurs in many arenas including the public spaces found in social movements, community-based organizations, and government sponsored programs designed to engage and give voice to all citizens toward building a stronger civil society. We conclude that only when adult education is viewed from the university lens, where it focuses on the individual and not the public good, does it succumb to neoliberal forces.

Keywords: adult education; academic capitalism; neoliberalism; marketization; commodification; progressive education; civil society

Introduction

Davies (2005), Ball (2003; 2012), and Hursh (2007) critique neoliberalism in education within the narrow confines of institutional academies, whether it is in the pubic school system or higher education. And though their arguments are eloquent and prickly, they don't capture the complexities of adult education, at least that which we practice in the United States. In this paper we approach the marketization and commodification of adult education from multiple lenses, including our personal narratives seeped in an understanding of scholars who have exhaustively deconstructed this subject from myopic understanding of one arena. Yet it is our narratives that give life to our understanding. We represent two generation of scholars: one being a baby boomer who is in the twilight of his career who has experience in three adult education arenas, and

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the other a millennial whose academic career is grounded in the fertile soil of scholarly educational policy analyses.

In this paper we look at three broad arenas of adult education in which we have experience, and attempt to analyze them through a neoliberal perspective of marketization and commodification. We conclude that adult education in universities and colleges falls within the purview of classical neoliberal thought, and though professors of adult education in universities may be critical of neoliberal forces that control their profession, they too must take ownership of this problem.

What frames our analysis

Who we are

Zacharakis began his adult education career as an activist in the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Movement in the late 1970s and 1980s. This was voluntary work that was supported by an outside job. This movement invited all comers regardless of religious or political beliefs, class, race, and age. The common bond shared in this movement was that developing and using nuclear weapons was intolerable and unethical. He would later move on to the poor peoples movement working with Catholic Workers and Northern Illinois University's Lindeman Center in Chicago. These efforts were designed to empower groups and communities facing poverty and marginalization. Though some of this work was supported by grants and other sources of soft money, these programs and activities were free with the goal to win the hearts and souls of citizens with a larger goal to change federal and state policies. With the demands associated with raising a family, Zacharakis'path lead him to a job with Cooperative Extension working at a public land grant university as a community development specialist. Though this trajectory brought him more into the mainstream workforce, it was still consistent with his prior experience in community and organizational development. His Extension work was designed to support and empower rural and urban communities, and to give hope to a declining rural landscape and impoverished urban neighborhoods. Most of this work was funded by state and federal monies supplemented by some grant monies, thereby, allowing his services to be free and available to everyone. His final career move was to his present position as academic faculty at a research university in the Midwest where most of the funds are generated by student tuition, and where program strength is determined by number of students enrolled. Grant money to support this academic work is minimal and used only to support his personal research agenda. Student access in this arena is largely dependent upon one's ability to pay, signifying how marketization and commodification is the cornerstone of sustainability and success.

Holloway approaches this analysis from her own experiences as an adult learner within the traditional postsecondary setting. As a traditional college student, she first attended a large, public university where she earned her bachelor of science degree in public education. After beginning her career as a middle school teacher in 2006, she quickly found herself surrounded by teachers who held, at least, master's degrees. After three years of classroom teaching, she enrolled in graduate school to work towards her master's of education in K-12 administration. Relying on student loans to pay for the steep tuition costs, she reconciled the financial burden with the potential for upward mobility. She found herself among other adults who were also looking to further their careers and/or lead change in their schools. The coursework was practical and not very demanding, but she left with the degree and a new interest in education policy. She immediately enrolled in a Ph.D. program in education policy and evaluation. Having survived the ruthless competition for limited tenure-track positions, she is now in the

earliest stage of her first academic post, where she is subjected to the many ways in which all academics are measured, compared, and evaluated—a regime of accountability that is steeped in neoliberal logics and mechanisms. Though her career trajectory is more traditional than Zacharakis', Holloway's path exemplifies the material trappings of academic status associated with college and university degrees many students today consciously or subconsciously desire. She is both a product of neoliberalism as well as its victim.

With our different life experiences we have engaged each other in dialog and are using this writing project to deconstruct who we are as academics, asking this simple question: Are we pawns within this system with little control of our destiny, or do we have agency that might be used to create cracks within the system, especially if we work together? We both believe, right or wrong, that we have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our students and to contribute to a more equitable society. We also realize the limitations of this opportunity and are realistic when analyzing our place within the hierarchical structure of the university. What we know thus far is that adult education is not a monolithic system that is housed only in higher education, and that there is precedence to pursue a different trajectory that is more inclusive and that creates opportunities for those who cannot afford tuition.

A simple framework for adult education

Based on our experiences, there are three major arenas in which adult education occurs. Here, "educator" is defined broadly to include both traditionally trained/certified educators, as well as grassroots educators who teach in public arenas or in community about social issues.

1) Social movements and volunteer initiatives create public spaces where adults can learn and solve problems. Though marketing occurs, it is not based on personal desires for material things, albeit there are many ego-driven motives for power and fame. The purpose of marketing is to win converts and change public policy by changing how we value, for example, the environment, our neighbors who are less fortunate, and how conflict can be resolved. The marketing occurs in public spaces where protest and social media become educational opportunities. The goal is to engage citizens of all shapes, colors and beliefs in order to strengthen the democratic process. The role of the adult educator is often as a volunteer who typically has other sources of income. The learner is positioned as a potential ally in creating change, and is thus provided new information related to a narrow though complex issue. Melucci, Keane and Mier (1989) describe the Freeze Movement and poor people's movement as *new social movements* with singular goals that rationalize global problems related to capitalism and neutralize collective behavior. Holst (2002) in his thesis on social movement and civil society argues that identity politics associated with new social movement tend to divide rather than unite people around issues and problems.

2) State-funded and nonprofit programs are where the educators work for a basic salary, receive little recognition, and social status is relatively modest. Examples include university extension programs, including but not limited to Cooperative Extension, community health programs, youth programs, and community centers. Most programs like this are free or low cost, as the community, state or federal government bear the cost. The adult educator is moved to work not by money or status but because he or she feels fulfilled by their work and are contributing to the

lives of the learner and the health of the community. The learners usually participate voluntarily to learn new information that potentially will better their lives, as well as that of their family and community. These programs market their success stories to the community and their granting agency because numbers of learners and program participants is one of the most important metric to measure their values as granting agencies will not continue funding unless the programs are used by many citizens. Other metrics such as behavior change are less important. Regarding extension-like programs, Paul Sheats (1955) wrote that "adult education is planned to meet the immediate and continuing educational needs of adults in solving the problems they face as citizens" (p. 136). This problem-centered approach to adult education captures the essence of these governmental and nonprofit educational programs, as well as that of social movement and community-based education.

3) Degree granting programs in universities, especially at research universities, represent a narrow part of adult education in the United States. But for the adult educator, a faculty position has the highest status with the highest potential for income growth and security. Degree programs provide a credentialing opportunity and thereby validate, whether real or not, the learner's knowledge and expertise. Support for these programs is mostly dependent upon student tuition and full time enrollments. The product is commoditized through uniform and accredited curricula, which is widely recognized by students and their employers. Marketing is essential to attract a steady stream of students and to strengthen the reputations of the program as well as its host institution. In this scenario students are customers who buy and consume a product. The role of the adult learner is less about learning new material and more about helping students earn a credential; hence the credential becomes the *raison d'etre* for students to bare the tuition burden. And society accepts that the learner pays their tuition because it is perceived as a personal goal that will enable him or her to reach their career goals. Rhoades and Slaughter (1997) argue that this phenomenon is a result of supply-side capitalism that shapes policy and is a real lived experience for faculty and students. We question if the higher education manifestation of an adult education graduate program is in fact adult education, and suggest that such graduate programs better fits the higher education model.

This simple framework does not take into account other forms of adult education such as when doctors and nurses provide education for their patients, or when military officers lead their troops by incorporating education and learning. Nor does this framework consider corporate or organizational learning and staff professional development. It is a simple framework that only represents our experiences, yet illustrates the murky waters of commodification and marketization in adult education. Our stories are not unique in that many adult educators move seamlessly between academic and community work fulfilling their obligations as faculty members while working for social change in community or in social movements.

In order to clarify this framework, we first provide analyses of neoliberal precepts related to adult education, focusing on academic capitalism and how educators conform to its sociopolitical tenants. Then we offer a brief history of adult education focusing on the Progressive Period as defined by John Dewey and Eduard Lindeman. This overview is not intended to fully capture adult education's history—it includes only what we think is most important and representative of our values and experiences. We conclude by deconstructing the role we play as educators in shaping our future.

Neoliberalism within the complex world of adult education

Neoliberal rationalities have fundamentally changed the concept of education in the USA (Davies & Bansel, 2010; Peters, 1996; 2001; Rabinow & Rose, 2013). Education is no longer a vehicle for self-exploration and improvement, nor a process through which individuals are nurtured as developing, knowledgeable, and well-rounded citizens. Rather than conceptualized as a good for the public, education serves as a good for the individual—a way in which one can (theoretically) climb the economic ladder and contribute to the economic wellbeing of the state. Keddie (1980) reflecting on adult education in the U.K. thirty-five years ago argued that it is much like the rest of education in that its primary role is to help individuals fit into the economic system in order to live a better life without upsetting the status quo. In doing so, education is (re)positioned as an object of personal capital that is necessary to achieve economic success. In other words, education is (re)conceptualized as a commodity to be possessed for personal gain and advancement in the increasingly competitive market. Embracing this logic, President Obama proclaimed in his 2012 State of the Union Address that "a great teacher can offer an escape from poverty to the child who dreams beyond his circumstance" (Obama, 2012, para. 35). Education, then, is no longer about a process for developing a "thinking body of citizens" rather it is imagined as a tool for economic contribution and gain conceptualizing education as first and foremost an individualized endeavor. Adult education, in particular, is configured as a consumer good that is valued and funded in relation to its economic worth (English & Mayo, 2012).

Given this conceptualization of education as a commodity, market-based mechanisms are necessary to measure and evaluate the product so as to give consumers (i.e., students) the knowledge to make value judgments and choices. This need is accomplished with a set accountability processes that function to standardize and quantify nearly every aspect of schooling, including aspects of K-12 schools (e.g., student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and school performance), institutions of higher education (e.g., external grant awards, number of publications, research impact, number of graduates, and class evaluations), and adult education programs designed to place marginalized adults in the workforce (e.g., the gross domestic product, employment statistics). This process has ultimately stripped schools and adult education programs of their purposes to serve as public institutions and/or spaces for citizen development and liberal-oriented growth. Institutions of higher education and adult education programs have traditionally provided the means by which students could attain greater understandings of society, while possibly learning a trade or a set of specialized skills. While the latter was important for the individual, the former was a necessary condition for a civil society.

However, consistent with the neoliberal shift, institutions of higher education have also been (re)configured to serve as market-based entities (Ball, 2012; Hodkinson, 2008). While universities have always been degree-granting institutions, they once were places where the process of education was valued equally, if not more than, with the product (i.e., the degree). Today, however, the market demands that students have *degrees* that do not necessarily equate with *education*. Higher education has met this call, as evidenced by the proliferation of "diploma mills" and other fast-track methods for credential granting, placing greater value on the physical credential than on the process of learning. This has created a ripple effect whereby both individuals and traditional higher education institutions have been forced to compete in this refashioned market. For example, the "New American University"—the brainchild of Arizona State University President, Michael Crow—serves as an emerging model for public research

institutions. Under this new model, more classes are taught online, reducing the number of needed faculty (and thus salary costs) while simultaneously increasing the number of enrolled students (and thus tuition income). Now at 82,000 students, Arizona State aims to enroll 100,000 distance education students in the near future (see newamericanuniversity.asu.edu).

Simultaneously, adult education programs and adult learning have been reimagined as investments in individuals. This positions the adult learner as a consumer who is responsible for maximizing one's benefit from the program(s), and who is also responsible for marketing oneself as a "lifelong learner" (Olssen, 2006; Simons & Masschelein, 2008). As a result, the state is distanced from the burden of ensuring the wellbeing of the citizenry, and places this burden onto the citizens themselves (Olssen, 2006). It also (re)positions the private sector as a leading factor in adult education configuration (Youngman, 2000).

This reconfiguration also has implications for the higher education "student". Individuals sans higher education credential, regardless of age or field, are placed at a disadvantage amidst their increasingly degree-holding peers, and students within higher education seek positions and placed based on their individual performance and output as explained by Luhmann's (1977; 2006) social differentiation within systems. As such, we have witnessed a steady increase in enrollment of students aged 25 years and older, and by 2023 this increase is predicted to be higher than that of students aged 25 years and younger for the first time in history (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). In a time where the need for a college degree has replaced the need for the high school diploma (Farrington, 2014), adults are under greater pressure to attain credentials beyond high school in order to remain competitive for jobs and career advancement. Adult education (i.e., that which is not associated with traditional postsecondary education and institutionalized agencies), however, has been largely overlooked in the critiques of neoliberalism and its influence on the higher education arena.

Neoliberalism is shaping adult education in ways that our forefathers would never have imagined. Though democratization of the civilization is still a foundational topic in many adult education courses, we are in the business of recruiting students who pay tuition. We rely on Rhoades and Slaughter's (1997; 2004) explanation of academic capitalism and Bagnall's (1999) thesis of open marketeering to explain how adult education has evolved into a turbo capitalistic venture (Finger & Asun, 2001) where only entrepreneurial faculty and universities will survive. Brookfield (2005) argues that we are trapped in what Marx described as a commodity exchange economy governed by market forces where "I give you this, you give me that in return" (p. 24). Again closely related to what our for-profit partners (who we are quick to denigrate this motive) have taught us that success is defined by growth in student enrollment, we find ourselves at the mercy of a numbers game marketing a commodity. Paradoxically, we critique a system that emphasizes numbers, but our avenue to do this is through publishing academic papers only to attain the number of publications we need to earn tenure and keep our employment. Thus, we only work to reify the system we so oppose. In doing so we contribute to the marginalization of organically developed models of adult learning by sustaining a system that positions adult learners as paying customers rather than developing citizens.

As Rhoades and Slaughter (1997) point out, not-for-profit higher education institutions are not simply suppliers in this market they are "active players in the marketplace" (p. 13). They are not passive victims of neoliberalism—they are part of the problem. This is further complicated by their funding mechanisms, which is partially reliant on public monies. Universities, public or private, are primarily funded

by tuition and research grants. Tuition is often supported by high interest rate loans, and research grants are often the source of federal incentives. As such, the *public* has a vested interest in the universities, yet "academic capitalism" (Rhoades & Slaughter, 1997) keeps universities from serving the needs of the public and instead forces them to serve their own market needs and values.

Simultaneously, academic capitalism affords protection for universities in ways not offered to private sector entities because the product being "sold" by universities is increasingly in demand by individuals. These customers, also competing in an increasingly competitive market, must pay for higher education to attain the credential, and thus increase their market worth. This demand allows universities to increase tuition (at a higher rate than inflation), thereby forcing individuals to rely more heavily on high interest rate loans. This change is dramatic for doctoral students where the percentage of students with six-figure loans grew between 2007-2012 from 4.9% to 35.1% for Ed.D. students and from 4.7%-9.7% for Ph.D. students (which includes all Ph.D. students not just those in education) (Kantrowitz, 2014, p. 6). And in 2012 the average loan for Ed.D. students was $42,525 (US) and for Ph.D. students it was $58,525 (US) (p. 4). These statistics align with the average median increase in tuition for graduate students at from $6,594 to $9,445 (US) between 2007 and 2012, which is a 43% increase over five years (Digest of Education Statistics, 2014, p. 1). This growth occurred during a period in which the average inflation in the United States was between 1.5 and 1.6% (World Bank Data, n.d., p. 1). In essence we have created a sustainable system (as can be witnessed by its infallibility during the market crash of 2008) whereby public funds are providing the means for public institutions to function as market players, all the while divesting service from the good of the public. This denigrates the fundamental principles upon which higher education was built and forces a new population of adult learners into an endeavor that functions in the interest of the market, rather than the interests of the learners. This also brings into question the influence that marketization has on adult learning in general, which was originally conceived as a democratizing effort.

The progressive roots of adult education shape our analysis

We argue that the American adult education project has been coopted by the individualism promoted in widely read books by Knowles (1970) and Brookfield (2015) which focus on teaching and learning, resulting in the myopic vision that andragogy might be the holy grail that provides a unifying set of principles to our field, or that being a *skillful* teacher is the most important attribute of an adult educator. In defense of Brookfield, *The Skillful Teacher* does not represent the strength of his critical reflection on adult education's philosophies, culture, and politics. Yet this one book is not only his best seller but also his one book most American graduate students in the field will read. Instead we focus on the Progressive Period and the contributions of Rauschenbusch, Dewey, Addams, Lindeman, and later Horton, to provide philosophical umbrella to guide adult educators into the future where the common good and the need to have engaged citizens in all aspects of civil society is required to sustain a vibrant democracy. We look at these formative years during the Progressive Period to better understand the roots of adult education in the United States, and to see if we can recapture or reformulate a strategy to free us from the shackles of academic capitalism as defined by Rhoades and Slaughter (1997). We also see the trend to emphasize

teaching and learning as tangible, quantifiable processes symptomatic of marketization and commodification (Davies & Bansel, 2010).

Walter Rauschenbusch published in 1908 *Christianity and the Social Crisis* where he argued that as the population shifted from rural to urban, the results of the industrial revolution was people losing control of industry as well as their land. Though workers' wages had increased marginally during this time, Rauschenbusch pointed out that at any given moment they were only weeks from destitution while management and ownership reaped most of the profits from their labor. As the leading voice of the *social gospel* that sought justice and fairness before greed, he challenged unfettered capitalism, shaped his generation's discourse on citizenship, and what it means to have an equitable democracy. His voice, using Christian values, influenced leading educators of his day including Jane Addams, John Dewey and Eduard Lindeman. In *Democracy and Social Ethics,* Addams (1902) wrote that political reform required a sense of collective understanding; "This is the penalty of a democracy—that we are bound to move forward or retrograde together. None of us can stand aside—our feet are mired in the same soil, and our lungs breathe the same air" (p. 256). In voice that emphasized social responsibility and citizen engagement Addams (1915) later wrote a short pamphlet on why women should vote, arguing that they were providing the children who would one day labor in factories and therefore had a vested interest that they be treated fairly and paid equitably. Though most known for her work with in immigrants in settlement houses, she understood that in order to influence civil society women needed to be enfranchised in the political system by being allowed to vote. As her peer, Dewey (1916) argued that education was essential to solving social problems and needed to develop a fully engaged citizenry when he wrote, "Education, in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life" (p. 2). Eduard Lindeman (1926) provided in *The Meaning of Adult Education* the voice that connected the Progressive philosophy to adult education, and later wrote that "adult education is integral to the democratic struggle" where the "so-called common man learns to use his collective power intelligently and wisely" (Lindeman, 1945, p.10).

In 1932, Francis Brown, chair of the Committee of Adult Education of the Department of Superintendents, wrote: "the very foundation of our Government rests upon enlightened public opinion. This necessitates and intelligent, alert, thinking body of citizens" (p. 476). Shelby (1926) pushed this notion one step further by arguing that the large tax expenditures required for public universities could only "be justified by rendering service to the whole people" (p. 2). In 1955, *Adult Education* published nine essays written by leading scholars on what is adult education. Though there were diverse perspectives the unifying concept centered on it being embedded within community and organizations, more than merely educating individuals. In one of the nine essays Carl Minich (1955) arguably stated the purpose of adult education best: "Adult education should be available to *all* the people and not limited to economically or intellectually favored minorities. This is simply another way of saying that if adult education is to become an accepted part of our democratic way of life it must be democratically conceived and developed" (p. 140). This democratic way of life embodied an understanding in these nine essays that the strength of our society is dependent on the strength of low income, working class, and middle class people, especially those from immigrant families who arrived on our shores with visions of a better life and a willingness to work hard.

Progressive era philosophies and values initially created space for both social movement and institutional education to emerge as accepted forms of adult education where diversity of purpose came together to form a stronger society. This is when labor

colleges and Highlander Folk School emerged as important sources of organized labor education (Altenbaugh, 1990; Horton, 1989) and Cooperative Extension focused on working with farmers to improve their quality of life, including African-American farmers, reaching 85% of the of white farm families and 74% of "Negro" farm families in some areas (Bruner & Yang, 1949, p. 158). These efforts represented movements to lift the lives of people who were marginalized and whose communities were underdeveloped. Though adult educators working in social movements, such as the labor movement in the 1930s and for government or agency sponsored activities such as Cooperative Extension during the same period, practiced in many different arenas they shared a goal to develop a stronger civil society and worked within a political milieu that was outside the dominant culture. The overarching goal they shared was to assist workers and farmers in earning a living wage off the fruits of their labor. Their goals were akin to Jane Addams's work in Chicago's Hull House, and represent how adult education could (and can today) empower people to have more control of their lives, and contribute to civil society.

Probably the one book that captured the essence of adult education as formulated during the Progressive Period was Waller's (1956) *A Design for Democracy*, which was an edited abridgement of the 1919 report to the Adult Education Committee of the British Ministry of Reconstruction. The motives of adult education in this seminal book were articulated as:

> Inextricably interwoven with the whole of the organized life of the community. Whilst on the one hand it originates in a desire amongst individuals for adequate opportunities for self-expression and the cultivation of their personal powers and interests, it is, on the other hand, rooted in the social aspirations of the twin principles of personal development and social service. It aims at satisfying the needs of the individual and the attainment of new standards of citizenship and a better social order. (p. 149)

Waller in publishing this report for the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., the Canadian Association for Adult Education, and the National Institute of Adult Education, Great Britain, recognized its relevance and timelessness. He noted in the introduction that this "is probably the most important single contribution ever made to the literature of adult education" (p. 15), even though it had been out of print since 1923.

The transition to formally recognizing adult education as an integral part of American higher education can be traced to the Teachers College, Columbia University (1930), Ohio State University (1931), University of Chicago (1935), and New York University (1935) (Merriam & Brockett, 1997, p. 233). Initially such programs held prestigious positions within higher education, providing a sense of scholarship. Overtime, adult education graduate programs and especially doctoral degree granting programs have mushroomed with a high demand from potential students able to pay tuition and fill seats, at the cost of losing much of the scholarly prestige initially associated with this degree. Though there was resistance to this commodification from a few lonely voices such as John Ohliger (1968; 1982) in the 1970s and 1980s, the business of providing a non-licensed degree in education for those who were not working in public schools grew where today the degree is more important to career advancement than what is learned or the institution from where it is earned. A quick search on the web shows that presently there are more than seventy adult education graduate programs at public and private universities in the United States, plus many more at for-profit institutions. The only way these programs can survive is to fill seats in their classrooms by marketing this degree to a broad spectrum of individuals. Within

this postmodern world of higher education, adult education degrees offer an entrepreneurial opportunity to grow enrollments in colleges of education.

Sadly our students in the United States today seldom read Rauschenbusch, Dewey, Addams, or most importantly Waller's reprint of the 1919 Report. This leaves us asking this question: In what ways do neoliberal principles undermine the early efforts of adult education and rearticulate it as a personal rather than a public good? Perhaps we also need to question how our roles as adult learners, adult educators, and university faculty, contribute to the perpetuation of market over public values?

Agency vs. structure: our failure to pay anything more than lip service

Neoliberalism cannot be analyzed without looking closely at the intersection between agency and structure. Giddens (1979) wrote, "*every social actor knows a great deal about the conditions of reproduction of the society of which he or she is a member"* (p. 5). Giddens may have been naïve to think every social actor is aware when arguably they are only playing roles they inherited in a theatrical sense with little awareness or consciousness of the role they play. If we see these theatrics merely as structure that cannot be changed, then all is lost and the adult education project as defined by Progressive leaders will become an historical footnote that is taught in graduate level classes. If we see ourselves as agents we have the power to make changes, but this will require personal sacrifice. Foucault (1982) argued, "I would like to underline the fact that the state's power (and that one of the reasons for its strength) is both an individualizing and a totalizing form of power" (p, 213). We reject the deterministic dualistic construct between agency and structure in that this dichotomy is not static and is in fact in continual flux shaped by the agent's contestation of the status quo (Reed, 1997). Gaventa (1980) captures this complexity of agency vs. structure in his treatise *Power and Powerlessness* in which he analyzes how power created a sense of quiescence in a rural Appalachian coal mining community. This type of power is not overt but hidden as it manages and manipulates consent among oppressed groups. Nor is it static as quiescence can over time be transformed into rebellion. Not surprisingly, Gaventa is an example of adult educators who move seamlessly throughout their careers between academe and community.

The question has never been about eliminating freedom of choice, only about limiting the conscious and subconscious realm of possibilities resulting in feelings of futility or acceptance of the status quo. Hence, the battle to stave off neoliberalism must include professors of adult education working side by side with practitioners who lead and participate in social movements or are community educators in public spaces. And if we as faculty at a university are honest we have been seduced by the structure, the status, and the monetary security of tenure. Though we decry academic capitalism, we participate in its creation. "We have met the enemy, and he is us" (Kelly, 1987). This famous Pogo comic first published in 1970 captures the comedic nature of the dilemma we find ourselves in. Agency and structure, we argue, are intertwined and interdependent where the argument can be made that structure is created by people, albeit people who have power. Yet even the weakest among us is not powerless.

The neoliberal argument that individual good will lead to civic good and that accumulating personal capital is the fruit of education negates why many of us entered adult education as a vocation. While some of us may require our students to read historical texts by Rauschenbusch, Addams, Dewey, Lindeman or Waller, or more contemporary texts by Gaventa (1980), Youngman (2000) or Allman (2010), we do not

expect any changes in their behavior or any commitment to a more equitable social order. Who we are and who we perceive ourselves to be is confounding since most of our students represent privileged groups who can afford to pay or are willing to mortgage their future by taking out loans for their degree. We fail to see that we can do more, that we can raise the expectations of our students, that we can recruit and support students who see themselves as change agents, and that most importantly that we have a choice to change our personal behavior, which is an essential first step.

The problem with the neoliberal argument when applied to adult education is that it only fits that part of our project in traditional classrooms within traditional colleges and universities, both of which have been imprisoned by the accouterments associated with more education and more degrees. At our university there is little money to support working class and low-income adult students, and this problem is only exacerbated by public sentiment against taxes and public monies for education. This trend is especially troubling to Zacharakis whose doctoral education was paid for by monies designated to support social justice. Yet this problem of marketization and commodification does not occur in all adult education arenas. As social movements arise to confront the corporate forces in society, our adult education peers who lead and give life to these movements are not deterred by the fact there is no money, no status, and no security. The same is true for most of our colleagues who work in community centers, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Though they do have more security than their brothers and sisters working in movements and can make a sustainable wage, they are often motivated by their contribution to their community and civic society. Those of us in higher education have a more difficult time making this claim.

Final thoughts

As we work on this paper from the perspective of two generations and two different experiences we realize that we are at risk of being coopted by a neoliberal system that demands we market and commoditize this product called adult education degrees, if for no other reason to insure the sustainability of our place within the academy. We recognize that using our personal experiences to demonstrate how neoliberalism is functioning to marketize and commodify adult education and learning in higher education institutions limits our analysis by negating how adult education is structured in community and other places. However, we also argue that by positioning ourselves within this new configuration is a valuable way for us to recognize not only what neoliberalism is doing, but also how we, as academics, contribute to its reification. Zacharakis recalls his time with Phyllis Cunningham, who was his dissertation advisor at Northern Illinois University. She not only found money to pay for his education, but also for the education many of his classmates who were activists from around the world with the potential to become change agents in adult education. She pulled together a critical mass of American and international students who stimulated each other with their ideas and their life experiences, and worked to internationalize adult education in the US. The question of tuition or money to attend a conference was never discussed. Looking back, he realizes that without her financial and personal support, most of us in that class would not have been able to pursue a graduate degree. His entire career is a reflection of Cunningham's ability to create opportunities for those who might not have it otherwise. Holloway is just beginning her career and wonders if the best she can do is publish articles and books on neoliberalism and educational policy with little hope of

making change. She sees higher education departments follow the rational/technical trend by changing their foci from "studies" to "evaluation". Halfway through her Ph.D. studies, her program changed from *Educational Leadership and Policy Studies* to *Education Policy and Evaluation*. Not thinking much of it at the time, she now looks back and wonders whether this was yet another product of the neoliberal regime within which we live and work. And here she is, living the "publish-or-perish" reality that is the academic life.

Adult education is a murky and ill-defined waterway where the tenants of neoliberalism, marketization, and commodification cannot be equally applied to all of its projects. Though they hold true within university degree-granting programs, these programs are in essence forms of postsecondary or higher education and arguably are not part of the adult education project. But if we subscribe to the vision of our Progressive pioneers who held that the purpose of adult education was to strengthen and sustain a democratically inspired civil society, such neoliberal arguments can only be applied in certain situations when those public institutions are designed to reproduce the status quo which does not fairly or justly distribute the fruits of society to all its citizens. Finally we argue that though the neoliberal force of marketization and commodification are powerful, there is still the issue of agency vs. structure. Historically we show that the adult education project was about making a stronger democracy by focusing on civil society including those who have been marginalized and left behind within a poorly regulated capitalist system. With this in mind, we attempt to answer Paula Allman's (2010) call for critical educators to "ask probing questions about what is happening and about how we understand and feel about the events that are taking place" (p. 13). Allman challenges adult educators to reimagine what might be rather than simply critique what we are experiencing today and resigning ourselves to impotency. As agents we can choose to be merely beneficiaries of a higher education system that holds its faculty in high esteem and differentiates students through curriculum and grading (Vanderstraeten, 2004), or we can choose to find cracks in the system that can be exploited and pushed open in order to create a more democratic society where all are valued as citizens and members of a common community, and all have the opportunity to contribute to the dialog in our classrooms. These cracks can be widened by having our students participate with us as we work in community, consider borrowing the service learning model used elsewhere in higher education (Enos, 2015; McDonald & Dominquez, 2015), give university credit for prior work in community or with social movements, or most importantly be creative and find news ways we can engage students with adult education outside of academe. The challenge we present is to revisit the Progressive roots of adult education, realize our limitations as faculty, and not to become enamored and complacent as adult educators in higher education who benefit from neoliberalism in higher education.

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Mind the gap! An exploration of the role of lifelong learning in promoting co-production and citizenship within social care for older people

Trish Hafford-Letchfield
Middlesex University, UK (P.Hafford-Letchfield@mdx.ac.uk)

Marvin Formosa
University of Malta, Malta (marvin.formosa@um.edu.mt)

Abstract

Contemporary themes in public policy have emphasised co-productive approaches within both the access and provision of support services to older people. This paper provides a cross disciplinary exploration from its respective authors perspectives on social work and educational gerontology to examine the potential for lifelong learning and learning interventions from which co-production with those using social care services in later life might be better facilitated. Using an example from the UK, we specifically elicit how co-produced care can enhance the horizon of learning and learning research. The synthesis of ideas across these two disciplines could enrich understanding and provide essential levers for moving towards empowerment and emancipation by engaging with a more co-productive approach in social care for older people.

Keywords: older people; user participation; person-centred support; co-production; lifelong learning; educational gerontology; critical pedagogy

Introduction

Within the European Community, a plethora of government policies assert a paradigmatic shift towards increasing the engagement of older adults with public services. Following international trends, the themes of active ageing, participation and user involvement are all thought to be integral to achieving wellbeing, social inclusion, and citizenship in later life (European Commission, 2012). In the UK, the term 'co-production' is increasingly being used to describe new types of public service delivery thought to embody these shifts particularly in ageing services. Co-production refers to active input by the people who use services, as well as—or instead of—those who have traditionally provided them. These contrasts with approaches that treat people as passive

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recipients of services designed and delivered by someone else (Needham & Carr, 2009). Co-production emphasises that the people who use services have assets which can help to improve those services, rather than simply expressing needs to be met. These assets are not financial, but rather are the skills, expertise and mutual support that service users can contribute to effective public services.

The main vehicle for promoting co-production is through policy and practice initiatives that support the personalisation of care using what is known as 'Personal Budgets' (PBs) and self-directed support. Personal budgets are a way of combining several budget streams following an assessment of an older persons needs and allocating the individual an up-front indication of funding that can be used flexibly and creatively to help them meet their needs. Self-directed support describes the mechanism and framework through which personal budgets are being delivered and encourages self-assessment and support planning to realise and achieve maximum choice and control. The evidence however, shows that older people have been less likely to benefit from these initiatives than other groups resulting in inequality in social care provision (Katz, Holland, Peace, & Taylor, 2011). Whilst there are a plethora of reasons for this, a number of studies (Hafford-Letchfield, 2011; McNair, 2012) have highlighted the significant role that knowledge, information and advice on older people being able to exercise their citizens' rights and in achieving quality support, all of which could be addressed through adopting a learning approach. This paper explores this proposition through examining the contribution from both the disciplines of social work and educational gerontology, which are inherently concerned with promoting user involvement, participation and citizenship in later life. Based on an analysis of the UK context and through a more detailed exploration of how the two respective policy areas and disciplinary knowledge connect, we have drawn on a wider source of literature to examine the potential of lifelong learning and learning interventions in promoting co-production. We similarly provide a more critical discussion of the policies built around co-produced care and the subsequent implications for adult education and learning.

Co-production, older people and social care

Whilst co-production provides a new way of talking about direct participation, community involvement, the sharing of power and expertise in social care; embedded in the discourse of co-production lies many unchallenged assumptions. For example, terminology used to describe and articulate the 'co-producing' relationship has included 'service user', 'consumer', 'customer', 'client', or 'expert by experience' and also highlights some of the different political and discursive dynamics behind their adoption, as well as in highlighting the hierarchical power positions involved. Some have suggested that these terminologies represent a move from user participation and involvement in social care to more consumerist discourses. Gilleard & Higgs (1998, p234) for example, go as far to state that this: "rhetoric of consumerism attributes to all older people, a position of agency which, as users of scarce and targeted resources, they cannot fill". The suggestion that co-production attempts to steer a middle path between the 'bottom-up' user movement and the 'top-down' ambitions of successive governments acknowledges an ever increasing penetration of market-related mechanisms into the public sector, particularly into welfare and ageing services. Making the commitment to co-production requires a culture within older people's services which builds on a shared understanding of what it actually is, and identifies a set of principles for putting the approach into action as well as recognising the benefits

and outcomes that will be achieved through adopting such an approach (Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2013). It raises the question as to what strategies might be used to achieve co-production and whether we have sufficient knowledge about how best to achieve it in practical terms (Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2013).

It is particularly important to develop strategies from the perspective of those using social care services in later life. Co-production cannot be a mechanism for public service reform without giving attention to the effectiveness of tools and approaches such as personalisation that enables it to meet its key objectives. Allocating a personal budget in lieu of services can for example include direct or cash payments, from which an older person or their carer, are expected to manage their own care which could include equipment, personal, housing related or community support. A study by Xie, Hughes, Sutcliffe, Chester, & Challis (2012) of the progress made towards promoting personalisation in social care services for older people found that this requires the whole system to change not just the social worker and older person. Greater integration of services and expansion of community-based services were identified as essential to work against previously rigid and bureaucratic approaches to commissioning and purchasing, and to enhance previously poor relationships between statutory, voluntary and community organisations so that can work together to provide a more holistic response. Slow progress has been identified in some areas such as the implementation of the older person's self-assessment and in achieving sustainable results with particularly disadvantaged groups. Groups of older people with high support needs for example, are becoming increasingly diverse with increasing representation of people from black and minority ethnic communities, people from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities and groups such as people with learning disabilities who are living longer (Sharif, Simpson, Ross, & Turner, 2012). Within the research on personalisation and co-production, these groups are currently largely excluded from participating in decisions about service delivery and development. Critical perspectives on co-production also indicate that physically frail older people have low expectations and can feel intimidated if they express dissatisfaction about their experiences of services such as those in care homes (Barnes & Bennett. 1997). They are also less likely to participate in pensioners' action groups and older people's forums. Therefore, rhetorical aspects of relevant policies tend to skirt over some of the practical difficulties experienced by these groups where control and choice within user-participation and co-production rationales do not always recognise the critical realities of the lives and circumstances of those older people who require social care support. Their lives, especially those residing in deprived areas, may be characterised by intense levels of vulnerability. One may conclude that vulnerable older people are the anti-thesis of progressive welfare policies and within the cultural field of third age lifestyles, their non-participation may not simply be because they choose *not* to participate, but because they may simply not know *how* to participate.

Research into the experiences of older people living in the community contemplating personalised support (Hafford-Letchfield, 2013) has highlighted the increasing focus within social care provision on individual and family responsibility and the failure of support planning to engage with widespread structural inequalities that characterise those using care in order to bring about change. The underlying assumptions about how far older people using social care services might become autonomous, self-managing and enterprising individuals within a co-production agenda has also been questioned (Scourfield, 2007). Lymbery (2010) draws our attention to the inadequate resource base for adult social care in the UK. A lack of tangible support for the process of engaging with directing one's own care has been shown to engender

situations where the potential of 'user participation' in social care in later life remains relatively unfulfilled. It has also been asserted that some of the rhetoric around personalised support and co-production embedded within policies guiding how care should be delivered are part of a mere discursive strategy to justify reform, with little meaningful discussion about how these changes might actually take place. Furthermore, government emphasis on individual responsibility for social care and its concomitant espousal of 'moral communitarianism' (Clements, 2008), seems to suggest that service users have duties "to contribute to mobilizing the support they require" and "to engage available capacities outside the social care system" (Hatton, Waters, Duffy, Senker, Crosby, Poll, Tyson, O'Brien, & Towell, 2008, p. 33). Social workers and other professionals thus tread an increasing uneasy balance between expanding levels of needs and expectations with tightly constrained resources.

Given that personalisation is absolutely central to the UK's government's agenda for transforming social care and that older people are the largest group of social care users, personalisation cannot be successful unless it's working for older people. If properly implemented personal budgets can indeed lead to improved levels of effectiveness of support at similar cost and of user satisfaction (Carr, 2004). In turn this should result in much more sustainable solutions which will deliver savings in the medium term (Hatton et al, 2008). Implementation of personalisation in its broadest sense has also proven difficult to measure and record in practice. There are some activities and targets which have been used to indicate that a local authority or provider is taking a 'personalised' approach to provision. Policy documents related to personalisation in social care are, therefore, a mixture of description of the vision of personalisation combined with gentle persuasion aimed at local authorities and providers to implement change. This is especially true in relation to the skills and knowledge that older persons might need to capitalise on to achieve more person-centred support, or engage meaningfully with a co-productive approach.

The benefits of co-production for older people (SCIE, 2013) refer to the direct importance of recognising their assets and skills and building on existing capabilities, particularly by valuing reciprocity, mutuality and their peer and personal support networks. Co-production emphasises the potential to build relationships where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together and recognises that both parties have vital contributions to make in order to break down barriers and improve quality of life for people and their communities. Therefore, user involvement is more than a politically mandated 'good thing' given its practical and ethical benefits. Whilst users are recognised as experts about their own needs and issues, harnessing user involvement itself can be therapeutic, through its socially inclusive process.

Notwithstanding, the aforementioned structural constraints and tensions in bringing these agendas into the day-to-day realities of older people using social care and for those supporting them, we suggest here that that parallel developments in the policies on social work and lifelong learning may offer a more integral means of supporting positive outcomes for implementing the co-production agenda. We draw particularly on the principles of educational gerontology as a discipline within lifelong learning which debates the purpose and meaning of learning in later life.

There has been a relatively under-theorisation of lifelong learning, in terms of needs, opportunities, and experiences of older people using social care such as in the situations described earlier, and much less of an empirical research base (Hafford-Letchfield, 2010; 2011). Given that older people with high support needs are one of the groups currently largely excluded from participating in decisions about service delivery

and development (Sharif, Simpson, Ross, & Turner, 2012); we suggest that a convergence of the lifelong learning agenda with social policy and its consequences for care has potential to increase interrelated and overlapping activity in both policy implementation and practice. For example, acknowledging that the experience of major life events resulting in change and transition, or crises, can make opportunities for learning crucial to how an individual responds. This is especially true if learning interventions follow a critical rationale, by which we mean that the learning involved is informed by a social justice agenda and utilised as a lever for empowerment and emancipation.

We first consider some of the issues and evidence for this assertion and following a further discussion of the wider policy context and empirical evidence available so far, we attempt to delineate learning strategies within social work practice that offer potential towards successful policy implementation of co-production in improving the lives of older vulnerable people.

Lifelong learning as an instrument for supporting change in social care with older people

Lifelong learning has become a ubiquitous concept often referred to by politicians, policy-makers and academics who have explored its different angles, epistemological platforms and applications. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 1997, para 3) referred to lifelong learning as ”the entire body of ongoing learning process, formal or otherwise, whereby people develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their qualifications”…. or “turn in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of society”. The concept can be visualised as an attempt to provide formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities to all, irrespective of either age or generation.

Policies that promote lifelong learning have been adopted over the five continents. The European Union [EU] which declared 1996 as the *European Year of Lifelong Learning* supported by a range of funding opportunities to promote adult learning and to encourage pan European partnerships to develop and sustain good practice. Of significance to older people, the EU Grundtvig programme funded over 400 lifelong learning projects although at the time of writing limited analysis has been undertaken of this provision and its benefits (see the database at www.foragenetworks.eu). Within the UK specific policies such as *The Learning Age* (Department for Education & Employment, 1998); *The Learning Revolution* (Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills, 2009) both observed the need to effect a major cultural change away from the traditional confines of education and vocationalism to one where learning was seen as lifelong and lifewide (the latter describes learning occurring in a range of different contexts). An argument was made for equal access for potential learners and emphasis given to how “continued and renewed opportunities for intellectual stimulation will make all the difference between a life retaining some prospect of dignity and independence” (National Advisory Group for Continuing Education & Lifelong Learning, 1997, p. 63). A content analysis of these policies however (Hafford-Letchfield, 2011a) noted that whilst there are frequent mention of the importance of the provision of learning ‘opportunities’, there remains minimal acknowledgement of a lesser instrumental role of learning in later life; it’s more tangible and intrinsic qualities or the layering of actions at the individual, community and organisational partnership levels that are necessary to make learning opportunities a reality. Any curriculums at the

level at which services are developed therefore need to be more closely aligned to the citizenship agenda in order to assist older people in assessing and asserting their participation and involvement.

The Carnegie UK Inquiry (Schuller & Bostyn, 1992) made a significant attempt to examine participation by older people in lifelong learning at three levels within policy making; economic; philosophical and societal. It was the first influential report to demonstrate inequalities in learning between generations and how older people, particularly women, experience cumulative disadvantage in education. The Carnegie Inquiry challenged the rhetoric of lifelong learning and argued for a more positive and wider appreciation of the potential of older learners. In 2012 a subsequent thematic paper on older people was commissioned by The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) within its inquiry: *The future for lifelong learning* (McNair, 2012) and demonstrated minimal progress. Its report indicated that those least likely to engage in future learning are those of 75 years plus with particular resistance from within the skilled and unskilled working class. NIACE's *Older and Bolder* programme attempted to collaborate with other disciplines engaged in older people's issues nationally, through learning initiatives such as health promotion and financial literacy (Carlton & Soulsby, 1999) with some success. Several other studies have begun to identify and make the case for the benefits of learning in later life (Hafford-Letchfield, 2010; Formosa & Finsden, 2011; Jenkins, 2011; Jenkins & Mostafa, 2012). Drawing on quantitative and qualitative datasets, a small evidence base has since been building to show how learning in later life may result in improvements in life satisfaction; self-image; ability to cope with challenges; increased health knowledge and self-reported improvements to physical and mental health including cognitive performance and a reduced risk of dementia. The *Men's Shed* movement in Australia for example, (Foley, Golding & Mark, 2009) highlighted benefits and growth in personal confidence afforded through older men's participation in learning when this was aligned with cultural and gender needs in more traditional settings.

At an international level, debate about the role of education and training has focused on its relationship to economic competitiveness and globalisation. Whilst lifelong policies and initiatives acknowledge the family and community as significant sites for learning, few have given genuine attention to the situation of older people (Hafford-Letchfield, 2010; 2011). The EU policy on lifelong learning only referred specifically to older people as late as 2006, where an emphasis on the "need for up-skilling and increasing lifelong learning opportunities for older workers...in order to keep [them] employable" (European Commission, 2006, p. 8-9) was prioritised. In summary, whilst learning in later-life has recognised older people as more than a potential group of workers, it has paid less attention to the challenges of key transitional phases that may result in complex needs and situations that accompanies ageing.

Critical perspectives on ageing and wellbeing policies

Critical perspectives within social gerontology on the other hand seek to understand the social construction of ageing, and to create impetus for change beyond the political economy lens which pay attention to not only how social structures affect how we view older people but also on how they might view themselves. Whilst it may be true that growing old has become a more social, reflexive and managed process, post-industrialism has not obliterated inequalities in later life. Social class, gender, sexuality and other types of inequality have not become less important in late modernity, but

rather, they have become (re)defined and experienced in different ways. Indeed, a considerable number of older persons in high- and middle-income countries - as much as 19 percent in the European Union (a total of 16 million or one in five) - live at the risk of poverty (Eurostat, 2010).

Aspin & Chapman (2001) assert three other 'agendas' for lifelong learning - namely, economic progress and development; personal development and fulfilment; and social inclusiveness and democratic activity. It is these agendas that could perhaps be more closely aligned with the potential for learning programmes in social care. Learning could be utilised by focussing on identifying challenges and issues in later life, and to work with service users to equip them with better skills in choosing the best option to resolve any crises. Further, a critical educational gerontological approach might adopt lifelong learning to promote social inclusiveness and democratic activity made possible by "deconstruct[ing] and recognis[ing] never-ending multiple, shifting knowledges" (Aspin & Chapman, 2001). Holstein & Minkler (2007) suggest that the successful ageing model fails to account for particular life trajectories and environmental realities, and is predicated on reductionist aims for a very large idea (p16). Overzealous attention to health or employment as a measure of success and achievement crowds out cultural space to grapple with critical existential questions and devalues people who flourish despite limitations in this area. These are some of the issues that may inform an approach to utilising lifelong learning to help shape how older service users experience ageing, dependency and their use of services in an everyday and co-productive approach.

As in Europe, the UK's population projections predict that increased social expenditure related to ageing, in the form of pensions, healthcare and institutional or private care is likely to result in a higher burden for working age populations and on the sustainability of public finances and welfare provisions (Eurostat, 2013; Lehning & Austin, 2010). Against this backdrop, successive governments have prioritised pragmatism and the communal over individualism, envisioned as one successful way to adapting social democracy to a changing world through a framework of re-thinking and reformulating policy. For example, active and healthy ageing has been identified as an area by the European Commission for cooperation on the basis that such a standpoint "values older people and their contribution to society identify and overcome potential innovations, barriers and mobilise instruments" (EuroHealthNet, 2013, p.1). More importantly there is a steadily developing link within initiatives promoting wellbeing and co-production where later-life learning is present. This has mostly been associated with the effect that the process of participation that occurs through learning, on wellbeing rather than focusing on the actual learning outcomes itself given that learning often takes place in social settings (Soulsby, 2014). The significant UK *Foresight Report* (Kirkwood, Bond, May, McKeith & Min-Min Teh, 2008) aimed to generate a vision for the size and nature of future challenges associate with mental capital and wellbeing identified learning through life as a major contributor. This report described the concept of mental capital as the totality of an individual's cognitive and emotional resources, including their cognitive capability, flexibility and efficiency of learning, emotional intelligence and resilience in the face of stress. The idea of capital as asset within the trajectory of later life assumes some benefits which accrue. However, policy makers will need to resolve any obstacles to reap such long term rewards which may need investment earlier on. Revaluations of the under-utilised mental capital of older people has the potential to lead rapidly to novel opportunities for learning, continued productivity and social engagement. These will have strong potential to enhance quality

of life and to benefit the economy by reducing premature dependence (Kirkwood et al, 2008).

In summary, we have outlined some of the arguments for both lifelong learning and 'co-production' in terms of the positive implications for support in later life, and by giving examples as to how far policy and practice is succeeding or not in the move towards meeting the personalised needs of older people in response to changing demography and traditional lens's through which older people are viewed. We have noted that in both areas, a significant disjunction remains between policy rationales and actual implementation and that policy in different areas do not always talk to each other. We suggest that there are some key areas where shifting paradigms necessitates deep cultural shifts, both individual and systemic, so as to bring relationships in line with the new ideological stance on positive ageing. One way to go beyond this impasse might be to embed personalised care in a lifelong learning programme that aids potential service users to obtain, process, and understand information needed to make appropriate decisions about their support. The remainder of this paper proposes ways in which these policy frameworks might be integrated where learning and 'user participation' in social care can support genuine co-production.

Supporting co-production through learning in later life: Integrating policy and practice

Saleebey (2001) and Lamb, Brady & Loman (2009) highlighted the importance of developing resiliency to operationalise strengths-based perspectives within gerontological social work to provide a focus for identifying and encouraging coping strategies and to implement user-participation that remains sensitive to risks but which does not dwell on deficit management (Lamb et al, 2009). Policy directives which lack structures for active representation, and are devoid of networking between different professionals, or who operate from an ideology of 'individualisation', will fail to access those older persons with complex needs and who are already excluded from learning opportunities. Specific strategies are needed in the co-production discourse for example, to reach older people experiencing mental health issues, such as dementia, or learning disabilities (Routledge & Carr, 2013). These groups may hold a subaltern status in society, often labelled as 'other', or experience double jeopardy - that is, discrimination on the basis of more than one ascriptive bias such as older women (ageism and sexism), and older ethnic minorities (ageism and racism). There are areas of participation which require further development for example with minority ethnic groups, older gay and lesbian people (Concannon, 2009), and older adults with disabilities (Janzon & Law, 2003). This is where critical educational gerontology (CEG) can offer an appropriate interface with social work and social care. Calling for attention to the triumvirate of knowledge, power and control CEG asks fundamental questions such as: why do we encourage older people's learning? whose interests are really being served? who controls the learning process? why is education 'good' for people? how is quality of life enhanced by education? CEG is unsympathetic to 'instrumental rationality' and posits that the aim of learning in later life is to enable learners to be in control of their thinking. Key principles include a focus on the (i) making links between oppressive social structures, ageing and education, (ii) challenging that late-life learning is more than a neutral enterprise, (iii) including socio-political concepts such as emancipation and empowerment in the process of learning and; (iv), developing an epistemology for learning based on dialogic and reflective practice between those facilitating learning and

learners (Glendenning & Battersby, 1990). Like critical gerontology, CEG has suggested that the embodiment of learning in later life can be a prime catalyst towards an improved democratic and equitable engagement in a variety of contexts ranging from long-term care and other settings where older people are able to exercise citizenship which are beyond traditional learning contexts (Formosa, 2011). Despite the variety of such contexts, one dominant theme should be to improve and enhance the quality of life of older people through learning experiences that help the older person take control of their lives. Thus learners are given a say in the planning and coordination of the learning experience.

Hafford-Letchfield (2011) has differentiated the utilisation of types of learning within care settings. Learning opportunities and interventions can be used, for example, to support the development of new skills to cope with changing or new situations such as bereavement, living with health conditions, becoming an informal carer and other transitions associated with ageing. Learning can be a goal in itself as well as to increase enjoyment and leisure for its own sake. Further, she has identified a number of projects where the direct use of learning has supported older people realising their ongoing contribution to the community (Hafford-Letchfield; 2013). A qualitative evaluation of the provision of learning opportunities in care homes where older people were matched to volunteer learning mentors (Hafford-Letchfield & Lavender, 2015) demonstrated that the outcomes were not only transformational for the individuals involved but other benefits included intergenerational transfer of knowledge, skill and understanding between older people and learning mentors. By forming partnerships between community based mentors and care homes through a paradigm of learning, the quality of care was also raised where the relationships developed fostered advocacy on behalf of the older person, particularly in safeguarding situations and improved the older persons self-esteem and confidence in raising issues about care that may have been previously ignored (Hafford-Letchfield & Lavender, 2015).

Participation is actually more than simply having an opportunity to have one's 'voice' heard and barriers to genuine involvement require being in touch with the right people, having knowledge about one's rights, being able to develop consciousness about external factors such as poverty, culture, and ageism and how these are recognised. These warrant a more robust empowering framework such as offered by some organisations who work in the community on the ground using these methods. In the USA, a small scale study identified a variety of characteristics associated with the cognitive process in later life used to enhance the critically reflective aspects of ageing and contribute to the development of increased resiliency in older people through the mechanism of informal learning (Lamb et al, 2009).

These diverse perspectives highlight the potential for embedding learning within the social relations of social care and its partners which make explicit links between learning and more effective care, particularly around coping with transitions. Policies in both education and social care could say more about their purpose or function in equipping people to succeed in using personalised care. Normative applications of the term 'lifelong learning' stress connections with social cohesion, community building and individual development and freedom, rather than one advocating participative citizenship. Invariably, this calls for shifts for the "development and strengthening of collective organisation both amongst those who use services and amongst those who provide them" (Ferguson, 2007, p. 401). Without doubt, learning in later life can be a significant factor in achieving such as objective, as well as in enhancing older people's capacity to exercise choice and determining their circumstances and needs.

Transformational models of learning

A transformative agenda in late-life learning is one where "learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods" where a "common defining feature is that programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants" (Scottish Executive, 2004, p. 33). Transformational approaches to learning have the potential to engage with the effects of structural inequalities, their potential undermining of collective provision and the way we perceive lifelong learning in personalised care. This approach might be described as one that celebrates interdependence and the reclaiming of social work skills, knowledge and resources with the reassertion and revaluing of relationship-based practice that has been traditionally co-located within community education through the medium of co-production. The key underpinning principles might refer more direction to the rationale for using learning as a mechanism for co-production; inclusion and curriculum as follows:

Rationale and inclusion

Learning about social care can be premised on community education which traditionally focused on improving social conditions for marginalised groups and individuals. Educators and practitioners in the field can equip service users with the power of criticism and create opportunities for the development of critical consciousness and for transformative action in their relationships with them. Katz et al, (2011) found that older people with high support needs value similar things to everyone else. However, many have had to adapt the way they meet their needs, or come to terms with unmet needs, as a result of illness or disability and other issues, such as money or information. The things that older people value can be divided into three (sometimes overlapping) aspects of well-being: social, psychological and physical and paying attention to their cultural lives including music, art and crafts, theatre, religious observance and watching television have been shown to bring benefits including social interaction, relaxation, a sense of achievement, mental stimulation and continuity with the past. Others valued the roles they played or wanted to make more of a contribution to their community. Empowerment-based practice recognises the importance of linking micro-educational and practice methodologies to theories of social change and that the development of critical consciousness within older people's social movement is an important precursor to critical action, where the self is a key site of politicisation. A transformative agenda would therefore provide learners with the scope to extend their understandings of themselves and the contexts in which they live. It affirms and offers older people a language that allows them to reconstruct their moral and political energies in the service of creating a more just and equitable order that simultaneously undermines hierarchical relations. This means engaging in building the capacity of older learners and their social networks by using a problem-solving approach that promotes individual confidence and provides a sense of achievement and direct support to utilise a broader range of resources (Hafford-Letchfield. 2010). Their progress could then be assisted through developing links and communications with educational providers in the area to ascertain that older persons make the right care choices. These approaches can open up, expose and counteract institutional processes and professional mystique. Only by positioning as experienced and knowledgeable social actors will older people achieve an active role in engendering a learning environment equally shared by service providers and users which harnesses an interactive approach.

We have already referred to the evidence on those older people excluded from lifelong learning. Transformational learning refers to that in which individuals change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds. This process is fundamentally rational and analytical. Transformational learning is embedded in a politics of social inclusion which can be defined as the support of those "activities aimed at removing the barriers to enable individuals to participate effectively in economic, social and cultural life" (Stenfors-Hayes, Griffiths, & Ogunleye, 2008, p. 626). In the context of the social care, this means that leaning activities must "aim at (or designed to achieve) the social interaction of service users with society and be the process by which society makes efforts to help service users to reach their full potential". In achieving acceptable levels of inclusion, social care literacy must seek to include older adults identified at greater risk from exclusion. For example studies have shown that older service users including those with dementia, can, and want to articulate the things that matter to them. There may be scope to develop a stronger collective voice for this group. Katz et al (2011) suggest using the internet as a means of communication in a number of ways for example; as a prompt to identify and explore what individual older people with high support needs want and value in their lives, to be used by older people, their families and professionals; as a tool in the education and training of professionals working with older people; as a framework for commissioning services, based on outcomes for older people rather than on the input of services; as a tool for understanding the trade-offs individual budget holders are (or are not) willing to make; and as an aid for researchers who are exploring quality-of-life issues for older people with high support needs and assessing the impact policies and services have on their well-being (p. 4). At the same time, learning coordinators must also counter the accessibility issues in learning contexts. Besides physical, they may include psycho-social barriers such as the stereotypical and ageist belief in the adage "I'm too old to learn" or older adults' generalising from previous poor learning episodes to current programmes, and situational barriers that relate to an individual's life context. Access for disabled learners both physical and institutional barriers such as non user-friendly enrolment procedures, high fees, inappropriate venues, or unexciting methods of teaching and learning have been shown exclude or discourage certain groups of learners as well as how learning is marketed or not. Social workers can therefore utilise personal budgets and resources in more imaginative and targeted ways which provide evidence from analysis of economic costs, and benefits relating to longer term gains associated with quality of life.

Curriculum and geragogy

From an epistemological perspective, curricula are never neutral and always embedded in hidden and ideological constructions. A transformative agenda in lifelong learning stipules the reconstruction of curricula in ways which enable participatory learning and which challenge pre-determined ownership of knowledge by facilitators through the authority of institutions. In essence, the curricular repertoire of social care literacy is to include skills to be able to process and understand basic information needed to make appropriate care-related decisions, as well as having the knowledge, beliefs and confidence to manage one's own social and health. Research by Hafford-Letchfield (2011) demonstrated the need to include within everyday practice, the identification of how learners can direct their own care, maintain and exercise control and engage in meeting and achieving meaningful outcomes to themselves. On one hand, supporting people with long-term care need may need to address issues of confidence and skills in

being independent and taking control of their condition and ability to manage these. A key aspect of learning might be in providing service users people with the opportunity to explore their own solutions to their needs which fit with how they would choose to live their lives and manage their situations. This warrants the sharing of timely and relevant information about local options, discussing self-care and self-management skills and fit with relationship based practice approaches to social work. Indeed, a crucial ingredient in social care literacy is the dissemination and sharing of information. The choice and personalised care agenda, individual budgets and a shift to earlier intervention and preventative approaches are all dependent on older people being aware of the options available, being able to keep up with what is going on in the world, and not least to be in a position to take advantage of these. Being successful in utilising information is crucial to developing skills of self-reliance so central in aiding service users discern which care item best caters to their needs and are consistent with a co-productive approach.

Geragogy refers to the art and science of teaching and instructing older adults and the creative of learning environments in which teaching assumes the status not of an imposed set of prescriptive guidelines and strategies, but arises as a concern for influencing the conditions that promote the disempowerment of older people and for unsettling learners' assumptions that they cannot affect social change. Critical geragogy invokes a 'community of practice' centred around 'dialogue' and 'problem-posing'. Freire (1972) reminds us that whilst dialogue refers to the "encounter between men [sic], mediated by the world, to name the world...which is to be transformed and humanised", problem-posing involves a "constant unveiling of reality" where learners achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality (p. 61, 54). In practice terms this aligns with user participation which engages older people in the planning, organising, and delivering of their own learning and how this relates to their care needs. Service users may themselves become peer advisors, gaining their views on what should be taught and what learning materials should be included, as well as providing them with an opportunity for actual face-to-face teaching. User engagement in learning situations have been found to be successful helping service planners come to a better emphatic understanding of the wider issues relevant to users of welfare services and the impact of their condition on their lifestyle (Costello & Horne, 2001). At the same time, service users reported that this co-learning approach made them feel valued and increased their confidence skills and heightened their self-esteem (Harding, 2009).

Summary and conclusions

This paper has attempted to synthesise some of the relevant policy themes in relation to co-production and the linked concept of personalisation of social care services to older people by considering the role that lifelong learning might play in promoting these agendas more meaningfully and through a co-productive approach. We highlighted the under-theorisation of this field at the beginning of this paper and have traced some of the policy developments within the field of lifelong learning and co-production and what we currently know about the impact of these policies on the everyday experiences of older people using social care who remain a relatively marginalised group. We have attempted to consider the subtle interplay of context and welfare subjectivities which highlights the ways in which policy and its subjects combine with other factors such as socio-political or economic ones that might contribute to or hinder older people's

involvement and participation in their own care. Within the rhetoric of co-production and lifelong learning, those engaged in social work and social care have a role to play in challenging power relations or the discursive aspects of how older people are viewed in such a complex policy environment. Utilising learning within the ways in which we interact and intervene in our everyday practice with older people and the decisions made together with social care users permits reflection on the real meaning of co-production. It leads us both to question how the state manages the relationship between the individual older person and the society and how resources are allocated and arrangements for their 'empowerment' made. Having an understanding about how older peoples experiences are shaped by society's norms and its institutional arrangements are important to consider the potential roles that learning can then play in social care. Quality learning experiences within social care need to be explicitly concerned with both what are seen as the causes of older people's needs and desires as well as recognising older peoples potential to achieve higher levels of expression through contributing in a way that is actually determined or articulated by them when using services. Through their commissioning and arrangements to support older people, social workers can do more to engage, educate and change the behaviour of the public in this endeavour.

Despite positive developments surrounding the implementation of co-production services within social care, older people have not been at the forefront when capitalising on their benefits. Mounting pressure on social care budgets have attempted to shift the focus of resources to those with higher levels of need, hence reducing the potential for more preventative or innovative forms of intervention causing real tensions in achieving co-production in practice. This paper has identified a number of issues that act as barriers in the progress of achieving co-production in social care and considered how lifelong learning particularly in its critical forms might bridge that gap. Recommendations highlighted a need for increased information, advice and support. Most importantly, it revealed that issues concerning eligibility criteria and understanding older peoples independent living and expectations about care and support should be similarly recognised and addressed as this is not just restricted to health and social care needs. Promoting co-production in services capable of responding to the circumstances, strengths and aspirations for older people requires considerable strategic collaboration by the relevant stakeholders actively engage older people in developing robust structures for the development of social enterprise and sustainable communities that transgress ageism in the way older peoples services are conceived and delivered. This 'transformation' involves working across boundaries such as housing, benefits, education, leisure, transport and health and presents challenges to established ways of working. More flexible responses to local need based driven by forums, networks and task groups are said to involve service users, carers and front-line staff as active participants in the design and change process. In Needham & Carr's (2009, p. 17) words, "if co-production is to improve outcomes in social care, it will be at the 'transformative' level, avoiding versions of co-production that simply cut costs, demand compliance or reproduce power relations".

There are assumptions made by policies attempting to shape how society sees old age and older people's potential for learning and the spaces that might be created within social care services in which to 'age well'. Whilst older people's learning needs have in the past decade become subject to increased discussion at educational policy level, it has triggered a somewhat awkward partnership between the different domains involved. As a radical agenda, and in the current economic downturn, we suggest here that educational and social care professionals should position themselves within these

powerful discourses in order to truly transform services for older people which grapples with some of the more sustainable approaches outlined in this paper. In conclusion, it is thus essential to develop a continuous critical dialogue by deconstructing these different relationships and unearthing any assumptions made by policy to which educational gerontology, particularly critical perspectives, can illuminate.

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Aims & Scope

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

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