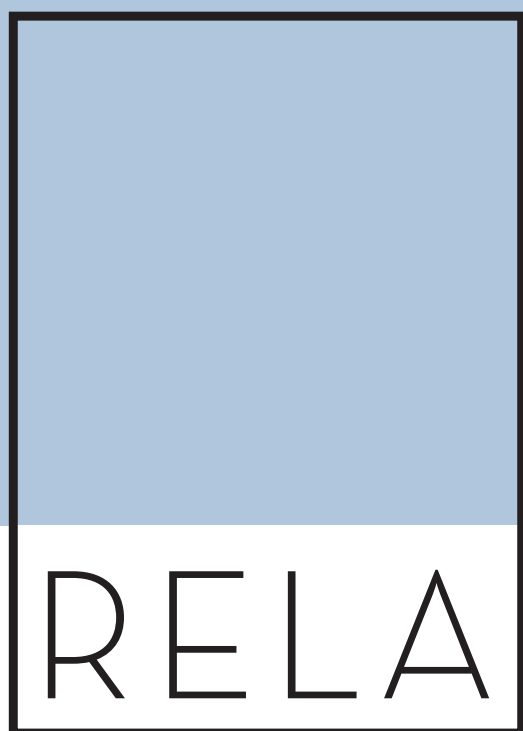# Cartographies of research on adult education and learning

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Editorial: cartographies of research on adult education and learning

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Introduction

The field of research on the education and learning of adults has changed dramatically over the last decades. Some have analysed these changes through various forms of what we characterise here as 'cartographies'. Cartographies are attempts to map out particular conditions, developments or trends. In the field of adult education and learning such mapping has been done in quantitative ways through bibliometric analyses, but also through qualitative and critical approaches. These are important contributions to reflexive engagement, to our understanding of what is going on in the field, and to considering the forces that shape and dominate it.

Bibliometric analysis, for example, considers the field as it is represented through journal publications. This has led to a number of observations regarding the research approaches that dominate, i.e. a historical emphasis on Anglophone authors in the publication of research, description of the field (see e.g. Larsson, 2010, Fejes & Nylander, 2014) and specific gendered and age related biases. If the publication of research in the field can be taken as an indicator of the amount of research carried out, it appears through such analysis that quantitative research has reduced over the years and qualitative research has increased (cf. Taylor, 2001; Fejes & Nylander, 2015). Theoretically speaking, socio-cultural perspectives, critical pedagogy, and post-structural theorisations currently dominate (see Fejes and Nylander in this issue). Such observations have, we feel, crucially supported analytic discussions concerning the dynamics and mechanisms shaping the field as socio-cultural practice.

There is a dominance of Anglophone authors publishing in the international journals, both in terms of numbers of published and most cited articles (cf. Taylor, 2001, Fejes & Nylander, 2014). Yet, the number of articles by non-Anglophone authors seems to have increased slightly during the last few years (cf. Harris & Morrison, 2011, St. Clair, 2011, Taylor, 2001). Furthermore, there has been a shift from male to female dominance (cf. Taylor, 2001). These are only a few observations illustrated through such analyses - there are numerous other observations focusing on a range of aspects, such as how gender perspectives are taken up within the field, and to what extent there

is a focus on certain groups, such as older learners. However, two of the many limitations of these sorts of studies are that they do not include analyses of national or regional research contexts other than the Anglophone contexts and that they focus on journal publications only. These limitations are partly addressed in this issue by Bernd Käpplinger who analyses conference papers presented at European conferences, rather than journal articles in Anglophone journals. Similarly, Kjell Rubenson and Maren Elfert, in this issue, include a sample of journals representing a wider geographical distribution than previous journals analysed, thus providing a possibility to widen the debate.

Another strand of relevant literature on cartographies of adult education research can be found in edited collections of research, bringing researchers together to debate what constitutes the field of research and asking questions about where the field is going. These seem to come and go at intervals. In 1964 the "Black book" was published, in which American scholars of that time reflected on the field (Jensen et al., 1964). This was followed by the "Blue book" in 1991 (Peters et al., 1991). A book edited by Bright (1989) brought together authors writing about the epistemology of the field. Other discussions related to the distinction between andragogy and pedagogy emerged in a non-Anglophone context (e.g. Ten Have, 1973, Savicevi, 1991), a topic also taken up by Knowles (1970) in the North-American American context. These sorts of publications have been influential in shaping research understandings of the field and what is identified as 'new' and important.

The ambition of this thematic issue on cartographies of research of the field is to bring together a range of papers, participating in different ways to the construction of the field as it is shaped in contemporary times. A specific ambition of this issue, which is of particular interest to RELA, was to bring together scholars from different parts of Europe and beyond, in order to debate issues at stake in adult education in Europe. We hope these cartographies, authored by colleagues from Sweden, Canada, Germany, Denmark and France, will provide a ground for scientific reflexivity about the field, where it stands today and how it is shaped and influenced.

Introducing the articles

The five thematic papers of this issue can be clustered in two groups: The first three provide bibliometric analyses of the field by focusing on journal publication and conference papers. The second group includes two papers focusing on specific research areas in the field of adult education. Below we provide short introductions to these five papers as well as the two open papers in this issue.

Bibliometrical analyses of the field

In the first paper, the two Swedish scholars, Andreas Fejes and Erik Nylander investigate how pluralistic the research field on adult education is. They do so with an analysis of the dominating bibliometrical trends observed in three leading academic journals researching the field of adult education, during the period of 2005-2012. The analysis adopts a two-step procedure: firstly, a map is made of the content of the top-cited contributions in terms of theoretical and methodological perspectives, common research themes and ways to construct the object, i.e. the *what* and *how* of the most cited articles. Secondly, the empirical account of *who* publishes in the adult education research field is presented. The findings show that the most cited articles tend towards

homogeneity with regard to the geographical distribution of the contributions, as well as to the research methods adopted. At the same time, the citation pattern shows that both early career researchers and established researchers are represented in the sample. The findings raise important questions regarding the openness of the established networks that give direction to the content of the journals, both regarding the themes and the methodologies. Is the emergence of new knowledge enabled or disabled by the dominant paradigms that inspire the research in the field of adult education?

In the second contribution, the Canada based scholars Kjell Rubenson and Maren Elfert explore the increasingly fragmented map of adult education research. They examine how the configuration of adult education research has been evolving, particularly over the last decade. Their analysis draws on a two-pronged approach: a reading of four seminal articles written by adult education scholars who have conducted bibliometric analyses of selected adult education journals; as well as their own review of 75 articles, covering a one-year period (2012-2013), in five adult education journals that were chosen to provide a greater variety of the field of adult education in terms of their thematic orientation and geographical scope than has been the case in previous reviews. Their findings suggest that the field is facing two main challenges. First, the fragmentation of the map of the territory that was noticed at the end of the 1990s, has continued and seems to have intensified. Second, not only practitioners, but also the policy community voice their disappointment with adult education research, in combination with a disconnection between academic adult education research and policy-related research. The authors provide a couple of speculations as to the future map of adult education as a field of study and point to the danger of shifting the research agenda away from classical adult education concerns about democracy and social rights.

In the third contribution 'Adult Education Research between Field and Rhizome', Bernd Käpplinger from Germany, presents a bibliometrical analysis of conference programs of the European Society for the Research on the Education of Adults. The conferences analysed are the seven triennial conferences that have been organised from 1995 to 2013. The author investigates the papers presented at each conference with regard to research approach, research methodology, location of the presenters, the visibility of the scholars and the influence of international agencies. This analysis presents an interesting and varied insight in the orientations and geographical distribution of the contributions to the conferences. The findings relate to the participation and representation; to the geographical distribution of the contributions to the conferences; to the influences of international agencies such as OECD and UNESCO on the policy directions discussed in the papers; to the prominence of particular authors in the theoretical positioning of the contributions; and to the distribution of research methodologies in the researched documents. The findings result into the major conclusion that, at the occasion of the triennial conferences, the adult education research cannot be perceived as a 'field', or a clearly established area, but rather as a 'rhizome' that is characterized by diversity and fluidity.

Participation in adult education and the professionalization of trainer-consultants
The Danish scholar Sissel Kondrup, in the fourth contribution to the thematic issue, deals with the much researched issue of participation in the provision of adult education, particularly with regard to people working in unskilled jobs. In her research she confirms the often repeated finding that people working in unskilled jobs participate in adult education less frequently than other groups, and that they are more reluctant to participate, since they have an instrumental orientation towards education. The

traditional interpretation of these findings is that the motives for non-participation are formed by specific cultures, value contexts or habitual dispositions. However, such interpretations tend to underestimate how these motives or orientations are produced and reproduced through a continuing experience process conditioned by people's ongoing engagement in specific historical work practices. In response to this, the author suggests to pay closer attention to peoples' specific work lives in order to comprehend why people working in unskilled jobs position themselves less likely than other groups as educable subjects. The author concludes that biographical research, related to the working-lives of people in unskilled jobs and to their attitudes vis-à-vis adult education, may improve the understanding of their non-participation and hence inspire efforts to include them.

In the final cartography paper 'Core activities and career pathways of independent trainers-consultants in France', the France based authors Laurence Bonnafous, Thierry Ardouin and Patrick Gravé, present in the first place an overview of the developments of Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) in France and the way independent professional trainers-consultants are organised in trade unions, and secondly, the initiatives of these organisations and their individual members to improve the recognition of the CVET-trainers as an autonomous, qualified professional group. The data are collected by means of document analysis, action research in the context of the trade unions, and questionnaires for individual trainers. The authors come to the conclusion that the group of researched independent trainers-consultants cannot be yet regarded as a profession. They thereby identify three lines of tension that could be taken as a point of departure for future initiatives to build a sustainable professionalization. The first line of tension concerns the difficulty of identifying a "core occupation" from which essential high level knowledge could be analysed and promoted. The second line of tension occurs at the level of professional ethics. It is related to, on the one hand the educational 'concern for the other', and on the other hand the necessity for the trainers-consultants to survive in a market driven context. Finally the third line relates to the tension between individual strategies of the trainers consultants, often in competition with each other, and more collective actions to increase the public recognition of the profession.

Open paper

The sixth paper in this issue, which is also the first open paper, is by Juan Carlos Pita. It presents research on the relationship between social background and the way arts students succeed or fail to realize their vocational ambitions. The contribution is based on previous research dedicated to the life paths of art school graduates whose empirical data consisted of 13 autobiographical interviews. It cuts these paths into biographical periods and attempts to throw light on the relationships they have between each other. This contribution starts from an observation: in spite of candidates being admitted to an art school and obtaining the same degree, their artistic vocations take several different directions and are highly polarized in terms of social origins. This article brings out this dichotomy through the concept of temporal form of causality. It highlights biographical logics that determine the achievement of the artistic project by articulating archaeological and procedural analysis of the biographies, and it points out a certain number of social gravities that find their origin in the social space and that become significant over the life paths.

The final paper in this issue is also an open paper. The two authors, located in Belgium, Delphine Resteigne and Peter Reyskens, provide a mainly theoretical contribution that discusses the limitations of the traditional views on intercultural

training/education and explores an alternative perspective. The authors raise the question how to understand cultural awareness training, if dealing with cultural diversity is not depending on individual competences but rather on the interaction between people on the ground. They take three steps to discuss this point. In a first step they consider the challenge of cultural diversity for military organizations. The second step consists of a reflection on the notion of intercultural competences and the idea that intercultural competences can be acquired by individuals. In the third step they develop an alternative understanding of the preparation for intercultural interaction, based on Sennett's distinction between practicing and rehearsing. In spite of the fact that the paper is mainly theoretical, it could have lots of practical relevance for the military and for wider contexts of adult education and training.

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How pluralistic is the research field on adult education? Dominating bibliometrical trends, 2005-2012

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Abstract

What the field of adult education research is and how it can be described has been a debated issue over the decades. Several scholars argue that the field today is heterogeneous, borrowing theories and methods from a range of disciplines. In this article, we take such statements as a starting point for empirical analysis. In what ways could it be argued that the field is pluralistic rather than monolithic; heterogeneous rather than homogenous? Drawing on bibliographic data of the top cited articles in three main adult education journals between 2005 and 2012, we illustrate how the citation patterns have tendencies of homogeneity when it comes to the geographical country of authorship, since the USA, UK, Australia and Canada dominate, as well as the research methods adopted, since qualitative approaches have near total dominance. Furthermore, there is a tendency to adopt similar theoretical approaches, since socio-cultural perspectives, critical pedagogy and post-structuralism represent more than half of the articles in our sample. At the same time, the results of our analysis indicate signs of scholarly pluralism, for instance, in terms of authorship, since both early career researchers and established researchers are represented among the top cited publications. We conclude the article by arguing that empirical analysis of publication and citation patterns is important to further the development of reflexivity within the field, not least for early career researchers, who might benefit from knowledge about what has been recognized among peers as worth citing in recent times.

Keywords: adult education; bibliometrics; content analysis; sociology of science

Introduction

What the "field" of adult education research is and how it can be described has been a debated issue over the decades. In the 1970s and 1980s the debates were to a large extent of a philosophical character, focusing on issues of epistemology, i.e. the status of adult education as a discipline or as a unique field of knowledge (cf. Hirst, 1974; Bright, 1989). Such debates seem to have declined in the 1990s and, entering the 2000s, these debates had almost disappeared (Rubenson, 2000). Today, there seems to be a consensus concerning the epistemological status of adult education, since scholars construe this "field" as inherently interdisciplinary, borrowing theories and methodologies from a range of disciplines (cf. Fejes & Salling Olesen, 2010; Hake, 1992; Larsson, 2010; Rubenson, 2000). Openness to the inclusion of scholars from diverse disciplines with different methodological and theoretical inclinations is thus arguably an important part of the self-image of scholars active in the field. However, whether or not adult education research is characterized by methodological and theoretical pluralism, could also be treated as a research question, open to inquiry and contestation. In what ways is the field characterized by scientific practices that are heterogeneous and pluralistic? Is this interdisciplinary and institutionalized pluralism reflected in the most cited contributions in some of the main adult education journals in the field?

To study the publication outlets of adult education is a feasible way to map out how adult education as a field of research is construed. Studying this field by analysing its leading scientific journals has become a popular strategy in recent years (Hayes, 1992; Blunt & Lee, 1994; Rachal & Sargent, 1995; Taylor, 2001; Fejes, 2008; Harris & Morrison, 2011; St. Clair, 2011; Larsson, 2010; Fejes & Nylander, 2014), and the early examples of bibliometric studies and content analysis of adult education research date back to the 1970s (Dickinson & Rusnell, 1971; Long & Agyekum, 1974; Boshier & Pickard, 1979). In this article, we study the top-cited articles in three of the leading English-speaking adult education journals between the years 2005-2012 in order to examine if and in what aspects the field is shaped as heterogeneous and pluralistic. Thus, our analysis aims to provide a description of the field based on what scholars have recognised as worthy to cite.

The analysis adopts a two-step procedure: firstly, we map the content of the top-cited contributions in terms of theoretical and methodological perspectives, common research themes and ways to construct the object, i.e. the *what* and *how* of the most cited articles. Secondly, we deepen the empirical account of *who* publishes in the adult education research field. This is done by tracing the institutional affiliations, academic positions and geographic site of enunciation of the most cited authors as well as by providing some demographic characteristics. Our findings show how the most cited articles have tendencies of homogeneity when it comes to the geographical country of authorship, since the USA, UK, Australia and Canada dominate, as well as the research methods adopted, since qualitative approaches have near total dominance. At the same time, the citation pattern shows some signs of pluralism for instance, in terms of authorship, since both early career researchers and established researchers are represented in our sample.

Before presenting, in greater detail, the research questions and method that have led us to unravel the dynamics of contemporary adult educational research, we briefly sketch some historical trends in the research field. This sketch will act as a basis for the discussion of our results.

A sketch of the history of adult education research

Adult education as a field of research has emerged largely out of a concern for the practice of adult education. In North America, such concern was partly connected to the emergence of university programs in adult education. The focus was on developing knowledge in order to define and develop the field (Jensen, Liveright & Hallenbeck, 1964) and much research was directed at developing programs and instructional methods. This is illustrated, for example, by Long and Agyekum's (1974) analysis of articles that was published in the AEQ (then named Adult Education). They found that during the period 1964-1973 more than half of the articles (55%) concerned one of the three following areas: program planning and administration, instructional material and methods, and adult learning. Rubenson (1982, p. 62) notes that empiricism and psychology heavily influenced adult education research in the US before the 1980s, and argues that that this was partly due to the dominating idea that instruction 'derives linearly from research'. There was thus a lack of research on sociological aspects of adult education, and questions of power were not a common issue dealt with.

In Europe, the history of adult education research is more diverse than in the US, not least because the US is one nation compared to the multiple ones in Europe, and there is one official language in the US, whereas Europe has many. Such diversity in Europe could be illustrated, for example, by the different ways professorships in the field have been labelled: professor of andragogy in some locations such as the former Yugoslavia or the Netherlands (Bron, 2006), or professor of adult education in Finland, Germany and Sweden. In some countries, there has never been a professorship in adult education. A second illustration of diversity is the way adult education is organised. In some countries, e.g. in Scandinavia, there are long historical traditions of institutionalised adult education (cf. Laginder, Nordvall & Crowther, 2013), while in other locations such history is much shorter. A third illustration of diversity, connected to the two above, is how well developed the adult education research field is within each country. This could partly be expected to depend on the history of the institutionalisation of adult education and based on different political priorities (social democratic, liberal, conservative). However, one trend in Europe during the 20th Century has been how adult education in many locations became integrated into social and economic policy, making research funding available (Rubenson, 2000). Such developments can partly be related to trends within the social sciences and educational science more generally.

In the 1950s, there was an increase in the public spending on education in countries such as Germany, Sweden, the USA and the UK. One of the effects of these political reforms and growth of public expenditure on education was a growing need to find means to evaluate and administer the population in the educational realm. Partly connected to these developments, many countries established governmental authorities and research institutes that were meant to monitor and survey what was happening in the educational field. The increase in large-scale surveys and statistical data analyses based on micro- and census data after the World wars can, in part, be seen as a means for politicians to have researchers provide results deemed useful for policy-making and steering (Husén, 1983). The ascend of a quantitative research paradigm in educational research was driven largely by the expectations that funding of such research would increase efficiency and productivity of education. In Sweden, this was seen, for example, in the vast number of studies exploring the phenomena of 'reserve of talent' (*begåvningsreserven*), which refers to those who have not been given the opportunity to reach the level of education which their talent foresaw (Härnqvist, 1958; Husén, 1956). Such studies paved the way for an increase in public spending on adult education in

Sweden as it became apparent that many citizens lacked the educational opportunities that the measurements of 'talent' predicted they were suited for. Thus, research on adult education in Europe partly came to focus on policy issues and the state, topics seldom treated in the US despite empiricism and statistical data dominating the field at this time. According to Rubenson (2000, p. 5) the lack of focus on policy issues and the state in the US could partly be explained due to a 'decentralized political and economic system and individual emphasis on social mobility, [which] promotes a research focus on the individual'.

However, the dominance of empiricism and the quantitative research paradigm would come to change in the later part of the 20th Century. In the 1960s and 1970s, alongside the rapid growth of the whole university sector and the political radicalization of students, the domination of empirically-oriented research was questioned by the increased use of hermeneutic, phenomenological and critical perspectives. This development also paved the way for qualitative research methods and that did not have much legitimacy and scientific status from the start (cf. Husén, 1983, 1988; Larsson, 2006). These more general trends within the social sciences and educational science had repercussions for the field of adult education research. We will mention three such repercussions here.

Firstly, there was an increase in qualitative studies. Even though research in the US still, to a large extent, lingers on a psychological research tradition, previous research indicates that there has been a decline in empirically oriented research in the US (Rubenson, 2000) as well as quantitative studies (Taylor, 2001). Secondly, theorisations in the field of adult education that came to focus on issues of power developed. For example, the work of Paulo Freire (1972) became influential for many adult education scholars during the 1970s, not only in Latin America but also in Europe among the former colonizers (cf. Kane, 2013). Freire was also picked up in the US, most notably through the work of Henry Giroux (1983). The writings of critical pedagogues such as Freire and Giroux provided critiques of oppressive relations and inspiration for how to design educational practices that might be mobilized to counter oppression. At the same time, intellectual movements that later became known under the label of 'post-structuralism' emerged. These had a strong emphasis on abandoning the quest for essence and causality, offering new ways to conceptualize power, class, gender, and the making of social scientific knowledge. With an interest in deconstructing and problematising practices of adult education, researchers in adult education now started to ask other questions and provide different answers than those offered by critical pedagogues (cf. Usher & Edwards, 1994). However, the risk of such a shift was in the US context, according to Rubenson (2000, p. 5) that 'the concern over the lack of a theoretical base in some quarters of adult education has resulted in a preoccupation with abstract theory building'. The third and final repercussion that we want to draw attention to is that the debates about the epistemological status of the field have almost disappeared, and instead the field has been construed by many scholars as interdisciplinary and pluralistic (cf. Fejes & Salling Olesen, 2010; Hake, 1992; Rubenson, 2000).

Bibliometric research on the who, what and how of adult education research

In this article we use bibliographic data to give a synthetic image of the research field where knowledge about adult education is produced. We believe that bibliometric measurement and content analysis might prove helpful in identifying what is promoted and valued within the field and, as such, may provide a pertinent basis for scientific reflexivity as the *modus operandi* of the field is outlined (Bourdieu, 1988, p. xii).

Similar approaches have previously provided fruitful knowledge in terms of the *who*, *what* and *how* questions in this particular field. By aggregating bibliographic data on what is being produced in adult educational journals, one could, for instance, specify the demographic backdrop such as the relative numbers of women and men among authors (Hayes, 1992; Taylor, 2001; Harris & Morrison, 2011) or the institutional affiliation of authors in terms of geography (Taylor, 2001; Harris & Morrison, 2011; St. Clair, 2011). Both Taylor's (2001) and Harris and Morrison's (2011) analyses indicate that the research field has gone through a change from a dominance of male authors to female authors. They have also confirmed that there is a clear dominance of anglophone authors in the Adult Education Quarterly and the Australian Journal for Adult Learning. On the same topic, Larsson (2010) has stressed that publication patterns in the research field of adult education and learning are clearly related to specific geographic sites of enunciation and different language regimes. Building on Larsson's (2010) arguments, Fejes and Nylander (2014) have shown how anglophone authors are not only more prone to contribute to the English-speaking journals in the field, they have also a much better revenue on their publications than non-anglophone scholars in terms of who is considered worth citing.

Apart from identifying *who* it is that contributes to the scientific journals in the field, this line of research has also provided some answers as to what kind of research is being published, i.e. it answers the *what* and *how* questions. For instance, Taylor (2001) and St. Clair (2011) have noted an increasing trend for qualitative studies in the field and a simultaneous decrease in the number of quantitative studies. Taylor (2001) found that the most common subject treated in the articles of AEQ between 1989 and 1999 was 'adults learning', a finding supported by Harris and Morrison (2011) who, from the analysis of the Australian Journal for Adult Learning, added 'teachers/educators/teaching' as common themes. Some of these results might appear self-evident in the eyes of someone whot has worked in the field for a long time, yet given the historical changes discussed above, it should not be taken for granted that these circumstances will not change further as time goes by.

One of the limitations of previous bibliometric studies and content analyses of journal publications in the field is that they tend to map out one journal at the time. As the different journals might uphold positions that are, hypothetically at least, complementary to one another, it seems more reasonable to study the research field with a sample that includes *multiple journals* published in different geographical locations. Therefore for our analysis we have chosen three different journals to represent the field published in three different geographical locations: Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ) (USA), International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE) (UK) and Studies in Continuing Education (SICE) (Australia). Analysing these journals will, based on those articles recognized by scholars in the field through the highest rates of citations, provide the basis for answering our questions about how this research field is structured in relation to bibliographics and content.

Categories and principle of classification

We have conducted an analysis of the content and authorship based on a sample of the most cited articles published in three leading journals in the field between 2005-2012. Our focus on academic journals is based on the premise that academic publishing provides *one* important knowledge base for any discipline or field of research, and represents vital parts of its history, social structure, norms and ways of communication.

Compared with books and book chapters, which are less likely to be subjected to review processes, journals include papers that have been deemed to have a certain level of rigour and quality. Arguably, peer-reviewed journals have gained increased importance in evaluating research in recent years, a tendency that has accelerated through a series of political reforms (Karpik, 2011; Nylander, Aman, Hallqvist, Malmquist & Sandberg, 2013; Fejes & Nylander, 2014). Although we acknowledge that entire research fields and several advanced scientific journals have emerged specializing in bibliometrics and scientometrics[1], our paper engages with other adult education researchers who have conducted similar studies (cf. Taylor, 2001; Larsson, 2010).

Our analysis aims to provide a broad description of how the field has been shaped in terms of authorship and content in recent years. We have therefore focused our exercise on ten different categories that are of particular interest to us.[2] These categories correspond to a set of *how* and *what* questions - in terms of research method, theory, context and object. A second set of questions deal with the question of *who* - in terms of authorship. Under this heading we have included variables on department affiliation, geographic site of enunciation, academic title, gender, number of authors, as well as number of citations.

Table 1. The bibliometric analysis divided up by content and authorship

Content (How and What)	Authorship (Who)
Method used	Department
Theory used	Academic title
Context of research object	Country of institutional affiliation
Main object of research	Citation numbers
	Gender
	Number of authors

In order to identify how the most cited articles relate to the questions above, we have used data available in the Scopus database. Besides being one of the main indexing databases in the academic community that applies certain quality procedures when including journals, the reason for choosing this database is mainly pragmatic. Scopus includes all three of the journals chosen for this analysis, that represent three different geographical locations, whereas only two of them, AEQ and SICE, are listed in the Web of Science, the other major database available for bibliometric measurements (cf. Archambault, Campbell, Gingras & Lariviere, 2009).

Classification based on dominance

In selecting and classifying the data for our analysis, we have adopted the principle of dominance. First, we narrow down the sample of our analysis to the *top cited articles* published in each of the three journals. The reason for focusing on the most highly cited articles is the collegial recognition ascribed to them by either relating, opposing or building on their arguments. Altogether, this means that we have carried out a detailed analysis of 57 articles, all of which appeared in the journals throughout the period of 2005 to 2012, which amounts to the 19 most cited articles in each journal. As our focus here is on recognition among peers, all self-citations have been excluded from the statistics.

Based on this sample, each author of this paper separately read the articles and categorised them in relation to the above-mentioned questions. Throughout these

readings we sought to construct broader thematic categories that could allow for quantifiable descriptions, for example the object of study being either students, teachers, workers, or research. Since the quantitative approach requires a reduction of the number of possible themes or subcategories than it is possible to account for, we grouped the articles based on the dominance criteria. When these recurring themes had been classified individually, we compared our categorisations. Those subcategories that were sizeable enough to form their own category were listed as such, whereas smaller unconventional units were lumped together as broader categories or placed among the leftovers classified as 'Other'. In those instances that the two researchers categorized articles differently from each other – which amounted to approximately 20% of the total sample - we read the articles again and came to a joint conclusion about the most appropriate way to label them (cf. Taylor, 2001). This method can be seen as a strategy to increase the reliability of the categorisation process, as the nomenclature effects are controlled for by collegial means

There are some obvious limitations to this study, in terms of our selection of only journal articles, journals published in English, as well as in certain geographical locations.[3] However, we do not claim that our analysis is fully generalizable in its findings in relation to the field as a whole, especially since other modes of publication (that are not journals) and other publication languages (that are not English) are left out. However, by selecting journals positioned as key ones within the field from three different continents and picking out those articles that have been most cited between 2005-2012, we hope that our analysis will provide a description that, to some extent, could be generalizable to the field.

Findings: Content analysis and bibliographics based on citations

In the following section, we present the results from our analysis of the 57 most cited articles by drawing from the questions raised under the two overarching areas of interest sketched above. Firstly, we will address the issues pertaining to the content of these articles. Secondly, we will direct attention to the social and institutional structures of the contributing authors, i.e. the bibliographics of the most cited authors in the field. The findings will be divided into two different tables, after which we will embark on a discussion of what we see as our most interesting results.

Content of research

Table 2. Number and share of top-cited articles in three adult educational journals, categories related to content.

	SICE (n)	AEQ (n)	IJLE (n)	Tot. (n)	Tot. (%)
Content (Method)					
Conceptual & Reviews	3	6	6	15	26,3
Qualitative Interviews	4	7	4	15	26,3
Interviews & Participation	6	1	4	11	19,3
Other qualitative	5	1	3	9	15,8
Quantitative	0	3	1	4	7
Mixed methods	1	1	1	3	5,3
Total	19	19	19	57	100
Content (Theory)					
Socio-cultural theory	7	1	4	12	21,1
Critical pedagogy	3	4	3	10	17,5
Post-structuralism	4	2	3	9	15,8
Other	1	4	2	7	12,3
Other learning theories	3	2	1	6	10,5
Research reviews	1	3	1	5	8,8
Transformative learning	0	3	1	4	7
Lifecourse & transition perspectives	0	0	4	4	7
Total	19	19	19	57	100
Content (Context)					
School & University	7	4	6	17	29,9
Workplace & transitions to workplace	5	0	5	10	17,5
E-learning, ICT & IT	5	3	1	9	15,8
Nonformal education (e.g. NGO´s, Home)	0	7	1	8	14
Educational systems	0	2	4	6	10,5
Overviews	1	2	2	5	8,8
Policy	1	1	0	2	3,5
Total	19	19	19	57	100
Content (Object)					
Students	9	7	7	23	40,4
Research	3	5	5	13	22,8
Teachers & Educators	2	6	3	11	19,3
Workers & Professionals	5	1	4	10	17,5
Total	19	19	19	57	100

Table 2 provides data on how the top-cited research was carried out. As for the method deployed, qualitative research clearly dominates, representing 62 percent. If we also include purely conceptual papers and theoretically oriented research reviews the dominos of the qualitative paradigm becomes even more pronounced (88%). That means that only 12 percent (n=7) of the top-cited articles used quantitative methods or mixed methods to reach their conclusions. Four of these studies used quantitative approaches, while three of them drew on mixed-method approaches. Three out of the

four quantitative articles were published in the AEQ, perhaps indicating that this publication outlet is the major one for quantitative research within the three journals studied. Looking closer at these three articles, we see that the first one is based on an attitudinal survey of traditional and non-traditional undergraduate students' motivation and interest (Bye, Pushkar & Conway, 2007), the second is a comparative survey of institutional barriers to participation in adult education in various countries (Rubenson & Desjardin, 2009) and the third is a study of the educational effects of online instruction for police officers (Donavant, 2009). The fourth quantitative study that made it into our sample was published in IJLE and focuses on older learners' motivation for participation in online learning (Mulenga & Liang, 2008). Taken together, these articles represent a small number of quantitative contributions to the field that have been given recognition based on citation measurements. Whether this is due to the relative lack of quantitative articles submitted, the profile of the journals, or the limited impact of those quantitative studies carried out, is a question beyond the scope of this study.

Looking more closely at the vast number of qualitative studies, we can see how interviews and interviews in combination with observations dominate, together representing almost half (46%) of the top-cited articles. For example, English (2006) published an interview study in AEQ focusing on learning within feminist organizations. Another interview study published in SICE used a combination of interviews and observations to study recognition of prior learning practices (Breier, 2005). Lastly, we can see how 27 percent of all top-cited articles are conceptual papers or review articles. As an example of this sub-genre we can mention an argumentative paper calling for a social transformation approach to lifelong learning published in IJLE where the author draws on a plenitude of scholars to make her point (Rogers, 2006). The research reviews were typically qualitative in nature, but we separated these from the other research methods as they amounted to a rather sizeable and distinguishable research strategy of their own.[4]

Continuing with the *how*-question of research and what theories are mobilised in these articles, we can see how three theoretical perspectives dominate and represent more than half (54%) of all the top-cited articles: critical pedagogy, post-structuralism and socio-cultural theory. Our working definition of socio-cultural theory includes authors who focus on activity theory, socio-cognitive or situated perspectives on learning. For example, in an article in SICE, Mason (2006), draws on her own experiences as a tutor in online master's courses and on literature on adult learning when discussing three technologies used in online teaching (blogging, learning object and e-portfolios). References to Wenger and social learning theories are one part of the argument pursued. In another article, published in AEQ, O'Donnell and Tobbel (2007) analyse adult students' transition to higher education. Drawing on Wenger's community of practice concept, in combination with other theories, they focus on adults' transition in terms of participation, learning and identity.

In mapping out the articles within the critical pedagogy paradigm, we have included contributions that draw from Marxism, critical theory, feminism, social movement learning, and post-colonial perspectives. Looking more closely at some of the articles, Tisdell and Thompson (2007) study adult educators' consumption of media, drawing on critical media literacy to problematize educational equity with the aim of creating transformative learning processes and alternative counter-hegemonic narratives. In another article, published in SICE, Forrester (2005) argues for a reshaping of learning within the trade unions in the UK, a movement he argues has to move from an 'employability framework' to one informed by virtues of 'democratic citizenship'.

As for the category labelled post-structuralism, we include a series of articles that draw on Foucault, actor-network theory, science and technology studies and post-structuralist feminism. Although these articles sometimes share certain features with critical pedagogy, they also differ in important regards. Normative claims are here much less conspicuously outlined. Often the author avoids them altogether as any search for essence, and causality and foundational norms are looked upon with suspicion. One example is an article in AEQ where St. Pierre (2006) critically addresses the concept of scientific research and how it has emerged as a policy term as of late. The author draws from various other authors associated with post-structuralism such as Butler, Spivak and Foucault in order to conclude that it is impossible to separate methodology from epistemology, which is why, she says, adult education researchers need to engage with epistemologies that are not their own.

Focusing instead on the *where* question, the context of research, we find that schools and universities represent the most common empirical location (30%), while work and workplaces are the second most common (17.5%). ICT (16%) as well as non-formal education locations (14%) are also quite common.

To sum up our findings so far, we have found that only a small share of the top-cited articles in recent years have been using quantitative research methods. Instead, the methodological strategies adopted by leading adult education scholars seem heavily tilted towards qualitative research approaches in general, and interview studies, in particular. Theoretically, we have found that the field is dominated by three overarching approaches which share certain internal family-resemblances. These were grouped as socio-cultural theory, critical pedagogy and post-structuralism. Schools and universities as well as workplaces and ICT are the most common empirical locations.

In order to deepen our understanding of who produces this knowledge and who has managed to reach our sample of the most cited scholars in the three journals, we will turn to the bibliographic data on institutional affiliations, academic position, as well as demographic variables such as gender and country of origin.

Authorship

Table 3. Number and share of top-cited articles in three adult education journals, categories related to authorship.

	SICE (n)	AEQ (n)	IJLE (n)	Tot. (n)	Tot. (%)
Authorship (Department)					
Adult education & Lifelong learning	5	9	10	24	42,1
Education	3	5	2	10	17,5
Other social science	2	2	5	9	15,8
Higher education	5	1	1	7	12,3
Educational technology	4	0	0	4	7
Sciences	0	2	1	3	5,3
Total	19	19	19	57	100
Authorship (Position)					
Professor	10	5	4	19	33,3
Associate Professor	0	4	7	11	19,3
Assistant Professor	0	6	1	7	12,3
Senior Lecturer	3	0	4	7	12,3
Lecturer	2	2	2	6	10,5
Researcher & Ph.D.	4	0	0	4	7
PhD-student & Non-Ph.D.	0	2	1	3	5,3
Total	19	19	19	57	100
Authorship (Country)					
United Kingdom	7	2	8	17	29,9
Australia	8	1	3	12	21,1
USA	0	9	2	11	19,3
Canada	3	6	1	10	17,5
Other country	1	1	5	7	12,2
Total	19	19	19	57	100
Authorship (Gender)					
Woman	11	13	13	37	64,9
Man	8	6	6	20	35,1
Total	19	19	19	57	100
Authorship (Number)					
Single	11	11	7	29	50,9
Multiple	8	8	12	28	49,1
Total	19	19	19	57	100

Table 3 provides bibliographic and institutional data on the authors that contributed to the 57 most cited articles within the rather limited time-frame of our study. The results show a distinctive pattern when it comes to the geographical aspects, which is a topic that has been dealt with in one of our previous publications (Fejes & Nylander, 2014). Suffice to say here, among the top-cited scholars the anglophone world dominates within the research field, representing 88% of all top-cited articles (authors from the

USA, UK, Canada and Australia), while the rest of the world represents as few as 12%. Between the major anglophone countries we find that United Kingdom has most of the well-cited contributions, with 30% of all top-citations, followed by researchers with institutional affiliations with Australia, the USA and Canada, which each assembled around 20% of the total share. The rest of the world has a modest share in this 'league-table' of adult education citations, amounting to no more than 12%, largely due to some well-cited contributions in IJE.[5]

Beyond geopolitical patterns of dominance, we find that the well-cited authors in this period are placed predominantly in departments and research units specializing in adult education and lifelong learning (42%). Apart from departments that could be immediately connected to adult education specialties, there were another 37 percent of researchers listed in education departments of various sorts. Among these, most had unspecified positions with regards to education departments, whereas others belonged to units focusing on research in higher education or educational technology. This illustrates that those who publish in the field, but who are not in an adult education department, are affiliated with departments or units quite close to adult education. Some of these departments might have research groups in adult education, but without these being described as such. Only one out of five (21%) of the top-cited contributions had a first author from another scientific discipline (social scientific fields, 12.3%, and more rarely the 'hard sciences', 5.3%). Thus, it seems that even though the adult education research field is commonly viewed as particularly heterodox and pluralistic, the majority of first authors belong to an adult education department or a department with close proximity to adult education.

Furthermore, we find that although most of the top-cited authors were established researchers at the time of their research some of these contributions were made by lecturers and PhD-students. In fact, within our sample, only one third (33%) of the top-cited contributions were written by full professors, while a substantial number of papers were written by associate professors (19.2%), assistant professors (12.3%), senior lecturers (12.3%), lecturers (10.5%) and other researchers (7%). Five percent of the top-cited papers (n=3) had even been written by PhD students and other authors without a PhD.

Yet, looking at the most cited papers in our sample, the authors are mainly more established researchers. The most cited paper in our sample is a review of transformative learning theory, single-authored by the US male scholar Edward Taylor (2007), associate professor in adult education, published in IJLE and cited 81 times. Taylor's contribution has an outstanding citation frequency as compared to all the other publications. The second most cited paper is one on the future of e-learning, single-authored by a male Australian scholar John Hedberg (2006), professor in educational technology, published in SICE and cited 28 times. Top cited papers three, four and five are cited 23 times each. In an article published in AEQ, female Canadian scholar Dorothea Bye (Bye et al., 2007), PhD student in psychology (co-authored with professors), analyses motivation among non-traditional students in higher education. Male Australian scholar Stephen Billet (Billett & Pavlova, 2005), professor in vocational and adult education, with a colleague, analyses workers' development of the notion of self. In another article published in IJLE by male UK scholar Mark Olssen (2006), professor in political theory and education policy, the focus is on discourses on neoliberalism and lifelong learning.

On the overall gender patterns of the authors contributing to all the top-cited articles, we see a clear female dominance. Taken together, the female authors represent 65 percent of all top-cited articles as compared to 35 percent for their male counterparts.

In terms of number of authors, we see a relatively equal distribution between single and multiple authorship, with 51% of the articles single-authored and 49% with multiple authors.

Bibliometric trends in the field of adult education research

The aim of this article has been to analyse to what extent the field of adult education can be characterized as heterogeneous or homogeneous based on the most cited publications in some of the leading journals in the field. By means of analysing the publication patterns of content and bibliographics of the most cited authors between 2005-2012 we have provided some empirical evidence on the dominating theoretical traditions and methods deployed for attaining collegial recognition in the field, and we have given a collective portrayal of those authors who have succeeded in generating the most citations in recent years.

As our results show, the field can be seen as pluralistic or heterogeneous only in certain aspects, while being homogenous and monolithic in others. In terms of content, a clear pattern relating to method emerged, which was almost entirely qualitative in nature. Within the near total dominance of qualitative research among the top-cited articles, research based on interviews was the most popular method chosen. The field is theoretically construed as partly heterogeneous in terms of the wide array of theories and concepts used. At the same time, however, three theoretical perspectives dominate, representing more than half of the articles in the sample. Focusing on authorship, the field seems rather homogeneous on the basis of measurements of geographic site of enunciation, with a clear dominance of anglophone authors prevail. Heterogeneity, on the other hand, is visible in relation to the academic position of the authors, with a mixture of early career researchers and professors represented in our sample. In the following, we will discuss our main findings further. We will consider the dominance of qualitative studies, the dominance of three theoretical perspectives, as well as questions about authorship.

A qualitative research paradigm

With regards the research methods used, our results illustrate how there has been a near total dominance of qualitative research methods within the top-cited contributions in adult education research journals in recent years. Only four articles in our sample can be categorised as solely drawing on quantitative methods. Such results are partly in concordance with earlier research (Harris & Morrison, 2011; St. Clair, 2011; Taylor, 2001) insofar as these previous studies found that qualitative research has become more common and quantitative research less common over the years. However, despite the decrease in quantitative research, previous studies indicate that it is still quite common. Taylor (2001) for example, illustrates how quantitative and qualitative research were equally common at the end of the 1990s (see also argument by Groen & Kawalilak, 2013). A focus on the top-cited articles, however, indicates that quantitative research methods are much more endangered than previous review descriptions have been able to convey.

The difference in results might be due to our focus on a wider range and on slightly different journals compared to previous studies, or because we considered a later time-period than in Taylor's (2001) study. Another possible reason for the decline in quantitative papers may be that our focus has been on those articles that have been

picked up and cited by others, whereas previous reviews in the field have grasped the full research output in specific journals (Taylor, 2001; Harris & Morrison, 2011). It might be that numerous quantitative studies have been published with low citation rates, and that it is the quality of these papers or the numerical (il)literacy of scholars in the field that prevents them from being cited. Regardless of the reason, our results show how qualitative research has gained a dominant role in the field. In fact, our findings suggest that not only should research be framed within a qualitative paradigm in order to be picked up and cited extensively by peers, it should also preferably focus on individuals and their narrations elaborated through interviews (46%), sometimes in combination with observations. Having all possible research strategies in mind, this is quite a remarkable outcome that calls for further discussion.

One possible explanation regarding the dominance of qualitative research might be found in the historical trends outlined above. Firstly, those adult education scholars who currently hold positions as professors have, to a large extent, shaped their academic careers during a time when qualitative research was emerging and establishing itself as a dominating trend within the field. It can be argued that there is a risk that these leading professors, who often fought hard to make qualitative research legitimate, had focused on providing more doctoral courses and supervision within the frames of a qualitative research paradigm. Thus, it could be hard for doctoral students interested in conducting quantitative studies to find suitable supervision at their institutions or receive meaningful feedback at adult educational conferences.

Secondly, quantitative methods have been important, and previously dominated adult education research in the US. Our results seem to indicate that, even though the volume of quantitative research seems to have drastically declined in the last few decades, such research is still to be found, but predominantly so in the adult education journal in the US. Three out of four of the quantitative articles in our sample are published in AEQ, and three out of four of the main authors of these articles are from North American institutions. The fourth of the main authors is from an institution in Zambia, but is affiliated with a North American university. Thus, one could argue that adult education scholars who draw on quantitative methods seem to have benefited from being located and published in North America.

Another explanation of our results might be found in the question of recruitment to doctoral studies in the field. There is a long-standing tradition in the field of recruiting students who themselves have been engaged in practices of adult education, as teachers, activists or community workers. From a life-course perspective, it is logical to assume that these students bring with them interests that relate to prior experiences of their vocational and political practices. The propensity to use qualitative research methods and to construct research objects that are intuitively recognizable (students' motivations, transformative learning experiences, pedagogic and political strategies, etc.) might therefore, at least in part, depend on the recruitment to the doctoral level. It could also be connected to a wish to produce the kind of knowledge demanded in educational and teaching programs which, according to Taylor's (2001, p. 336) diplomatic observation, has led to 'less debate about its [qualitative methods] validity as a research method'.

Another important lead in explaining the qualitative dominance might be found by reading about the aims and scopes of the three investigated journals. As the sample builds on research journals within adult education that stress the relation between theory and practice as especially important, ambitions to publish research that is deemed useful to practitioners, might also render the journals more inclined towards qualitative approaches, in which the connection to those working in the field appears more straightforward. Provided that one would like to contribute to an increase in quantitative

studies, there would be a need to develop the competence to carry out such studies, either by fostering the appropriate skills within the field or by bringing in such competence from other departments or disciplines. This latter dimension seems more visible in our material, where a researcher in psychology, and another one from a department specializing in criminal justice, conducted two of the four quantitative studies in our sample.

Teamwork between scholars who are competent within different areas of conducting social scientific research is not rare and almost half of the top-cited articles in our sample were collaborative projects that involved more than one researcher. Yet, in order to be able to carry out large-scale quantitative studies empirically, there is a need for researchers active in the field to attract larger research grants. As our results clearly illustrate, very few studies are quantitative, and the qualitative studies are, to a large extent, small-scale interview studies in terms of empirical material. One possible explanation for this finding is that adult education researchers are not very successful in attracting funding for large-scale research projects in which mixed method approaches and quantitative research form an integral part. However, the lack of quantitative studies might also indicate that adult education research is not highly esteemed among research funders, or that adult education, which is often a very minor part of the educational or public system, has been ignored during this particular time period, i.e. the early 2000's

Three theoretical perspectives

Our results illustrate that, even though a wide array of theoretical perspectives are used among the top-cited articles, three perspectives dominate the field: socio-cultural perspectives, critical pedagogy and post-structural perspectives. This pattern indicates that broad conceptual pathways are open for the conduct of adult education research. So how come these three perspectives dominate the field?

One explanation could be related to the methodological observation that almost all articles in the sample draw on qualitative research methods. These theories are often mobilized to help explain and problematize qualitative data of various sorts, and thus authors deem these theories appropriate in relation to the choice of method. Secondly, as the bibliographic variable on institutional affiliations of the authors illustrates, the dominance of these three theoretical perspectives should probably be seen as tied to specific sites of enunciation, e.g. adult education research as it is practiced in the USA, UK, Canada and Australia. But what happens outside this anglophone world of publications, say in Korea, Germany, China, or France? Such a question can also be raised in relation to our own sample and its internal relationship. For example, the three dominating perspectives are most clearly represented in IJLE (n=10) and SICE (n=14), while they are less represented in AEQ (n=7). This could indicate that adult education research in North America, to a large extent, is still influenced by psychology, with a stronger focus on the individual rather than on sociological questions and issues of power (cf. Rubenson, 2000). Such an explanation is partly supported by our sample, since three of the articles in AEQ drew on transformative learning theory, while only one of the papers in the other two journals focused on this theory (authored by a US scholar). Transformative learning theory was developed in the US, and is very much focused on the individual and her/his cognitive dispositions.

Thirdly, the dominance of these perspectives could be related back to the history of the field. With the emergence of critical pedagogy in the 1970s, not least through the writing of Freire, issues of power came to the fore in much of the adult education research. Critical pedagogues are brought together by a 'preoccupation…with social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and

social relations' (Burbules & Berk, 1999, p. 47). The critical inclination typically comes from researchers identifying themselves with a social cause or movement, which leads them to take on the role of spokespersons or judges who unveil the destructive disparity between the ideal and reality, between how the world really 'is' and how it ought to be (Boltanski, 2011). Critical pedagogy could thus be expected to appeal to adult education scholars who themselves come from the adult education field, bringing along a wish to conduct research that might help improve practice by focusing on issues of power. As already argued, previous practitioners and activists have been a common source of recruitment to PhD programs in adult education. Similarly, post-structuralism, being part of a critical tradition as well, offers a different way to understand power, and thus adult education.

Socio-cultural perspectives, rather than being critical or focusing on issues of power, could be viewed as descriptive. Generally, their focus is on describing how learning occurs in relation to and within socio-cultural practices, through the appropriation of language, rules, tools, etc. (cf. Wenger, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). Such perspectives were most commonly used in our sample. Firstly, the popularity of socio-cultural perspectives could be explained by wider tendencies within educational research, since socio-cultural perspectives on learning have taken an dominant position in terms of how to understand learning, at least in a European context (often through rather simple comparisons to 'cognitive perspectives' or 'behaviouristic perspectives' on learning) (cf. Säljö, 2013). Secondly, by looking in a cross-sectional way at our results, the dominance of socio-cultural perspectives can be related to the research contexts that are most common in these studies. Out of thirteen articles that we grouped as belonging to the socio-cultural perspective, five focused on the workplace, four on e-learning and four on a specific educational group of people. Thus, some of the top-cited articles focused on two contexts that have emerged as important in policymaking on lifelong learning during the last decade (e-learning and workplaces). Arguably, the continuing success of socio-cultural perspectives has benefited from, and contributed to, a change in emphasis from education to learning. As argued by Fejes (2006) and Nicoll and Fejes (2011), there seems to have been a shift in adult education research from lifelong education to lifelong learning – where the focus on lifelong learning account for other learning processes than those associated with educational institutions. Thus, the increasing emphasis on workplace learning within adult education seems to have resulted in well-cited articles that extend the domains in which knowledge is seen to be acquired, reflected for instance in workplaces amounting to no less than 21% of the most cited articles as compared to the 10% that focused on the transformations of entire educational systems. With the spread of research on workplace learning, socio-cultural perspectives have been able to gain or sustain momentum during the last decade (cf. Fenwick, 2010). Yet another explanation to the dominant pattern described might be that sociocultural perspectives are very generic and broad, framed within a social constructive theoretical terrain, thus making it attractive for being taken up in a range of different versions, and contexts, offering tools for many adult education researchers in the mainstream.

Authorship

In terms of authorship, the top cited contributions to the field are homogeneous with regard to the dominance of anglophone authors. There is also a majority of authors in the sample that come from an adult education department or from a department closely related to such expertise. Furthermore, established researchers have authored most of the highly cited articles. However, there is also diversity in terms of academic titles

among first authors, since both early career researchers as well as well-established researchers are represented among the sample. How can we explain such results?

The first issue regarding the anglophone dominance and inherent provincialism in the field has been illustrated by several contributions in previous research (Larsson, 2010; Taylor, 2001; Harris & Morrison, 2011), and we have in another publication (Fejes & Nylander, 2014) ourselves extensively elaborated on possible explanations. In short, the three journals included in our sample, especially AEQ and SICE, are edited by anglophone scholars, and also have a majority of anglophone scholars on the editorial boards. Furthermore, the aim and scope of the journals do not indicate that they are 'international', although one of them has the word 'International' in its title (IJLE). Thus, even though scholars in many locations, through the economy of publication and citations, are forced to publish in journals indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus (cf. Fejes & Nylander, 2014), the journals in our sample (especially AEQ and SICE) are not clearly defined as international journals, i.e. they are rather national/regional journals and thus might not encourage submissions from other locations. Furthermore, as the journals publish in English, those with English as a native tongue are at a great advantage, as non-native speakers have to reconceptualise their research in another language, as well as to another audience.

The result that most authors are located in adult education departments or departments closely related to adult education might not be considered as very surprising, as we have focused primarily on the contributions from three adult education journals that have been picked up and cited by peers. However, it might be important to stress this finding anyhow. Firstly, this result indicates that the field is rather homogeneous as for its institutional embeddedness, i.e. the majority of contributions come from within the field, rather than from altogether other departments. This might cast doubt on the claim that the field is inherently transdisciplinary or pluralistic. Secondly, the finding suggests that the most cited authors often rely on a university infrastructure in which the topic of adult education and lifelong learning has become an institutionalized research speciality. To a fairly large extent the field is dominated by scholars who are embedded in research units and departments where seminars, graduate schools and teacher training programs all point towards proficiency in adult education or lifelong learning.

There is wide representation of authors in different stages of their career among the sample, thus indicating that the top cited contributions to this field are not clearly correlated to the researchers' hierarchical position within academia. One could even speculate that the chances of attracting high number of citations are more dependent on the authors' site of enunciation rather than academic title. However, turning to those five papers that have attracted the most citations within our sample, only one of them is authored by a doctoral student (together with established authors), and all of them are authored by anglophone scholars, indicating that there might be a rather intricate correlation between site of enunciation, title and citations. Another common denominator among these five articles is that they were all published in the early phase of our study (2005-2007) which is hardly surprising as the aggregated cited half-life within education more broadly, is 8.3 years (Larsson, 2009). Thus, it takes several years before a paper can have been expected to attract a large number of citations.

One of the five papers (Taylor, 2007) stands out, with an outstanding citation frequency consisting of 81 citations (the second most cited paper has "only" 28 citations). Such a citation frequency could probably be explained by several factors. Firstly, the article is an literature review and discussion about the development of transformative learning theory, a kind of text that could be argued to increase the

chances of receiving citations. Secondly, transformative learning theory is one of the more successful theories developed within the field of adult education as such. So even if Larsson (2010) illustrates that there is a low citation relation between different adult education journals, in the case of transformative learning theory, a community has emerged *within* the field. The theory is especially common in articles published in AEQ, probably because the theory was originally developed in the US. Thirdly, the paper is published by a US scholar in the UK journal IJLE, thus providing an opportunity to offer an adult education theory developed in the US to a wider international audience. Limiting the publication on transformative learning theory to AEQ would probably only keep the debate within North America since AEQ is construed as a national/regional journal rather than an international one (Fejes & Nylander, 2014). As citation rates between adult education journals are generally low (Larsson, 2010), IJLE thus emerges as a strategic output for an overview of an adult education theory developed within the US.

Concluding notes

In sum, our findings question all too generalized statements about the field of research on adult education and learning. Statements about the dynamics of this field need to be refined and nuanced through empirical investigations such as the one we have just carried out. There is a risk that we, as adult education scholars who publish in adult education journals as well as read them, take our own set of assumptions of the field to be true. Even though such assumptions are important and inevitable, they need to be complemented with systematic empirical inquiries in order to further the discussions on what the field is and how it might develop.

The main concern that we have raised in this paper relates to the questions of *who* and *what* are allowed to enter and are worth citing in three leading academic journals. Our result partly concurs with Rubenson's (2000, p. 5) statement concerning the field before 2000, in that it suggests a 'preoccupation with abstract theory building'. One quarter of the articles in our sample was written in a form that is either purely conceptual or aimed at providing research reviews. Among the empirical contributions, many of them draw on a rather limited amount of data, often in the form of a few interviews.

Speculating further from our results, could it be that the chances of being published and well-cited increase if one is a professor, or at least co-writes with a professor, and/or is located at a university in either the US, UK, Canada or Australia, and/or conducts qualitative studies, preferably interviews, and/or uses socio-cultural perspectives, critical pedagogy or post-structuralism as theoretical perspectives? If so, it raises several questions. To what extent do the three dominating theoretical traditions and the qualitative paradigm in the field enable or hinder the emergence of new knowledge? To what extent are established networks of adult education research based on proximity and familiarity with these theoretical approaches? To what extent do relations with certain networks and/or certain scholars in the field enable or hinder entrance into these publication venues and/or affect the chances of high citation rates? These questions are important, not only in terms of reflecting upon where the field 'is', how it might develop, what is valued as worthy of citing and what might be excluded, but also for doctoral students and early career researchers in order to help them reflect on their own position in the field and on the choices they may need to make to increase their chances to enter these publication venues. Read from a more heretical point of

view, our study may also help researchers who strive to renew this research field. Arguably there is no better way to do that than to know the history and dominating relations of the field to date.

In line with our findings, a series of questions for future studies might be raised. Firstly, are there any correlations between authorship and content as we have described? For example, both our own result and previous studies (e.g. Taylor, 2001) indicate a dominance of female authorship in the field. Does this in any way correlate with the dominance of qualitative studies and approaches that take the views and narratives of people as their starting point? Are there ways to conduct adult education research critically, while still building on statistical methods? Secondly, what would our results be if we drew on data from other geographical sites and included altogether different language regimes? Would the image of the field perhaps look entirely different if we included other sources of data in our analysis, such as books and book chapters, or conference proceedings? And to what extent do field-specific assets that authors have accumulated in their previous track records of articles, books, keynotes and editorial position, affect the propensity of other adult educational scholars to cite and make reference to their work?

Notes

[1] See, for instance "A bibliometric view of Scientometrics" by Olle Persson, retrieved 2014-12-18: http://www8.umu.se/inforsk/scientometrics/
[2] A more detailed analysis focusing on the geography of authorship is available in Fejes and Nylander (2014).
[3] See Fejes and Nylander (2014) for a more elaborate discussion on the limitations of bibliometrics for adult education research.
[4] Other qualitative methods represent 16% of all articles. In this category we have sorted qualitative studies where the method does not fall under the conventional procedures such as statistical analysis, interviews or ethnographic observations. For example, in a study of recognition of prior learning within higher education, teacher voices are used to exemplify the authors' argument, but without it being clear from where these voices come from methodologically (Armsby, Costley & Garnett, 2006).
[5] For a full list of top-cited articles, see Appendix 1.

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Adult education research: exploring an increasingly fragmented map

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Abstract

Against the background of internal developments of adult education as a field of study, and new external conditions for research, this article examines how the configuration of adult education research has been evolving, particularly over the last decade. Our analysis draws on a two-pronged approach: a reading of four seminal articles written by adult education scholars who have conducted bibliometric analyses of selected adult education journals; as well as our own review of 75 articles, covering a one-year period (2012–2013), in five adult education journals that were chosen to provide a greater variety of the field of adult education in terms of their thematic orientation and geographical scope than has been the case in previous reviews. Our findings suggest that the field is facing two main challenges. First, the fragmentation of the map of the territory that was noticed at the end of the 1990s, has continued and seems to have intensified. Second, not only practitioners, but also the policy community voice their disappointment with adult education research, and we note a disconnect between academic adult education research and policy-related research. We provide a couple of speculations as to the future map of adult education as a field of study and point to the danger of shifting the research agenda away from classical adult education concerns about democracy and social rights.[1]

Keywords: adult education research; adult education journals; bibliometric analysis

Introduction: The changing context of adult education research

In this article, we will discuss the state of the map of the territory of adult education research. This work is based on a bibliometric analysis and a review of previous articles of a similar nature. Our discussion builds on Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical understanding of a scientific field (e.g., Bourdieu, 1984, 2004; Camic, 2011). Bourdieu draws attention to how scientific fields, although highly independent, are impacted by

social structure and institutional power. A review of a scientific field should therefore address a two-fold relation, the broad social world in which the field is embedded and the scientific field itself, with its own rules of functioning, of which it is a part (Bourdieu, 1984). Camic (2011) notes that understanding the production and use of knowledge within a specific scientific field requires looking not only at the field as such, but also at its relation to other fields, disciplines and groups such as practitioners and policy makers.

The social world of adult education research

The Bourdieusian perspective suggests that the evolving configuration of adult education research is directly impacted by changes to the internal structures of the field as such as well as by changes to the social context of the field, such as the social and economic role awarded to adult learning and education by the policy community. It is therefore important to note that as adult learning and education has come to the forefront of public policy, adult education research is becoming of vital interest to a broader community than the traditional group of adult education scholars (see e.g., European Commision [EC], 2011; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2003). The emergent discussions in policy circles on the relevance of adult education research is part of a broader movement, partly driven by supranational organizations like the OECD and the European Union (EU), to build a tradition of evidence-based policy making anchored in research findings. The central role afforded to the PISA and the recently launched PIAAC[2] programs should be seen as reflections of this shift. The call for policy relevant educational research is inducing countries to introduce changes to their educational research and development (R&D) system. For example in England the government has changed the balance between pure basic research and pure applied research through creating what is being labelled "use-inspired basic research" that is carried out at dedicated research centres such as the Centre for Wider Benefits of Learning (OECD & Centre for Educational Research and Innovation [CERI], 2002). The same ambition has been driving the EU's Sixth and Seventh Framework Programme research agendas. Adult education research will likely be rather unaffected by these changes as the field only has had limited success in accessing this kind of research funds. However, adult education research is increasingly being criticised by the policy community who voices its disappointment with its usefulness. This was a dominant theme in the national reports submitted by developing and developed countries in preparation for the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI). To support an adult learning and education agenda the developing countries point to the need for research to more directly support initiatives focusing on reducing poverty, addressing HIV and strengthening the role of women (Aitchison & Alidou, 2009), while the industrialized countries contend that evidence-based policy-making is influenced by research coming out of governments and supranational institutions, but not academic institutions (Keogh, 2009).

While the concern from the policy community is a new phenomenon, there has been a long-standing criticism of the limited relevance of the research enterprise for the practice of adult education. Sork and Cafarella (1989) suggested that the gap between research and practice was widening rather than shrinking. This could be an outcome of the calls during the late 1970s for the field to become more theoretically sophisticated so that it might gain more respect in the scholarly world (Rubenson, 2011). Thus, in a response to this call university departments of adult education tried to affect the institutional structure of the field by recruiting new faculty into adult education who often had less connection to the field of practice than the outgoing faculty. The merit

system for academics was increasingly focused on academic merits (articles in preferably refereed journals, acquiring research projects, etc.), while practice-related, developmental work was less honoured by the university system. The situation is not deemed to have improved since the Sork and Cafarella article (Sork & Cafarella, 1989). Rose (2011), reflecting on the *2010 Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* (Kasworm, Rose, & Ross-Gordon, 2010), of which she was one of the co-editors, notes: "Adult educators have a vibrant and impassioned calling, yet the researchers fail the field." She sees this partly as a result of the fact that researchers "have not been able to move beyond a critique of power and oppression" (p. 44). Her harsh conclusion is that "adult education has eschewed any attempt to bring its research into areas that have implications for the actual practice of the field" (p. 44).

The scientific field of adult education

Turning to the maturity and evolution of the field, Rubenson (2011) suggests that since adult education began to emerge as a field of study in the late 1920s, it has undergone three quite distinctive phases. He notes that these phases are most noticeable in the United States, which to a large extent has come to define the nature of the scholarly field, but they are also clearly discernible in Europe and to a lesser extent in some other parts of the world. The first phase starting in the 1920s was a response to the beginning professionalization of adult education. With a small but growing number of adult education programs, faculty started to focus on how to generate a body of knowledge that would help in the growth of the evolving field. In 1961, the Commission of Professors of Adult Education had two dozen members. By 1972 that number had grown to 156. While in 1963 86 adult education dissertations were reported, that number increased to 173 by 1969 (Long & Agyekum, 1974). Dickinson and Rusnell (1971) reported a strong increase of research related to adult education and scholars affiliated to university departments, and Long and Agyekum (1974) observed an "increasing sophistication in adult education research" (p. 106) between 1964 and 1973.

Guided by funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Commission of Professors of Adult Education in the US set out to define the conceptual foundations of adult education (Jensen, Liveright, & Hallenbeck, 1964). Officially titled *Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study*, this book is popularly called the "Black Book." The "Black Book" can be seen as ushering in the second phase of adult education. We can understand this development as a process by which a field of study begins to emerge as a direct response to the needs emerging in adult education as a field of practice. Seeking solutions to primarily teaching and learning issues the emerging field was closely embedded in the field of educational psychology and strongly influenced by external professional organisations. Between the release of the Black Book and the publication of its follow up, *Adult Education: Evolution and Achievements in a Developing Field of Study* (Peters & Jarvis, 1991) in 1991, the number of adult education graduate programs in the US and Europe increased rapidly, yearly scholarly conferences were initiated and research journals were launched. Thus, this gradually maturing process of the field of study reflects and is affected by internal shifts of the field, primarily with regard to its location and presence in the broader university structure and are less a result of external forces.

The 1991 review painted a very positive picture and ended on an optimistic outlook and with expectations of continuous growth and solidifying of the field of adult education over the coming 25 years. While there does not exist any comprehensive review of what has happened since the 1991 book, there are several indications that the field of study has not progressed as anticipated and that it has entered into a new phase,

the third, in its development. In North America and those parts of Europe where the field had expanded and matured during the second phase, the last two decades have not seen a continuing growth in specialized adult education departments. Instead, the trend has been to amalgamate adult education programs with other fields into larger departments or in some instances to close them down. In a Bourdieusian perspective this could be taken as an indication that the field of study has lost some of its legitimation within the university structure.

Outside North America and parts of Europe the process of developing adult education as a field of study began later. This is the case in several African and Latin American countries. In some instances, like in Brazil, there is an acceleration of programs and departments specializing in adult education (Torres, 2009). In China, the first MA program in adult education was launched at East China Normal University in 1993; a PhD program followed in 2004. The number of universities with graduate programs of adult education has increased from seven in 2003 to 23 in 2008 (Huang & Shi, 2008). In 2008, China reported to have some 100 specialized institutions for adult education research (Chinese National Commission for UNESCO & Chinese Adult Education Association, 2008). A somewhat similar development can be noted for the Republic of Korea (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology & National Institute for Lifelong Education, 2009).

It is against these external and internal developments of the field of study, and new external conditions for research, that this article examines how the configuration of adult education research has been evolving, particularly over the last decade.

Previous findings regarding the map of the territory

Numerous articles examining the scholarly field of adult education have appeared since the 1960s, employing content analyses of adult education journals (Dickinson & Rusnell, 1971; Long & Agyekum, 1974), country comparisons (Brookfield, 1982), and citation analysis (Boshier & Pickard, 1979). Some articles looked at subdisciplines such as adult basic education (Fisher & Martin, 1987) or specific aspects such as the impact of feminism on adult education (Hayes, 1992). Rubenson (1982), among other things, found that there was an overwhelming influence of psychology with the consequence that the territory of adult education research was defined primarily through assumptions of the characteristics of the learner and, thus, teaching was reduced to learning; empiricism and research methodology was emphasized in order to build a discipline of adult education; there was strong scepticism against borrowing from other disciplines and fields of study; and North American scholars dominated the landscape with little international exchange.

In a second study, revisiting the previous one, Rubenson (2000) noticed, not surprisingly, that the map was changing in accordance with the general drift of the social sciences. More specifically he noted a shift to more articles invoking a post-structural tradition with its emphasis on gender and critical race theories and a major impact of the new economic paradigm with a rapidly increasing number of articles focusing on workplace learning which resulted in a broadening of the conceptualisation of learning in adult education. He further noticed a major change in the attitude towards borrowing from other disciplines and that policy-oriented studies were less predominant in North American journals than European. The dominance of North American scholars in defining the map of the territory was seen to be less obvious than it was two decades earlier as European scholars were gaining more visibility.

Against this background it is of interest to look closer at how the configuration of adult education research might have changed over the last decade. In the next section we will present the research we have carried out in this regard.

Method, data and analysis

Our analysis of the changing characteristics of the map of adult education research is based on a two-pronged approach. We draw on a reading of four seminal articles written by adult education scholars who have conducted bibliometric analyses of selected adult education journals: Taylor (2001) (reviewing the journal *Adult Education Quarterly* [AEQ], based in the US, for the period 1989–1999); St. Clair (2011) (reviewing all 22 volumes of *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*); Fejes and Nylander (2014) (reviewing *Adult Education Quarterly*, *International Journal of Lifelong Education* [IJLE], which is based in the UK, and *Studies in Continuing Education* [SICE], coming out of Australia, for the period 2005–2012); and Larsson (2010) (reviewing two volumes – 2005 and the autumn 2008/spring 2009 volumes – of the UK-based journal *Studies in the Education of Adults*, the 2009 volume of IJLE and the 2005 volume of the AEQ). We have also considered Mulenga, Al-Harthi, and Carr-Chellman (2006), who conducted a content analysis of comparative and international adult education in SICE, IJLE, and *Convergence*. It is important to note that Taylor (2001) looked at all submissions, while the other reviews considered only the published articles. We chose these reviews because they are recent and have, with the exception of St. Clair (2011), focused on articles published in what is commonly seen as the core of scholarly journals in the field of adult education a reading of which is expected to provide an authoritative view of the status of the field. We included St. Clair's analysis of the CJSAE because of its neat focus on a country with a distinct adult education tradition and because of our own interest in this journal given that we are based in Canada. It should be noted that these journals are all housed in Anglo-Saxon countries. The journals reflect the central role scholars from these countries play, and they perpetuate their dominance over the field.

In addition to these already existing reviews, we reviewed 75 articles, covering a one year period (2012–2013) in five adult education journals: *Adult Education Quarterly* (AEQ), the *International Journal of Continuing Education & Lifelong Learning* (IJCELL), which is published out of Hong Kong, the International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE), the *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* (RELA), and the *International Review of Education* (IRE)[3]. We have chosen these journals, as they seem to cover a greater variety of the field of adult education in terms of their thematic orientation and geographical scope than has been the case in previous reviews. While the US-based AEQ and the UK-based IJLE represent core authoritative journals in the field, the ILCELL, published out of Hong Kong, reflects, more than other journals, the developments in Asian countries. The RELA is a rather new open-access journal published by the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA), which aims at providing a forum for scholars from Europe and for those whose first language is not English. The IRE, edited by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, is not exclusively an adult education journal[4] and has a stronger orientation towards developing countries.

We focus particularly on the following categories:
- Authorship
- Research focus

 • Research methodology and theoretical orientation.

We chose these three categories in relation to the two Rubenson (1982, 2000) articles and the four reviews mentioned above. For example, one finding of all four articles was the dominance of the Anglophone authorship; we needed to look at authorship in order to relate to those findings. From a Bourdieusian perspective these categories provide some suggestions regarding the maturity of the field, its relationship to other fields, the institutional configuration of the field as well as the impact of outside forces.

Findings regarding characteristics of adult education research

Despite variations between the various reviews we draw upon in terms of journals covered, time periods and categorizations, some clear trends are noticeable.

Authorship

Taylor (2001), carrying out a close analysis of all submissions to AEQ from 1989 to 1999, noted that despite a dominance of male authors there was a steadily growing submission of women who by the end of the period had overtaken men. Later reviews have confirmed this trend and point to a reversed gender gap. In the three journals covered by Fejes and Nylander (2014) for the period 2005–2011 women wrote almost two thirds of the articles and in our analysis of five journals for the period 2012–2013 women made up 55 per cent of the authors. The results reflect the growing number of female faculty in adult education. However, it might be worth noting that the gender distribution seems to have stabilized during the last decade.

Taylor (2001) reported considerable consistency in earlier periods in the dominance of single authorship in the AEQ. In contrast to the common trend in the social sciences towards co-publishing (Sethi & Panda, 2013), single authorship seems, according to our one-year review, to prevail in adult education. In the five journals slightly over half of all articles were single-authored.

Four out of five of the authors writing in these five journals were university professors, one third came from an adult education department, another third worked out of a broader education department while 20 per cent came from a non-educational, but often related discipline such as sociology, anthropology or cultural studies. One remarkable finding is that only five articles out of 75 were co-authored by PhD students (two of them identified as PhD Candidates; only in two cases the student was first author), and about ten per cent were authored by consultants or researchers not based in a university. Interestingly, none of those "non-academic" authors published in the AEQ and RELA, which may speak to the purely academic profile of those journals.

Judging by the recent reviews adult education research is increasingly being governed by a set of regional maps. As Mulenga, Al-Harthi, and Carr-Chellman (2006) and Fejes and Nylander (2014) observe, there continues to be a tendency for authors to publish articles in a journal of their home country. Taylor (2001) found that the submissions in AEQ during the 1990s originated almost exclusively from North America, and predominantly from the US, but a slight increase of articles from Western European countries could be noticed. There does not seem to have been any change as our 2012–2013 review shows that out of fifteen articles published in AEQ during that period ten were by Americans and one by a Canadian. Similarly, St. Clair (2011) noted a very strong dominance of Canadian scholars publishing in the Canadian journal. Given the pattern of "home grown publishing" it is not surprising that a vast majority of authors in the AEQ, IJLE and SICE, all hosted in Anglo Saxon countries, were from

those parts of the world (Fejes & Nylander, 2014). Similarly, Larsson (2010) and Mulenga, Al-Harthi, and Carr-Chellman (2006) point to the overwhelming dominance in the core adult education journals of scholars from the Anglo-Saxon world. An interesting finding in Larsson's review is that not only do the authors predominantly come from Australia, Canada, UK and the US but in their work they almost exclusively cite other authors from one of these countries. Moreover he notes that well over half of the references in the AEQ, the only adult education journal that is indexed by ISI, are from articles published in the AEQ, which from a Bourdieusian perspective highlights the reproduction of the dominance of Anglo-American scholars as well as of the AEQ over the field. This pattern also shows that research coming from outside universities is not being cited.

Including a partly different set of journals, we found that almost half of the authors in the five journals we analysed came from European countries and about a third from North America. Of the European authors 12 originated from the UK, only two from Eastern Europe (Bulgaria and Russia) and 11 from Scandinavian countries. Portugal was the most represented country from Mediterranean Europe with four articles. Seven authors were from Asian countries, which tend to publish for the most part in the Hong Kong-based IJCELL. Only three articles came from Australian scholars who tend to publish in their own journal, which we did not include in our review.

Looking at differences between the five journals we found that authorship in the IJCELL, the IJLE and the RELA is by majority European, with the IJCELL having a higher proportion of articles coming out of Asia, especially China. Only the IRE shows a somewhat more balanced geographical distribution of articles although with a strong dominance of authors from Europe and North America[5]. Thus, out of 15 articles, five were from Europe, five from North America, two from Africa, and one from Latin America, Australia and the Arab States respectively.

Another finding worth drawing attention to is that not only are the authors publishing in local or regional journals but the scope in the majority of the articles in the AEQ, the IJLE and the IJCELL is national. We have defined articles as national when they focus on national or local issues or when the database on which they draw was collected in the country they originate from. In accordance with Mulenga, Al-Harthi, and Carr-Chellman (2006), we found that few articles (eight out of 75) qualified as international in that the research and used data involved more than one country. Only four articles were co-authored by researchers originating from two different countries. Seven articles were supranational in scope, insofar as they addressed education strategies or initiatives driven by international organizations, such as the OECD literacy surveys. Ten articles addressed development issues, most of them published in the IRE, and one article (in the AEQ) dealt with indigenous education. These results are consistent with what was reported by Larsson (2010).

Research focus

Overall, regardless of the time period, the various authors have noted considerable consistency in terms of research focus. As suggested by Taylor (2001) the field may not be as pluralistic as we like to believe. In the AEQ 70 per cent of all submissions during the 1990s belonged to 5 of the 12 identified categories: adult learning, participation, gender/diversity, adult education as a movement, and analysis of publication patterns. One noticeable change in the AEQ was a drop in historical and conceptual articles (Taylor, 2001). This trend is being echoed by St. Clair (2011), as well as in our one-year analysis which found that only about ten percent of the papers were of theoretical or conceptual nature. All of the reviews showed a strong dominance of articles addressing

adult learning and teaching, so for example 40 per cent of all articles published in the 22 volumes of the Canadian journal addressed this topic (St. Clair, 2011). It is thus not suprising that Fejes and Nylander (2014) reported that 28 per cent of the studies were related to an educational institution setting, while about one in five addressed the workplace and around 16 per cent studied e-learning. Taylor's observation about the centrality of gender studies among North American adult education scholars is also noticed by St. Clair who found that one fifth of all articles were located in the area of feminist studies. This is a finding that may be specific to Canada, which has a strong feminist tradition in adult education. We were surprised to find only one study among the 75 using a feminist approach. Altogether, seven articles specifically addressed the learning of women, but only one of them used a feminist framework, the other four drew on bodies of literature related to the research question of the article, such as retention, literacy, development, but without taking a feminist perspective. Employing Hayes' and Smith's (1994) dominant perspectives on women in adult education publications, five articles examine "women as marginalized" and two (relating to the learning in nursing programs) "women as learners."

There was a clear dominance of articles addressing adult learning with 60 per cent of the articles in the AEQ and more than 40 per cent in the RELA dealing with learning. To our surprise, we found very few – four – articles on teaching, one each in all journals we looked at except for RELA. This may be an indication of a change from Taylor's (2001) review which had found that teaching and curriculum was among the major topics in the AEQ. With workplace learning evolving as a separate scholarly field it may not be that surprising that relatively few articles reported on work- and skills-related research. We found seven articles related to professional and continuing vocational learning. The absence of articles on online learning (we found only two articles on that topic, both in the IJCELL) was another surprise, such as the absence of papers related to literacy, with the IRE, which has a strong focus on developing countries, being the exception with five articles on that topic. Literacy seems to be an out-dated research topic and associated with development.

Another issue is the blurring between lifelong learning and adult learning and education. The IJCELL, with nine out of 15, contained the highest number of articles that self-contextualized into the broader landscape of lifelong learning. In all of the other journals, there was a more balanced proportion of articles in either of the categories, or in many cases the articles did not situate themselves in any of them. Articles covered all kinds of issues related to the learning and experiences and interactions of adults, be it in informal, non-formal and professional learning settings, including methodological research on autobiographies and life histories. Three articles were related to the learning of students in postsecondary institutions – an indication of a further blurring of what is understood as adult education.

Methodology and theoretical orientation

For the period 1989–1999 Taylor (2001) observed a sharp increase in the share of articles that employed some form of qualitative methods and a corresponding decrease in work using a quantitative methodology. This finding is echoed in all of the more recent reviews. As shown by Fejes and Nylander (2014), and according to our own review, presently adult education scholars are almost exclusively relying on qualitative methodologies, with a few using a mixed method but with a total absence of pure quantitative research. Out of 75 analyzed articles, 64 were qualitative and 11 used a mixed-method such as a survey combined with interviews.

Fejes and Nylander (2014) report that the three most common theoretical perspectives were socio-cultural (23 per cent), critical pedagogy (17.5 per cent) and post-structuralism (15.5 per cent). Looking at the disciplinary base, we classified about 40 per cent of the articles in the five journals as broadly sociological and about 33 per cent as psychological. By sociological we mean studies that look at social, organizational or institutional behaviour drawing on theories associated to the discipline of sociology such as neo-institutional theories and/or sociologists (the most frequently cited being Bourdieu with 15 citations in 75 articles) and often employing methodologies such as critical policy sociology. By psychological we mean studies looking at categories such as intentions and self-perception, meaning and experiences, employing theories of behavioural change or transformative learning. There were noticeable differences between journals with the majority of the articles in the IJLE, the RELA and the IRE being sociological, whereas the AEQ had a strong psychological orientation. Six out of 15 articles in the AEQ used transformative learning theory as a theoretical lens, making Mezirow one of the most-cited theorists in the AEQ (with seven citations), equalled by Merriam, followed by Freire (five) and Jarvis (four). Overall, Peter Jarvis is the most-cited scholar with citations in 16 of the 75 articles, followed by Paulo Freire and Pierre Bourdieu (15 each), Sharan Merriam (13) and Jack Mezirow (12).

We only found four papers among the 75 that were drawing at least partly on theorists associated with the post-structural paradigm, such as Foucault and Actor-network theory, e.g. Latour (one in the AEQ, two in RELA, and one in the IJLE). This was a surprise as Rubenson (2000) had noted an increase of poststructural research. It is difficult to say whether this is just a coincidence, given that our analysis covers only one year, or whether this may be a general trend in adult education or even in the social sciences.

The papers published in the IJCELL dealt more often with lifelong learning and generally had a stronger focus on organizational and institutional matters and a weaker theory base than in the other journals. As Mauch (1999, reporting on a conference held in 1994) observed already 20 years ago, in China and some other Asian countries like South Korea the notion of lifelong learning has been fully accepted as the new educational paradigm and articles tend to discuss the development of lifelong learning systems and policies in those countries.

Discussion

Overall the findings suggest that the scientific field of adult education finds itself in a precarious situation. This is reflected in a continuing regional fragmentation of the field, an accelerating hollowing out of the field and a seeming inability to respond to what can be labelled as a relevance deficit.

Regional fragmentation of the field

As noted, the move to develop adult education into a field of study accelerated in the US in the 1950s but by the mid-1990s it had become at least as vibrant in Europe as in North America, with special European research journals, scholarly societies and regional research conferences established. Our findings indicate that this shift has resulted in the creation of two quite distinguishable regional maps, one US or North American map and one European. While the AEQ remains the bastion of North American scholarship in adult education all the other journals are dominated by European authors, with the IRE showing a balanced presence of the two. Scholars keep

publishing in their local or regional journals without trying to engage with each other in a discussion of the regional differences. Of course this does not mean that there are no contacts between proponents of the different maps but it seems to suggest that adult education does not possess one authoritative map of its territory, a finding confirmed by Larsson (2010). We should also point out that just because of the difference in the number of countries in the regions the North American map could be seen as more cohesive than the European. However, with the increasingly central role taken by an organisation like ESREA, the contour of the European map may become more fixed.

Applying Bourdieu's understanding of scientific fields, the differences in maps should be understood in the larger context of differences in social and cultural traditions and the impact of these on research practices (Popkewitz, 1984). The US (and Canada, although to a lesser extent) with their decentralized political and economic systems and emphasis on social mobility promote a research focus on the individual. The strong focus on psychologically-oriented perspectives by American adult education researchers, as noted in the review, is in accordance with the dominant tradition in educational research in general. To use Kuhn's (1962/1996) concept of paradigm at the meta-level the tradition within adult education research is part of the dominant "Weltanschauung." As Brookfield (1982) noted already back in 1982, the North American literature draws "a clear distinction between an audience interested in research and theory, and one interested in practice" (p. 157), which is why it tends to identify practitioners, instructors and/or administrators as the usual target groups. Consequently, the process by which adult education has become a specialized field of study in North America has been linked to the professionalization of adult education. In Europe, a different "Weltanschauung" governs the research tradition. While European research has also been affected by the professionalization of adult education, it has been more influenced by the broader policy realm, as Rubenson observed in his 2000 review. Thus, the differences in topic and theoretical orientation that we observed between the publications in AEQ and RELA speak to differences in what Bourdieu has labelled the social cosmos of the field. Similarly, the articles in IJCELL suggest the beginning of a newly evolving map that emphasizes a technical-practical perspective and the promotion of adult learning as a tool to adapt to a changing economic and technological environment in the context of free market capitalism. This map reflects yet another social cosmos affecting the specific regional field of adult education in Asia.

The regionalisation of the field suggests a lack of maturity where, in Bourdieu's words, the scientific universe of the field of adult education is rather weak and as a consequence it becomes strongly influenced by the social cosmos in which it is embedded.

Hollowing out of the field

Two current processes work in tandem to weaken the field, a fragmentation of adult education research and the changes to the institutional structure of research. Returning to our observation regarding the absence of workplace- and skills-related research, which is unexpected given the dominance of the skills discourse in the policy realm (Elfert & Rubenson, 2013), this absence suggests a fragmentation of the field into subdisciplines, which have become fields of study in of themselves. The trend might be most obvious in the area of workplace learning which has started its own scholarly conferences and research journals, e.g. the *Journal of Workplace Learning*. Areas formerly associated with management and business studies are being subsumed under adult education, such as human resource development (HRD) and career development, in particular in the United States, where numerous professorships combine adult

education and HRD. Several academic journals serve the field of HRD such as the *Human Resource Development Quarterly* (HRDQ). The lists of members of the editorial board of the HRDQ as well as of the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) contains many adult educators, and the current editor of HRDQ is also on the editorial board of the Adult Education Quarterly. The overlap between adult education and HRD is noteworthy, as these constitute fields that are based on different logics. HRD has a strong focus on organizational and managerial performance and employee training. It is rooted in somewhat different theoretical foundations (Yang, 2004) and has less of a critical tradition than adult education (Fenwick, 2004). Fragmentation is also apparent in other traditional core areas of adult education like adult literacy. These subfields that struggle for their own legitimacy are challenging the field of adult education. In this context it is of interest to refer to Albert (2003) who argues that the field of sociology has fragmented into subdisciplines which all have their own standards of knowledge production and scientific legitimacy: "the various specialties and paradigms are now differentiated to such a point that researchers are little or badly acquainted both with the debates going on and the knowledge produced in other domains than their own" (p. 171).

The general restructuring of university departments into larger structures or closing down of adult education graduate programs in some countries, especially in the US but also in Australia and some European countries, further hampers the building of a field of adult education. Milton, Watkins, Spears Studdard, and Burch's (2003) study shows that adult education departments in the US undergo a changing of perspective, often reflected by name changes indicating a broader perspective of lifelong learning. Field (2005) confirms this trend for the UK, where the "coherent and bounded field of adult education is being displaced by the more open and decentred domain of lifelong learning" (p. 207). This development is in line with our finding that only one third of the authors worked out of adult education departments.

Relevance deficit

In the introduction we alluded to an increasing pressure from the policy community for "policy relevant" adult education research. However, our findings point to a disconnect between the policy discourse and academic adult education research. So for example, the outcome-based perspective that is being promoted by supranational organisations such as OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank is largely absent in the core adult education journals. The lack of statistically sophisticated empirical research in adult education further contributes to its perceived "irrelevance" to the policy community.

In our brief historical review at the beginning of the paper we suggested that the scientific field of adult education initially developed "from within" as a reaction to the needs of practice. Later in its search for legitimation within the academy the field moved away from its initial focus on practice resulting in research carried out "for the sake of research." This speaks to the relatively autonomous scientific "microcosms" of the field as represented by core journals like AEQ. It might also suggest that the field is not mature enough to handle the outside social pressures for "relevant" research.

Concluding note

It is always dangerous to speculate about the contours of the future map/s of adult education as a field of study, but we dare to provide a couple of speculations. The first is that the new subdisciplines will jeopardize the traditional field of adult education as they have more "capital" given that they are more in line with the policy discourse and therefore in a better position to obtain funding. The second is that there are no

indications that the fragmentation process will come to a halt. On the contrary, it is more likely that it will intensify. One reason is that an Asian map might start to emerge, given that adult education as a field of study is beginning to take shape in countries like China and the Republic of Korea. Our analysis of the IJCELL, which represents to some extent the developments in Asia with its specific characteristics, already points in this direction. This is by itself not a negative development but it is more likely to increase the number of maps than to contribute to the development of an integrated map. Another reason is that we might see the European map becoming even more dominant due to the institutional changes in the US that further weaken American knowledge production in adult education. The strong emphasis in the EU on the economic and social role of adult learning in combination with the stress on evidence-based policy will fuel research activities within the EU while there are fewer opportunities for this kind of research in the US. This development in European adult education research carries with it some obvious risks. Thus, while the policy-related interest in adult education research may provide some new opportunities for the development of more major research programs, something that has been lacking in the field, it also provides a danger of moving the research agenda away from classical adult education concerns about democracy and social rights and "forcing" the researchers to focus on a narrow politically-defined research agenda.

Notes

[1] An earlier and shorter version of this paper was published in Käpplinger, B. & Robak, S. (Eds.). (2014). *Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times. Studies in Pedagogy, Andragogy and Gerontagogy*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

[2] PISA stands for Programme for International Student Assessment; PIAAC for Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.

[3] As in the IRE not every article is related to adult education, we had to go back to 2011 to come to the same amount of articles as for the other journals.

[4] However, in 2013, the editor announced a shift of focus from comparative education to "adult education, non-formal education and literacy, or on formal education viewed through the lens of lifelong learning" (A message from the executive editor of International Review of Education, http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/journal/11159, para. 2).

[5] It should be noted in this regard that at the time when we wrote this paper, the IRE was the only journal among those we analyzed that published articles in more than one language (in English, French and German). However, most articles were in English. The abstracts were being published in English, French, German, Spanish and Russian. In the meantime, the IRE has changed its language policy - articles and abstracts are now being published in English and French only.

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Adult education research between field and rhizome —a bibliometrical analysis of conference programs of ESREA

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Abstract

Adult education research is frequently an own subject of research. Such research is often focused on the analysis of journals. This paper will instead analyse triennial research conferences of the European Society for the Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) between 1994 and 2013. The research was carried out mainly via a bibliometrical program analysis of conference papers. Results support previous findings in the analysis of adult education research, but a number of differences or blind spots of ESREA and adult education research in general will become visible.

Keywords: adult education research; longitudinal study; program analysis; bibliometrics; triennial research conferences of ESREA; comparative research

Theoretical-heuristic approach

Mapping adult education research

There is already a rich body of literature dealing with the international development of adult education research (e.g. Chang, 2013; Fejes & Nicoll, 2013; Fejes & Nylander, 2013, 2014; Larsson, 2010; Long, 1983; Nicoll et al., 2014; Rubenson, 1982, 2000; Rubenson & Elfert, 2014; St. Clair, 2011). It is important that fields of research define and reflect on their approaches. This is even more valid for a field like adult education research, which is nationally and internationally very heterogeneous in many respects. An analysis of articles published in journals was mostly the preferred approach by the scholars mentioned above. The work of Taylor (2001) stands out because, in his analysis of the respected journal Adult Education Quarterly, he examined not only the papers published, but also those refused. His study offers the chance to learn something about selection regimes in adult education research at least for this journal in the period analysed. Each academic field has its open or hidden rules of selection, which are often influenced by core people like journal editors and reviewers. Conference papers or proceedings have been analysed much less often (Long, 1983). This is partly astonishing since such an analysis potentially offers a wider overview, especially when

analysing conferences with rather liberal selection procedures with a low level of refusals. An analysis of peer-reviewed papers has instead to keep in mind the crucial influence of editors and reviewers. Overall, the analysis of journals or conference papers has different advantages and disadvantages. Both approaches can be considered complementary and they make a variety of insights possible.

The status and the goals of adult education as an academic field or discipline are frequently debated (e.g. Hake, 1992; Fejes & Nicoll, 2013). The use of the notion 'field' demonstrates partly the quest (Rubenson, 1982) to give adult education research a foundation. A strong academic field (like law) would be characterised by the power to enforce and to control standards autonomously in order to be as independent as possible from regulating forces from the outside (e.g. policy-makers, interest groups). Some researchers in adult education have focused on the term field as follows:

- 'We use the term 'field' of research in order to identify our object of research. A field is a socio-cultural practice which, through those actors, texts, and other kinds of material, that are part of it, makes up the field. What the field is, is a battle over truth in which we as researchers are all engaged in. Thus, the field should not be seen as fixed in any way, it rather emerges through our descriptions of it.' (Fejes & Nylander, 2013, p. 1)
- 'Bourdieu sees the social universe (the society) as an ensemble of relatively autonomous (power) fields which generate their own values and regulate themselves according to their own principles.' (Wittpoth, 2005, p. 26)[1]

Both quotations refer to power struggles inside and outside the field. It becomes obvious that authors as cartographers are not neutral, objective observers of a field. Instead, actors draw a map as an exercise, which also tells a story about the people active in the field and their own historical, cultural and socio-political position in time (cf. Garfield, 2013). Each scientific discipline has to draw lines in order to define boundaries. Educational research might sometimes be even more occupied with securing and reflecting on its identity because of its still often precarious position. It is a relatively young and volatile discipline that might be still engaged in 'curing the ills of an undisciplined discipline' (Plecas & Sork, 1986) and it has to identify 'centrifugal and centripetal forces' within the field (Gieseke et al., 1989).

The metaphor of 'rhizome' is used in social science as well as in adult education research. It was introduced as a general philosophical concept mainly by Deleuze & Guattari (1980). A number of authors in adult education research have applied the metaphor in different ways. The online journal 'Rizoma Freireano/Rhizome Freirean' states in its 2008 editorial of the first edition[2] the journal:

> The aim is to emerge the invalidated academic and official knowledge as legitimate knowledge, based on rules of multiplicity. This will lead into new thoughts, ideas, dreams and texts which allow reflecting about the world in/with people; and about what people are in/with the world.

The journal intends to create new approaches in the knowledge production about adults' learning. The multilingual approach of the journal (Catalan, English, Portuguese) beyond using solely the lingua franca English is one expression of this. Enoch & Gieseke (2011) were the first to apply the term rhizome in Germany (see also Gieseke, 2010). They see a non-hierarchical, openly developing structure of educational provision, which contains elements of extension, decay and new linkages. A German-

Polish research team has used the term in analysing and comparing the regional provision of cultural education in Germany and Poland (cf. Gieseke 2014). Usher (2010) wants the 'tree to be replaced by the rhizome, the multiply connected, inter-penetrating underground network of growth without any centre. Rhizomes are networks that cut across borders, linking preexisting gaps.' (Usher, 2010, p. 71). He is focusing on the concept of 'lines of flight', which is part of the metaphor of a 'rhizome'. In his analysis of research on lifelong learning, he comes to the conclusion that there are contradicting developments ('vectors') and 'the research process, contrary to the model of science, can be better understood as rhizomatic rather than arborescent and powered by desire rather than objectivity.' (Usher, 2010, p. 78) Additionally, St. Clair (2011, pp 37-38) used the term rhizome in analysing the Canadian adult education research association CASAE. He refers to a 'rhizomatic nature of human knowledge and human action' (St. Clair, 2011, p. 37). He focuses on differences and bipolarities in Northern America, stressing that 'a person with a different background may read these rhizomes quite differently.' (St. Clair, 2011, p. 38)

The usage of the term 'rhizome' by these different adult education researchers in different national and international contexts is very interesting. It challenges partly the notion of a field since none of the authors refers to another. Already this discourse is rhizomatic. No arborescent centre or root can be found. It seems to be rather the case that different scholars in very different contexts of adult education research were intrigued by this metaphor. This demonstrates the frequent disconnectedness of the different national fields of adult education research. Parallel to each other, the authors share the desire to look for new structures, to discuss new perspectives and to challenge popular assumptions of aborescent linearity and a canon of knowledge. In contrast, less differentiated historical writings often tend to describe the history of knowledge production as a logical succession of phases with key thinkers, schools and followers. Rhizomatisation is not meant as a process where everything turns into chaos, wilderness and becomes arbitrary. It is rather a heuristic concept for looking for different connected and unconnected traces and their temporary connections. Overall, the term rhizome heightens awareness of heterogeneity more than the term field does. The following discussion centres on the question of which insights in relation to homogeneity and heterogeneity in adult education research can be found when analysing the European Society for the Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) based on its triennial research conferences over time. The aim of the paper is to enhance partly the understanding of European research in adult education and its development in the last two decades, using the internationally rather lessknown method of a 'program analysis'.

The data analysed and the method 'program analysis'

The data analysed: papers of ESREA triennial research conferences

The data for this program analysis are available papers of ESREA triennial research conferences. ESREA is the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. Nicoll et al. (2014) did provide the first relatively comprehensive overview of the history of this academic society with its many different conferences, networks and other activities. ESREA "promotes and disseminates theoretical and empirical research on the education of adults and adult learning in Europe through research networks, conferences and publications" as stated on its homepage (www.esrea.org). ESREA thus compromises a wide range of activities (e.g. publishing the journal RELA). It organizes several conferences each year through its different networks, and every third year it organizes a large, central conference called triennial research conference. Only the latter

conferences form the basis of the current research. An analysis of all network conferences would be an even more elaborate and challenging approach, because of the high number of network conferences. ESREA triennial research conferences have taken place in different countries every three years:

Strobl (1995): 'Adult learning and social participation'
Brussels (1998): 'Learning to live in the learning society'
Lisbon (2001): 'Wider benefits of learning: understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning'
Wroclaw (2004): 'Between "old" and "new" worlds of adult learning'
Seville (2007): 'Adult Learning and the challenges of social and cultural diversity: diverse lives, cultures, learnings and literacies'
Linköping (2010): 'Adult learning in Europe – understanding diverse meanings and contexts'
Berlin (2013): 'Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times'.

As much as possible papers of these conferences will be analysed. One advantage of this is that ESREA conferences traditionally have a low rejection rate (Antunes, 2003). Thus, the analysis gives a broader insight into adult education research and goes beyond analysing solely conference titles, call for papers and keynotes (Nicoll et al., 2014, pp 34-41), which gives rather insights in the intentions of conference organizers. Journals refuse many submitted papers; editors and reviewers are important gatekeepers. (Taylor, 2001) The collection of the papers constituted a major challenge, since ESREA itself does not keep an archive of conference papers. The papers could only be collected with the help of the conference hosts and other people[3]. The papers of ESREA1995 were edited in a book (Bisovsky et al. 1998) or even a series of books. This also applies to ESREA2001 and ESREA2004 (ESREA, 2001; Bron et al. 2004). The papers of ESREA2004, ESREA2007, ESREA2010 and ESREA2013 were acquired as electronic data directly from the conference hosts. Unfortunately, data for ESREA1998 in Brussels could not be found despite extended efforts. The resulting sample consists of 364 papers from six conferences:

Table 1: ESREA conferences (year, location and number of papers)

	ESREA1995 in Strobl (Austria)	ESREA2001 in Lisbon (Portugal)	ESREA2004 in Wroclaw (Poland)	ESREA2007 in Seville (Spain)	ESREA2010 in Linköping (Sweden)	ESREA2013 in Berlin (Germany)
Number of available papers	25	27	74	48	64	126

Source: Own analysis

All data was saved or converted into Excel, Word and SPSS files for the respective analysis. Limitations of the data refer especially to the first two ESREA conferences, where papers were only available via the publication. It is likely that these and other conferences assembled more papers than are currently available. Overall, participant numbers at ESREA triennial conferences have increased significantly over time, which is a first expression of the liveliness of this field of research.

The method applied: program analysis

The data were analysed using the method of quantitative program analysis. The coding process resembles characteristics of the qualitative interpretation of documents. The method 'program analysis' refers partly to the content analysis of social sciences. It is often used in Germany in order to analyse the course offers of providers (see Gieseke, 2014; Schrader, 2014). Elaborate methodological discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of this method are available (e.g. Gieseke, 2000; Käpplinger, 2008). The method was applied here to the analysis of conference papers of ESREA triennials. A similar approach was applied by Long (1983) for the Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) in Northern America in using content analysis. A program analysis is a non-reactive method, which means that the material is analysed by a coding scientist or a coding team of scientists. Each paper was coded by a team of five people at Humboldt University[4] based on a code plan which was deductively and inductively developed. The coding was discussed by the team of coders, which helped to achieve so-called intercoder-reliability. The code plan consisted of these variables:

- **NAME**: Names of the authors. Papers with multiple authorships were multi-coded per each name.
- **COUNTRY**: The code was assigned according authors' workplace (institutional affiliation) and not according the country of birth.
- **TITLE**: Full title of paper.
- **METHOD**: Coded according a revised coding plan developed and used by Long (1983)
- **RESEARCH_FIELD**: Coded according to a plan originally developed by Arnold et al. (2000) and revised by Ludwig & Baldauf-Bergmann (2010)
- **NUMBER_CITATIONS**: Quantitative amount of citations in the reference lists.
- **GENDER_AUTHOR**: Gender of the authors.

The different variables chosen give information about a variety of important dimensions of adult education research. For example, it is important to know with which methods adult education research is carried out and which subfields of research dominate over time. Similar variables were chosen by the authors already cited who analysed journals. Other variables could of course be chosen as well. More details on exactly how the coding was undertaken/carried out will be given in the following chapters.

Results of the analysis

The role of conference sites

Triennials have taken place at seven locations so far: Strobl (Austria), Brussels (Belgium), Lisbon (Portugal), Wroclaw (Poland), Seville (Spain), Linköping (Sweden), and Berlin (Germany). Which effects are connected to these sites and to what extent are they visible? Firstly, contributions from the host country clearly flourished at the 'own' conference, being well above the average participation rate:

Table 2: ESREA conferences and the shares of authors from host countries

	1995 Strobl	2001 Lisbon	2004 Wroclaw	2007 Seville	2010 Linköping	2013 Berlin
Share of authors from the host country in relation to all authors in the conference	12%	15%	23%	14%	19%	30%
Average share of authors from the host country in all six conferences	2%	10%	6%	4%	12%	10%

Source: Own program analysis

Hosting a triennial is a chance for the national research community to present its own work to an international conference. Pragmatically, it is also an opportunity to publish internationally without substantial travelling costs. But how does the national participation develop before and after a triennial conference? It might be reasonable to assume that participating in a conference also raises participation rates afterwards. However, this assumption/this hypothesis is not generally reflected in/supported by the quantitative data:

Table 3: ESREA conferences and the share of papers from host countries before, during and after hosting a triennial

	Before hosting a Triennial	While hosting a Triennial	After hosting a Triennial
Share of **Austrian** papers in Triennials	No data, because Strobl was the first Triennial	12%	1%
Share of **Portuguese** papers in Triennials	6%	15%	10%
Share of **Polish** papers in Triennials	3%	23%	2%
Share of **Spanish** papers in Triennials	2%	14%	2%
Share of **Swedish** papers in Triennials	11%	19%	7%
Share of **German** papers in Triennials	6%	30%	No data, because Berlin was the last Triennial

Source: Own program analysis

With the exception of Portuguese contributions, no pattern exists to suggest that national participation was higher after hosting a Triennial. Rather the opposite is the case. The chance to stimulate a sustaining high participation in ESREA just by hosting a conference is rather limited. Nonetheless, it is interesting that the location of a conference mobilises some neighbouring scholars. Regional patterns of increased participation can be observed in each conference. Such patterns were observed for Austria (Slovenian scholars were attracted to a high degree), Portugal (Spanish, partly French), Poland (Czech), Spain (Portuguese, partly French), Sweden (Danish, partly Norwegian). Thus, the location of a conference makes some parts of the rhizome of adult education research briefly visible.

The role of countries and supranational/international organisations

The following map provides information about the average participation in Triennials according to country. It is measured by the average participation rate of authors from different countries in relation to the numbers of all authors contributing.

Figure 1: ESREA conferences and national participation rates
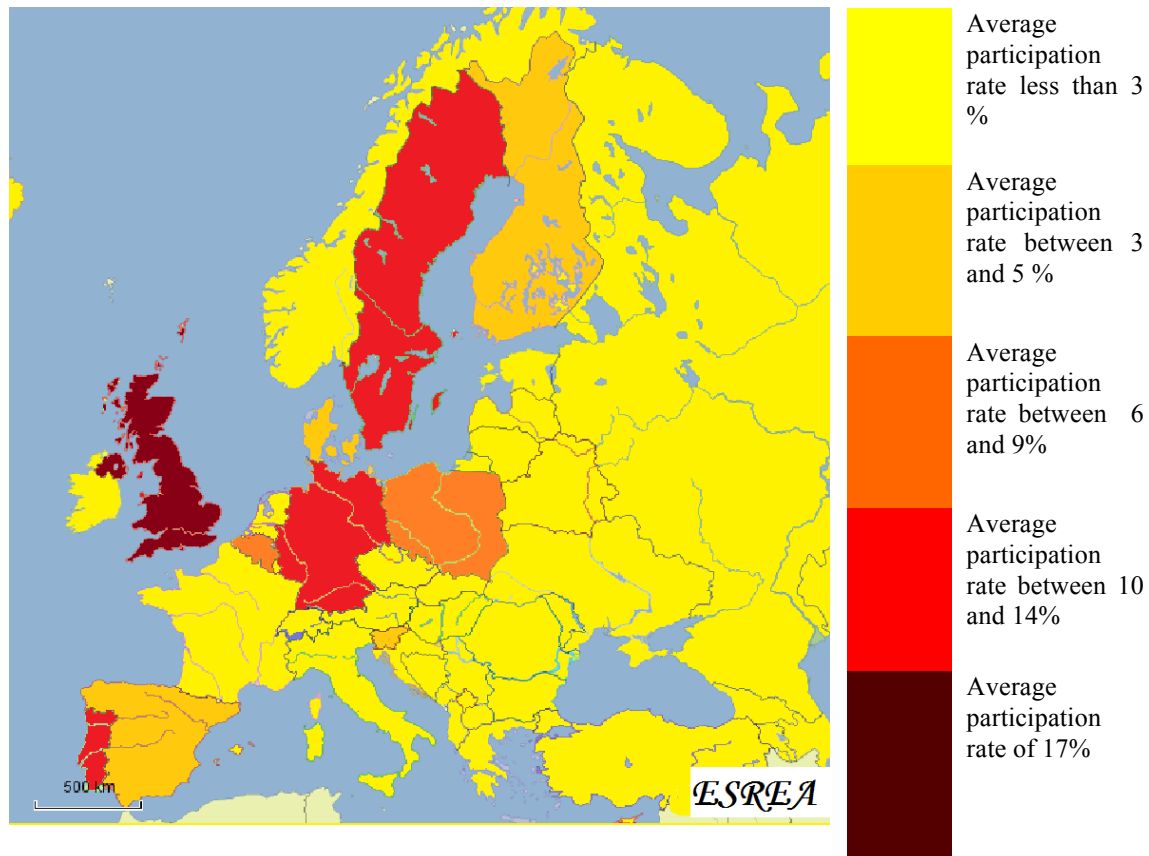
Source**:** Own program analysis

It becomes clear that ESREA is quantitatively influenced by the engagement of authors from a rather limited number of countries. ESREA is not as internationally diverse as one might expect. The size of the population of a country matters, of course, but it is not a determining factor. For example, France has a large population but a rather low engagement within ESREA so far. Russia is also a blank spot. In sharp contrast, authors from the UK are overall the most active. This is certainly partly due to the lingua franca English within ESREA. But the relative importance of the UK has significantly decreased over time, which might be explainable by the vanishing importance of adult education as an academic discipline even in the UK (Jones, 2014, pp 148-152). While authors from the UK once had an impressive share of 30% (1995) or 37% (2001) in relation to all contributions in an ESREA triennial conference, the last three conferences saw a British participation rate of only 6 to 9%. A similar observation of a decreasing engagement over time can be made for Belgian or Slovenian authors. Contrarily, shares of Portuguese and Swedish authors have increased over time. Polish and Spanish authors have been very engaged in their own national Triennial, which mainly led to their visual representation in the map. This is also partly valid for Germany, where engagement has increased quantitatively since 2010. It is likely that other countries will switch from yellow to another colour, if the next ESREA triennial is held in Estonia,

France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland or Italy, for instance. Other countries' representation on the map might diminish if the impact of being a host becomes less influential over time.

Finnish and Danish authors have also been visible at the Triennials, while many other countries have had quantitatively rather marginal roles or a limited visibility. The many underrepresented or even blank spots in Central and Eastern Europe are challenging. Adult education research in Europe is far from being established in each country, although in academia science is in general often unevenly regionally distributed. The relatively active role of Slovenia or the Czech Republic in the past and nowadays Poland (partly also Estonia, Greece or Hungary, although they are by a slim margin not visible on the map) might be an impulse to learn perhaps from these countries or some individually active scholars, how a higher engagement in Central and Eastern Europe could be supported. The European map of research in adult education has a North-South and a West-East bias, although this bias is shifting because of a higher engagement especially in Poland, Portugal, Spain or rather recently in Italy. (cf. Nicoll et al., 2014, p. 71)

More than 40 papers have been co-authored by at least one researcher from outside Europe. This equals 11% of all papers and can be interpreted as an 'internationalization' of ESREA even beyond Europe. Canada (18 papers), Australia (9) and the USA (7) are well ahead of all other non-European countries. 'Internationalization' is not as plural as one might assume. It is often highly interrelated with the English-speaking countries (cf. Fejes & Nylander, 2014).

Adult education has received increasing attention by national, international or transnational stakeholders. The slogan of lifelong learning is applied by policy-makers, which many scholars have commented on critically since the interest is often predominantly economically driven (e.g. Martin, 2000; Gieseke, 1999; Popovic, 2013; Olesen, 2014). Which effects can be observed when studying ESREA's Triennials? Figure 2 shows an increased representation of policy documents in the authors' citations[5] over time:

*Figure 2:* ESREA conferences and the citation rates of different policy documents over time
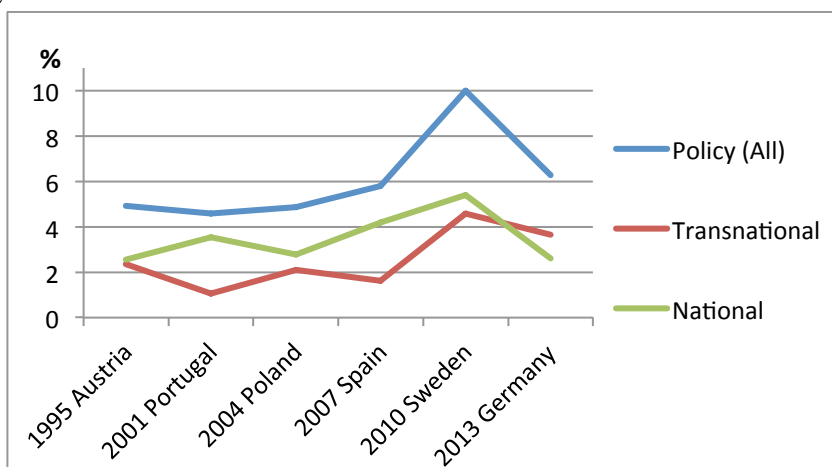
Source: Own program analysis

The share of policy-related documents rose slowly from 4.9% in 1995 to 5.8% in 2007. The climax was reached in ESREA 2010 in Sweden with 10.0%, but even 2013 saw a further rise of 6.3%. It is also interesting that transnational documents from agencies

like the EU, the OECD or the UNESCO have altogether almost doubled their relevance between 1995 and 2013. 2013 was the first year where transnational policy documents were cited more often than national documents. Adult education research refers increasingly to international or transnational developments. This development strengthens the relevance of a society like ESREA. When looking at the international and transnational actors or agencies more closely, the following developments become visible:

Figure 3: ESREA conferences and the citation rates of different policy documents over time
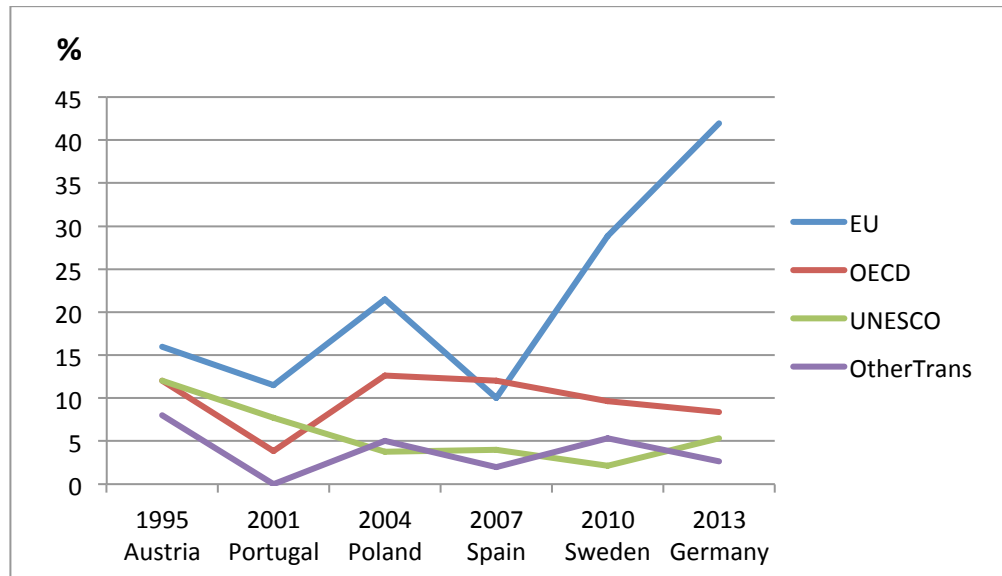
Source: Own program analysis

The EU has clearly gained ground since 2007. The role of the OECD is stagnating somehow, which is rather surprising considering OECD's high engagement in (vocational) education nowadays. This could be (partly) due to the fact that PIAAC results were not published until after the last ESREA conference in October 2013. The role of the UNESCO has clearly decreased. Nowadays, UNESCO seems to play a rather marginal role for most European adult education researchers - at least in quantitative terms and in relation to ESREA. It is also important to bear in mind that ESREA authors often cite policy documents critically. Thus, the sheer increase in citations should not be equated with an affirmative reception. It remains a task of in-depth and qualitative research in order to know better how policy documents are used in adult education research. Different lines of flight are observable. These can reach from rhetorical and rather affirmative reference to policy documents in externally funded projects, to very critical approaches in publications targeted solely at fellow scholars. Some scholars might even adapt their writings to each context like a chameleon. Nonetheless, European adult education research refers increasingly to policy documents. High shares of 59.4% in ESREA2010 and 50.0% of all papers in ESREA2013 had at least one policy related citation, while this respective share was between 22.2% and 35.4% in the other three ESREA conferences in the 21st century. This result might be influenced mainly/predominantly by the conference sites Sweden and Germany, since policy-oriented research is rather strong in both research communities. The share of policy related citations was, for example, 14.7% for Swedish authors in 2010. But this is not much above the overall average of 10% for the whole conference and thus can only

partly explain the climax in 2010. Developments in the policy-orientation of adult education research should be observed in future.

The most visible scholars

Academic societies are influenced by key persons whom are cited frequently. The following so-called tag clouds[6] serve to demonstrate the most frequent citations per conference:

Figure 4: ESREA conferences and the most cited authors

ESREA 1995

ESREA 2001

ESREA 2004

ESREA 2007

ESREA 2010

ESREA 2013

Source: Own program analysis

The tag clouds visualise and support a result of the last section. National policy documents were very frequently cited at every conference. EU policy documents have gained ground in recent years and are now as important as national documents. The OECD is also prominent, while the UNESCO is almost invisible.

When focusing on the 'big' (i.e. most cited) writers, it becomes evident that key persons such as PhD tutors or chairs, convenors or secretaries of ESREA are also very likely to be cited most often. Key scholars of ESREA like Alheit, Bron, Fejes, Hake, Larsson,

Olesen or West are just a few to mention and are quite visible within these tag clouds. North-Western and male authors dominate citations and the tag clouds. Only a few women like Bron, Merrill or Formenti are visually represented. Conversely, when looking not at the citations, but at the authors presenting at ESREA conferences, the opposite picture emerges: a female majority amongst presenters. While in 1995 female presenters in ESREA had a share of only 38%, women had shares of 62% both in Linköping (2010) and in Berlin (2013).

A dominance of English native speakers was a feature in 1995 (the often cited Taylor was Richard Taylor from the UK) and partly also in 2001. These conferences had the biggest attendance from the UK. Non-native English authors are relatively prominent and their role has been increased over the years. National patterns of the host country become clear especially in 2007, where three Spanish authors belonged to the most cited ones. A similar degree of an increased representation of national authors did not occur in other Triennials.

It is somehow surprising that authors specialised in adult education research have a relatively strong position within ESREA. They dominate many tag clouds. One might have expected that authors like Argyris, Beck, Giddens, Habermas, Lave & Wenger or Vygotsky of related scientific disciplines would have more prominence since they deliver general foundations. Somehow contradicting this—but only at first glance— might be the fact that French thinkers like Foucault and Bourdieu dominate so much despite the relative absence of French scholars as researchers within ESREA. English is the working language in ESREA, but it obviously does not lead to an unbalanced dominance of English native speakers as academic reference points. But authors have to publish extensively and prominently in English like Bourdieu and Foucault in order to be cited frequently. While in 2004 and 2013 Bourdieu was cited more often, Foucault was dominant in 2007 and 2013. Giddens achieved a brief peak in 2004.

Influences from non-European authors like Freire, Mezirow or E. Taylor are partly also visible. Other world regions in Africa, Asia or South America are quantitatively 'terra incognitas' in the adult education research map of ESREA. Such results might encourage ESREA to reflect on its participation policy, particularly since other associations like ECER offer participants from low GDP countries reduced participation fees.

The methods and the fields of research

Which methods and fields of research are frequently used by adult education researchers? Based on the revised and updated typology of Long (1983)[7] the following was identified:

Table 4: ESREA conferences and the methods applied in papers.

	1995	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013
Theoretical-philosophical	**40%**	**30%**	**23%**	**2%**	**3%**	**12%**
Literature Review	**16%**	**22%**	**10%**	**8%**	**5%**	**17%**
Historical	**0%**	**0%**	**1%**	**10%**	**6%**	**3%**
Methodological	8%	0%	4%	8%	5%	2%
Technique or Practice	0%	4%	10%	21%	8%	6%
Qualitative-empirical	12%	**26%**	**36%**	**29%**	**39%**	**31%**
Quantitative-empirical	20%	7%	10%	13%	16%	16%
Triangulative	0%	4%	7%	8%	17%	12%
Experimental and quasi-experimental	4%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%
Others	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Source: Own program analysis

The methods and approaches used have changed considerably over time. At early ESREA conferences, it was very popular to present mainly theoretical-philosophical papers. They made up 40% in relation to all papers in 1995. In contrast, empirical papers are much more popular nowadays. They are mainly focused on qualitative research (39% in 2010). Quantitative papers and papers with triangulative approaches are also frequently presented (16% and 12% respectively in 2013). Experimental and quasi-experimental papers are rather a peculiarity in adult education research, which constitutes a sharp contrast to other disciplines like psychology or economical sciences. The category 'Technique or practice' includes papers which focus on educational procedures, projects or initiatives within the practical field (c. Long, 1983, p. 95). These papers in particular are in a rigid sense not based on a clear separation between research and practice, but refer rather to the origin of adult education as a movement in which research is part of actions in practice. Such papers peaked in 2007, where the connections and interrelations between adult education and community education or social work were of pivotal interest for many researchers. Again, the 2007 conference was in many respects different from all other ESREA research conferences. Relatively popular are literature reviews (17% in 2013), while historical research papers and methodological papers were rather rarely presented.

Overall, one of the most striking results is that the empirical focus of papers has increased. When adding up all empirical papers, their share of all papers increased from 36% to 60% between 1995 and 2013. In 2010, their share of 74% was even two times higher than in 1995. The qualitative paradigm is also twice more prominent than the quantitative paradigm in empirical research. This point will be discussed later.

The learning of adults can be viewed from various perspectives. There is a triangle between learner, teacher and content and the triangle can be contextualised by institutional and organizational environments, which are part of a wider context of systems (labour market, political systems, cultural atmospheres, etc.) and policies of state agencies and other interest groups or stakeholders. Arnold et al. (2000), (see also Ludwig & Baldauf-Bergmann, 2008) refer to such a pentamerous classification when structuring the research field /the national research field. The coding of each paper based on this classification enabled this overview:

Table 5: ESREA conferences and the subject of research in papers

	1995	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013
Systems and Policies	**52%**	**48%**	19%	21%	25%	**32%**
Learning of Adults	12%	26%	**40%**	**27%**	**34%**	25%
Professional Action	8%	0%	14%	19%	8%	19%
Knowledge and Competences	20%	22%	14%	15%	9%	18%
Institutions and Organizations	8%	4%	14%	19%	23%	7%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Own program analysis

A high mobility between conferences again becomes visible. There is no trend observable suggesting that any field of research is clearly increasing or decreasing over time. The wider context of systems and policies has been very prominent in the past (see ESREA1995). After a sharp drop, it gained ground continuously after 2004. In contrast to this, educational institutions and organisations are not as prominent as learners as research objects. The content of learning (knowledge and competences) has never been a core interest for the majority of papers. Overall, learners, systems and policies have frequently been the focus of papers. The conclusion could be that adult education research often oscillates between the individual and the societal, while intermediating institutions and professions are sometimes less prominent or even neglected.

When combining both analysis of methods and of subjects, the most frequent combination in a triennial is a qualitative study on the learning of adults (13.5% of all papers). This is clearly the most popular sub form. It means mostly doing interviews with learners (Antunes, 2003, p. 72). The next frequent forms (8.8%) are theoretical-philosophical papers on systems and policies. The following configuration is a literature review (6.6%) with the same subject focus. Then follow qualitative studies on educational personal (6.1%) or on institutions/organizations (5.2%). The first quantitative combination can be found in 6th place with 5.0% and is focused on the learners. Studies on knowledge/competences and organizations/institutions have only rarely been carried out.

Discussion of results

Places matter immediately but briefly

The role of places as physical meeting points for academic discourses is not very well researched in adult education. An influence of the titles of the conferences on papers was not evidently visible despite intensive data mining. For example, the influence of six titles with 'adult learning' in the title and only one title with 'adult education' did actually not lead to a dominance of 'learning' or 'education' in the respective conferences. Perhaps the role of such terms is not as important as one might assume or conclude (cf. Fejes & Nicoll, 2013; Nicoll et al., 2014, pp 34-41). There are generally a lot of analyses on the role of journals, but the sites of academic conferences are rather

black spots in bibliometrics. Even analysis of conferences (cf. Long, 1983; Chang, 2013) do not analyse the role of the chosen locations for conferences. The analysis demonstrates that conference location seems to have only a few long-lasting effects. Nonetheless, the immediate effects in terms of participation and representation are strong. Future research could focus on the role of places for the development of academic discourses since the analysis presented here gave some insights.

The still fragmented European research rhizome of ESREA

The analysis showed that the most active countries within ESREA triennials have so far been the UK, Sweden, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Denmark, Finland, Spain and Slovenia. This result is heavily influenced by the fact that almost all of these countries have already hosted an ESREA conference. The hosting of a conference clearly results in increased participation. Many large countries like France or Italy are clearly underrepresented in the map so far. The whole area of South-East Europe is not very well represented in the map despite some interesting shifts towards the South and East (cf. Nicoll et al., 2014, pp 71).

Scholars like Rubenson & Elfert (2014) have pointed out that different maps of adult education research exist in Northern America, Europe and Asia. Even within Europe the map of research is relatively uneven or fragmented in national maps with loose connections to other national maps. European adult education research is—metaphorically—(still) reminiscent of a rhizome rather than a field. Parts of the rhizome are flourishing or diminishing over time. New connections and lines of flight are established over time. The North-South and West-East division is even within Europe an observable issue. Thus, it is very challenging to speak of a European map of adult education research, since quantitatively many scholars come from rather few countries. It still remains a challenge to involve more people from different areas in Europe and outside of Europe. A situation where previously very active countries in adult education research, like the Netherlands or the UK, 'drop from the map' has to be prevented or even reversed in future. The Netherlands—which had such a rich tradition of adult education research—are nowadays almost a blank spot for adult education research within ESREA conferences.

The international actors and policies become more influential in the field

The share of citations which refer to international agencies and to policy documents have both significantly increased over time. The peak so far was reached in 2010, where 10% of all citations referred to policy documents or official papers. Adult education research is a field of research which is closely connected to policy developments on the national or supranational level. It was not an analytical issue here if the citations refer mainly to these documents in an affirmative or critical way. Within the variety of transnational agencies the European Union is the most prominent actor, while (the) UNESCO has lost ground over time. This might raise the attention of ESREA as well as the UNESCO institute of lifelong learning. The role of the OECD is relatively stable.

In other bibliometric analyses, the focus of the supranational/international level and the role of policies was no research objective. This is a shortcoming of previous research since this subfield of research is established by now and seems to have become increasingly important. It would be interesting to observe what exactly the connection is between adult education research and these agencies? It might be the case that there is a field of adult education research constituted by ESREA and other actors, and there is a field of research on lifelong learning with other disciplines and actors. Do these sub fields exist in parallel or partially overlap? Are some researchers active (as

'chameleons') in both fields? What are the influences of these transnational and policy-driven fields on the research by core actors of ESREA? Does ESREA perhaps constitute a sub field in opposition to other sub fields? Such questions seem worthy of more detailed study in future.

Citing adult education researchers and scholars like Bourdieu and Foucault

The authors cited most often are situated within the field. This is valid despite the frequent remark that adult education research borrows theories and methods from other disciplines or that the whole field is even interdisciplinary in shape. The only conference for which this did not hold true was ESREA 1995, which might indicate a change or even an improvement over time. The most frequently cited names from the field of adult education are, for example, Alheit, Antikainen, Baert, A. Bron, J. Field, Freire, Jarvis, Larsson, Mezirow, Rubenson, Salling Olesen or West. Many of these names were also core figures in the founding and flourishing of ESREA. (cf. Nicoll et al., 2014, p. 60) Other names are much less prominent than one might expect, e.g. psychologists or system theorists like Luhmann. But Bourdieu and Foucault (occasionally also Giddens and Lave and Wenger), were very prominently cited scholars in many ESREA triennials. English is certainly the lingua franca within ESREA, but this does not seem to result in having the main line of thought coming predominantly from the Anglophone academic world, at least when non-anglophone writers publish also in English[8]. Challenging is the observation that except from Freire and Mezirow, almost all frequently cited scholars come from Europe or at least started their careers here (e.g. Rubenson). This underlines that ESREA is a European society. But it also tells us something about the few connections of parts of the rhizome of adult education research between Europe and Northern America. Connections to other continents are quantitatively almost totally missing so far or are at least less visible. The globalization of knowledge does not lead to an equally balanced interconnectedness of all parts of the world, but rather to a visibility of some parts of the rhizome. Considering the high level of global challenges, ESREA might think about appropriate measures to encourage scholars from outside Europe and so-called "Anglo-Saxon countries" (see also Fejes & Nylander, 2014).

Citation regimes are sometimes also discussed in other papers. Some scholars refer to the role of some specific research institutions like St. Clair (2011). Long (1983) demonstrated that some American universities had been most cited in the AERC conferences until the 1990s. It seems worthwhile to observe the different lines of flight of adult education research more closely in future. From a disciplinary perspective, it is encouraging that adult education researchers nowadays cite authors from within the field most frequently.

Preferred approach and method of the field: interviewing learners

Papers in triennials increasingly have an empirical focus. While theoretical-philosophical papers were relatively popular in the beginning, nowadays empirical papers make up a high proportion of papers. The most typical form is a qualitative research design like interviewing learners. Other approaches like experiments, which are popular in other social sciences, are almost non-existent. Quantitative designs have a marginal position in relation to qualitative approaches. Overall, adult education research often oscillates between the micro level of learning and policies, cultures and systems on the macro level, while the content/subject of learning and institutions/organisations on the meso level are of lesser interest for ESREA researchers.

Existing research on the nature of adult education research has frequently pointed out that qualitative research dominates clearly over quantitative research. (Rubenson & Elfert, 2014; Fejes & Nylander, 2014; St. Clair, 2011). This observation was confirmed by the data presented here. Nonetheless, it is worth looking more closely at the data. Especially Taylor's paper (2001, p. 333) has the challenging different result that when looking at the submissions of papers (and not only at the published papers) to a journal, the share of quantitative papers is very high. It is even higher than the submission volume for qualitative papers, but qualitative papers are accepted more often. Between 1989 and 1999, 265 quantitative papers and 170 qualitative papers were submitted, but 42 (24.9%) of the qualitative papers and only 33 (12.5%) of the quantitative papers were accepted by editors and reviewers. Similar results/figures are likely for the ESREA journal RELA (e.g. when looking at CfPs). It might be the case that the quantitative papers are generally of lower quality or less adequate. But it is more likely that the editors and reviewers of the journals follow a publishing policy which is more in favour of qualitative than of quantitative approaches. Thus, other scholars' analyses of only published papers and the conclusion that quantitative research is marginal in adult education research might partly be an artefact caused by powerful selection regimes. 'Artefact' means that the analysis mirrors the results of selection processes and the implicit rules of the editors, reviewers and leading scholars. It might not mirror all of the research activities within the field. The share of quantitative papers at ESREA conferences was around 16% in recent years. This is not as low as might be expected if the person knows only the bibliometric analysis of journals.

Thus, the challenging question is, which kind of mechanisms exist in the field of established adult education research, which might lead to an underrepresentation of quantitative research? Taylor's analysis of all papers submitted to Adult Education Quarterly (Taylor, 2001) and the analysis of ESREA conferences here indicate that some streams of adult education research receive more or less acceptance by the current leading scholars, reviewers and editors of main journals as gatekeepers to the 'main field'. A certain lack of methodological openness and creativity for other methods like experiments, quasi-experiments, participant observations or video studies is even more challenging. Historical studies are also rather rare. Is this justified by theoretical reasons, or is it a sign of a lack of methodological plurality beyond doing interviews? Which beneficial insights might other methods besides interviews generate like the 'program analysis' applied in this paper here? Other research supports also the interpretation that more diversity and more discussion is needed in relation to the methods applied: 'The interviewees give the impression that the research within ESREA has been methodologically on the narrow end of the spectrum with little explicit methodological discussion.' (Nicoll et al., 2014, p. 71)

Concluding remarks: research in ESREA between field and rhizome

The paper started with a brief discussion of the terms field and rhizome, which have been used in reflecting on adult education research in recent times. In general, the term field presupposes a constituted area, while the term rhizome is applied when looking for diversity and fluidity. ESREA and its research can be perceived as a field or as a rhizome when looking at the results of this analysis. Some lines of flight and trends became visible. Adult education research might be not 'as pluralistic as assumed' (Rubenson & Elfert, 2014, p. 31) since there are some established, unwritten methodological mainstreams and preferences clearly visible. Nonetheless, it has become

clear that the development of ESREA and its triennial conferences are very dynamic, diverse and complex. The rhizome is flourishing. Simultaneously, some parts are decaying. Perhaps this is even more the case for research conferences than for journals? This might justify specifically analysing the developments in conferences rather than journals. Using the metaphor and the concepts connected to rhizomes helps heuristically to search for the unknown, the less prominent over time. Key actors—people and organisations—within the field have become visible. There is mostly no simple genealogy, but rather a magnitude of ups and downs. A number of developments were different than expected (e.g. the relatively low influence of scholars cited outside adult education research).

There are of course methodological limitations connected to this analysis. The classification schemes can certainly be debated. ESREA might engage in establishing and discussing international classifications schemes or handbooks for international or even comparative adult education research. Despite the high level of internationalization nowadays, many shortfalls become visible and real comparative research in adult education research remains a challenge. The rhizome of ESREA might have to develop in this direction in order to support a new quality of research beyond national borders. Encouraging multiple authors with bi- or even tri-national backgrounds might be one way in order to encourage more comparative research.

The focus of this paper on quantitative analysis could be criticised as a loss of meaning. For example, it was the case in some papers that only one quote referred to an author in the references of a paper, but this author was a main influence for this paper. Quantitative analyses entail a loss of meaning. The process of coding involves qualitative judgements. Additional methodological critiques could be added. Nonetheless, I hope to have given some new insights in the histories and the developments of ESREA which might intensify the debate about the character of ESREA as a research association. (cf. Nicoll et al., 2014) I could only present a glimpse of possible analysis of the data. Such an analysis is of course also affected by the person who does it (cf. Garfield, 2013). I invite readers to contact me if they would like to use the data collected and to produce more (other) analyses. This could promote a better understanding of heterogeneity and homogeneity within ESREA.

Notes

[5] For each paper, all citations were counted. In a second step the number of cited policy documents – national and inter-/transnational ones - was counted. National documents meant all kind of publications which refer to national state institutions like governments, ministries, statistical offices on all federal or regional levels. Inter-/transnational documents were differentiated between various EU documents, OECD documents, UNESCO documents and a category "other documents" with miscellaneous contributions from the World Bank, International Labour Office, the Council of Europe or other agencies.
[6] The tag clouds were built and saved via the freeware program Tagxedo (www.tagxedo.com). (Therefore) the data of the citations were freed from all information other than the full last name and the initials of the first name. Some names received special treatment, because of their special spelling. Popular last names like Smith, Schmitt or Andersen were controlled in relation to the first name.

Institutions/organisations were coded in categories (NationalPolicy, EUPolicy, OECD, OtherTrans). Other organisations like national research institutes were quantitatively of no relevance. Tagxedo build the clouds based on the 50 most frequently names. Persons more often cited are written bigger than persons less often cited. The tag clouds were configured visually. The changed parameters of Tagxedo were: Emphasis: 60%, Tightness: 60%. Other parameters of the algorithm were not changed. The tag clouds can thus be reproduced, although Tagxedo allows images to be saved, but not the parameters.

[7] Intensive definitions and discussions on this classification can be found in Long (1983).

[8] It would be interesting to observe more closely what influence the 're-importing' of Bourdieu and Foucault had after their success in North America.

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Understanding unskilled work as a condition for participation in adult education and training

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Abstract

This article discusses how to comprehend why people working in unskilled jobs are less likely than other groups to position themselves as educable subjects and engage in adult education and training. The article outlines how different research traditions examining recruitment to and participation in adult education and training reveal and explain distinctive participation patterns. These traditions are critically reviewed to identify how they provide specific understandings as well as certain blind spots. The review reveals a striking absence of research into unskilled work and thus a tendency to overlook how engagement in particular kinds of work condition people's perception of adult education and training. It is finally argued that future research must pay closer attention to people's specific work-life and examine how engagement in specific historical, social and material (changing) work practices condition their perception of adult education and training.

Keywords: adult education and training; participation research; work life experience; motivation; unskilled work

Participation in adult education and training – a political issue

There is a general consensus amongst politicians and researchers that lifelong learning and training is a prerequisite for the transformation of industrial-based societies to knowledge-based ones, and for the development of competitive economies promoting both individual and societal prosperity and welfare (Field, 2006; Desjardins, 2009). The need for continuing learning is substantiated by intensified global competition, demographical and technological change, industrial transformation and new forms of organisation that increase the demand for qualified labour (Bélanger & Tuijnman, 1997). The pace of change implies that the value of knowledge and skills becomes temporary - they quickly become obsolete. Therefore qualification through education can no longer be isolated to particular life-phases, childhood and youth, rather it

becomes an on-going demand throughout life. This makes it incumbent upon all working age individuals to engage in lifelong learning, not just a minority of skilled workers or specialists, but the entire workforce (Field, 2006). This is a widespread but not absolute consensus. Some dissenting arguments exist. For example, some researchers point to underemployment (Livingstone, 2000) and question the presumption that an increased level of formal education will increase the supply of high skilled jobs (Brown, 2003). Though contested, there is an educational optimism – proclaiming education to be the locus for future welfare and prosperity – that constitutes a hegemonic consensus in both national and transnational policy documents and in most research on lifelong learning (Desjardins, 2009).

Despite the widespread consensus, that people need to engage in lifelong learning to maintain employability in the knowledge economy, there are severe inequalities in the distribution of adult education and training. Access to adult education and training is characterized by a 'Matthew-effect': people working in unskilled jobs are less likely to participate than other groups, and relatively less motivated for or more reluctant towards participation in adult education and training (Desjardins, Rubenson & Milana, 2006; Larson & Milana, 2006; Hefler, Róbert, Ringler, Sági, Rammel, Balogh & Markowitsch, 2011).

Whether knowledge societies and lifelong learning are considered a reality or a goal is subject to politics. The way lifelong learning is conceptualised and the way the challenges it has to overcome are defined constitute what become possible answers and solutions (Salling Olesen, 2002). The discourse forming the policies and the research in the field is thus not irrelevant. It defines what kind of knowledge and skills are considered valuable and who are perceived as educable subjects, just as it defines who has the responsibility to ensure the necessary learning to take place and who should bear the risk of the increased international competition.

The hegemonic discourse forming current policies on lifelong learning, both transnational and national policies, defines lifelong learning as a means to increase the employability of the labour force by investing in human capital. Studies examining the changing discourse in the policies on lifelong learning reveal that the target group – people being perceived as educable subjects – has changed over time. Today everyone is defined as educable subjects (Fejes, 2006). Moreover, lifelong learning has gone from being a right to becoming a duty (Biesta, 2006). People not participating are defined as a dual risk: they risk being marginalised in a labour market with an increased demand for formal qualifications and they become a societal liability for the development of a competitive knowledge economy. 'The mirror image of the knowledge economy discourse of hope and promise is one of exclusion, risk and fear. Those most at risk from the new (knowledge) economy are themselves constructed as the threat' (Brine, 2006, p. 657). Additionally, in order to be employable, qualifications have to be formalised. This means that everyone is obliged to engage in formal learning activities, typically in educational settings in order to obtain certificates documenting their qualifications (Kondrup, 2012).

Education has been a central policy tool to meet both economic and social objectives since the formation of the nation state. The economic importance of education has been stressed since Adam Smith but has intensified since the 1950s especially with the growth of neo-liberalism from the early 1980s (Desjardins, 2009). Focus on the importance of adult education in the 1950s and 1960s emerged at a time when welfare and the standard of living had increased after the Second World War, while the public had a growing awareness of education as a means to sustain social and economic development (Desjardins, 2009). This created a new demand for adult

education to enable a second chance for those who had not completed professional training in their youth. At this time, demand for trained labour grew out of industrialisation and implementation of new technologies. This created what Bélanger and Tuijnman named the 'silent explosion in the demand for adult education' (Bélanger & Tuijnman, 1997).

The growing demand for education led to a drastic rise in public expenditure and formed a dual challenge. The first challenge was to combine the ideal of education as a public good with the growing demand for education while keeping the increased cost publicly acceptable. This piqued interest in the societal benefits derived from education and thus for human-capital-studies:

> The rationale was largely based on the notion that increased education was an investment and that there were economic rewards to be had at the societal level. From this perspective, educational research and policy became deeply entwined around economic issues […] This logic has intensified since then, and has in general set the tone for reforms in education, and the discourse surrounding the purpose and objectives of publicly financed education. (Desjardins, 2009, p. 21)

The second challenge was to manage the resources spent on education and training to achieve political goals and ensure efficiency.

The spread of neo-liberalism since the early 1980s has intensified the relation between education and economic policy so that education today is a key tool in different welfare policies (e.g., employment and social policies). The close relation between education and economy is manifested in the discourse forming educational policies and the perception of the role of the nation state vis-à-vis education. The discourse has changed from a primarily social rationality to an economic rationality (Biesta, 2006; Rubenson, 2006; Desjardins, 2009). According to Desjardins this shift is substantiated by reduced possibilities for applying traditional macro-economic tools to regulate employment and national labour markets:

> By reducing the effectiveness of conventional policy tools, the capacity of national government to afford protection to their citizens has been substantially reduced in a liberalised context, and therefore, people are faced with increased risks. For example, because of a decoupling of local labour and global capital, combined with an increased level of technological development, people are more likely to lose their jobs. (Desjardins, 2009, p. 28)

This has altered the opportunities for national governments to regulate the national labour market, ensure full employment and thus protect the population from social and material risk. Therefore the role of the national governments has changed. Instead of ensuring full employment by regulating the demand for labour, the government's new focus is to provide opportunities for the labour force to develop and maintain employability (Brown, Hesketh &Williams, 2002). According to this logic employability becomes the means to ensure both individual and societal welfare and prosperity, and employability is produced and maintained through lifelong learning and training '…this has increased the significance of education in many regards, but the importance of a well-functioning economy for sustaining overall welfare has ensured that economic significance of education has dominated' (Desjardins, 2009, p.19).

Understanding participation – different research traditions

The widespread consensus that everyone must engage in lifelong learning and training in order to be employable has intensified the interest in examining why and how people engage in adult education and training, how participation and especially non-participation in adult education can be explained and how participation rates can be raised particularly amongst non-traditional learners (e.g., low and unskilled workers). The aim is to understand the distribution of adult education and training and explain different patterns of participation, especially why groups most at risk – people working in unskilled and low skilled jobs – tend to be least likely to participate.

In the following sections I will outline and discuss different traditions within research on recruitment to and participation in adult education and training. The presentation is mainly based on a review conducted by Rubenson (2011); though it is complemented with present, primarily European studies examining participation in adult education and training focused on low and unskilled workers, and studies examining policies on adult education and training. The intention is to examine how they contribute to and condition the understanding of participation and non-participation in adult education and training.

According to Rubenson the past 50 years of research on participation in and recruitment to adult education can be divided into 5 partly overlapping traditions (Rubenson, 2011). It is suggested that a sixth tradition can be identified and must be added to Rubenson's mapping in order to get an adequate overview of the current research field.

Based on a critical review of the six traditions, this article concludes that it is necessary to be more aware of peoples' engagement in specific work practises when examining their engagement in adult education and training. Or more specifically, in order to understand the distinctive orientations towards adult education it is necessary to examine how unskilled work embodies certain conditions for engagement in adult education and training. It is therefore necessary to refine what Rubenson defines as the fifth tradition, by examining the significance of peoples' specific work-life, and by examining how engagement in unskilled jobs gives rise to certain work-life experiences that form peoples' perceptions of need and opportunities vis-à-vis participation in different kinds of learning activities including adult education and training.

Understanding participation by examining participations patterns

The first tradition examining participation in adult education is preoccupied with who participates in different kinds of learning activities and why. This led in the 1970s to the production of national statistics on participation in adult education. Researchers in this tradition are preoccupied with comparing participants to non-participants. In this tradition's seminary work *Volunteers for Learning* by Johnstone & Rivera (1965), the authors examined how different groups described their motivation for taking part in adult education (Rubenson, 2011). They found that the expectation of being able to apply the acquired skills and knowledge in practise was the greatest incentive for participation. They also found that low skilled workers view education in primarily functional terms, which implies that it should be strictly applicable to their job:

> The average lower-class person does not perceive education in terms of personal growth
> or self-realization, and this may explain why the lower classes are much less ready to turn

to adult education for recreational purposes than they are for purposes of vocational advancement. (Johnstone & Rivera cited in Rubenson, 1975, p.113)

The studies within the first tradition are predominantly descriptive and have subsequently been criticised for lack of theoretical foundation (Rubenson, 2011).

Understanding participation by examining motives and needs

The goal of the second tradition is to examine how participants are motivated to participate in different types of adult education and how motivation can be conceptualised and measured (Rubenson, 2011). Research on motivation within the second tradition aims to examine what determines human action. Rooted in a general theory on need satisfaction, it is assumed that everyone has certain basic needs and are attracted to activities that will satisfy these needs. Therefore the decision to participate in adult education depends on whether an individual perceives it as a means to address actual needs (Doray & Arrowsmith, 1997). A central work within this tradition is Houle's theory on different motives for participation published in 1961. In his study Houle finds three different kinds of motives or orientations amongst participants: goal-orientation, activity-orientation and learning-orientation. Goal-oriented participants take part in order to reach specific personal goals and perceive education as a means to achieving something more. Activity-oriented participants ascribe value to the activity itself. They take part because they enjoy these kinds of activities and often perceive education as a means to satisfy their need for social contact. Learning-oriented participants have a general interest in learning and seek knowledge for its own sake (Rubenson, 1975; Boeren, Nicaise & Baert, 2010). The second tradition is continued by Boshier, who distinguishes between "deficiency" and "growth" motives for participation. People participating based on a deficiency motive see work and education as means to meet their primary need for security. While people with a growth motive have satisfied their primary needs and use education as means to self-realisation. Accordingly, the value people ascribe to education depends on the particular need it is meant to satisfy (Rubenson, 1975). It is a general conclusion within the second tradition that low skilled workers primarily participate in adult education because of deficiency motives, they do not ascribe education any value in itself (Hayes & Darkenwald, 1990). The second tradition has been criticised on several points. For one, it mainly focuses on people participating in education and assumes that their motives can be generalised to include non-participants (Rubenson & Xu, 1997). This implies that non-participation is interpreted as lack of motivation. The psychological motivation research is also characterised by methodological individualism reducing participation to a question of individual motivation and thus it ignores the broader societal context (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009; Hefler, 2010; Rubenson, 2011). Finally, critics have pointed out that it is not concerned with how human development during different life cycles affects people's orientation towards adult education (Hefler, 2010; Rubenson, 2011). This implies that the tradition does not take into account how participation is embedded in predefined social trajectories, where certain circumstances – both at work and in the private sphere – affect the motives for participation (Antikainen, 1998, 2006; Hodkinson, Ford, Hawthorn & Hodkinson, 2006; Lynch, 2008; Hefler, 2010).

Understanding participation by examining situated decision processes

The third tradition addresses the critique of the methodological individualism and the tendency to assume the same motives that drive participants can also apply to non-participants. The ambition is to develop more heuristic models in order to explain why somebody participates while others do not (Rubenson & Salling Olesen, 2007). Rooted in Levin's field-theory it is claimed that participation is a result of interactions between specific subjects and their context. Therefore the aim is to identify different forces affecting the decisions of participation or non-participation in adult education and training. Two significant contributions within this tradition are Cross' "Chain-response-model" and Rubenson's "Expectancy-valence-model" (Boeren et al., 2010; Hefler, 2010).

In the Chain-response-model Cross illustrates participation in adult education as a result of a cyclical decision process where psychological and environmental variables affect the decision. The first factor in the model is how a person's self-perception affects their attitudes towards education. The second decision-affecting factor is the expected gains; and the third set of factors is opportunities and barriers for participation. Cross found three kinds of barriers: "situational barriers" relating to peoples' actual life situation (e.g., economic barriers or lack of time); "Institutional barriers" relating to the organisation of the education (e.g., lack of interesting or relevant courses); and "dispositional barriers" referring to individual attitudes (e.g., insufficient self-esteem) (Cross, 1981).

In the expectancy-valence-model, Rubenson explains the degree of motivation and the force by which it affects a decision as a function of "expectancy and valence" (Rubenson, 1979; Hefler, 2010). Valence refers to the value a person ascribes to the potential result of a given action, while expectancy refers to the extent to which it is believed that a certain action will actually lead to a desired result (Rubenson, 1979). The decision to participate thus depends on the value ascribed to a given education or course in addition to expectations of whether it would be possible to accomplish it. Both valence and expectancy are situated: the value ascribed to adult education, the formulation of motives and the perception of barriers are determined by the "psychological field" constituted by the individual's specific experiences and attributes and by the actual situation.

Both models have been criticised for not directly addressing how 'the main constructs in the model [attitudes, motives and barriers] are related to, and interact with, the broader structural and cultural context' (Rubenson & Salling Olesen, 2007, p.12). They do not, to a full extent, manage to grasp the significance of participation and learning in the individual life history. The individual's subjective orientation towards participation is simplified by, for instance, defining non-participation as resistance, and they furthermore insinuate too simplistic mechanical relations between the factors determining participation (Rubenson & Salling Olesen, 2007). The models presume that the decision to participate is based on conscious reasoning and agency, thereby running the risk of overlooking how decisions, reflections and actual practices are always embedded in a complex of individual life historical experiences and a certain cultural framework forming the perception of one's self and their situation as well as both conscious and unconscious life strategies. Finally, the individual focus involves a risk of overlooking the structural factors:

> Structural factors or public policy decisions are not directly addressed but are at best treated as a vague background when explaining whether or not an individual will

participate. An understanding of how these factors might constitute barriers is commonly ignored. (Rubenson & Xu, 1997, p. 80)

A similar critique is provided by Desjardins et al. (2006) and Boeren et al. (2010).

Understanding participation by examining transnational participation patterns

The fourth tradition addresses the critique of the mainly individual approaches to understanding what determines participation. This tradition examines participation rates and aims to explain patterns and differences. It expands the focus of previous traditions with the emergence of transnational surveys and increased amount of data, which enables comparative cross-country studies and the examination of transnational patterns and differences (Desjardins et al., 2006; Rubenson & Desjardin, 2009; Boeren et al., 2010; Hefler et al., 2011). This has illuminated transnational differences and similarities (e.g., how different welfare state regimes affect participation rates and patterns). Research in this tradition reveals one's likelihood to participate in adult education and training is significantly affected by 'the long arm of the family', 'the long arm of the job' and 'the long arm of welfare state regimes' (Desjardins et al., 2006). It thus reveals that politics matters, how position in the labour market and social background is relevant, and why participation cannot be explained solely by focusing on individual motives.

Participation is interpreted as a result of bounded agency (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009, Rubenson, 2011) or a match between supply of and demand for adult education and training (Boeren et al., 2010). Both interpretations apply the expectancy-valence model in order to explain individual agency and demand for education and training. But they emphasise that individual readiness is not enough to ensure participation. On the contrary, it is necessary to 'consider broader structural conditions and targeted policy measures, and analyse the interactions between these and the individual's conceptual apparatus' (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009, p. 195). Likewise Boeren et al. conclude that it is crucial to take the national supply of adult education and training into account in order to explain cross country differences in participation rates (Boeren et al., 2010).

Both studies draw on a human-capital approach in their specific analysis and explain individual demand for education as a result of (bounded) rational cost-benefit calculations. This is not unique. Human-capital-theory is dominant in research aiming to explain demand for adult education, both when it comes to individuals and companies/employers (Rubenson & Salling Olesen, 2007). But human-capital-theory has limitations when it comes to research on recruitment and participation in adult education. It builds on an educational optimism (Paldanius, 2002) that assumes a direct relation between increased human-capital and increased productivity and mobility, further presupposing that everybody has opportunity to utilise (sell) their acquired knowledge and skills in the labour market. This is challenged by research revealing a widespread underemployment and thus questioning the assumption that investment in human capital automatically can be exchanged in the labour marked (Rainbird, 2000; Brown, 2003; Livingstone, 2000). Educational optimism tends to overlook how division of labour and ambiguous changes in the labour market form distinctive opportunities for realising human capital acquired from adult education and training. The human-capital approach also assumes that people have clear and unequivocal preferences and that they make conscious and free choices. Hereby it tends to overlook the fact that decisions are

not always conscious (Paldanius, 2002), that the situation can be ambiguous (Kondrup, 2012), and that participation in work related adult education and training are often other-determined (Stalker, 1993).

Besides examining participation rates and patterns, the transnational surveys about adult education and training have sought to gather information about motivation: how people are motivated and what hinders their participation. Cross' definition of different barriers features in the design of these surveys (e.g., Larson & Milana, 2006). The dominant approach to explain non-participation in adult education and training takes a hindrance or barrier perspective (Ahl, 2004). People are assumed to have an innate motivation to participate in adult education, which is adversely affected by certain hindrances and barriers. It thus presupposes that the question of what motivates people is meaningful to the informants, just as it assumes that motivation is an individual attribute, which can be understood and measured out of context (Ahl, 2004, 2006).

But evidence resting on survey data yields little or no knowledge of the consequences or meaning of participation in adult education and training (Field, 2006). In order to understand how people perceive the meaning of adult education and training, research needs to account for their need and possibility to participate; a qualitative approach may be applied. This is the underlying premise for the fifth tradition.

Understanding participation by examining the meaning of education

The fifth tradition examines how participation and non-participation can be understood from the perspective of different target groups. The general research interest is to explain the lack of motivation or non-participation in adult education and training, especially why many unskilled and low skilled workers have an instrumental and restrictive view of education and training.

The arguments forming this tradition hold that orientations toward adult education and training must be researched as an element in specific life-histories or biographies, where certain habitual dispositions (Paldanius, 2002; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004), cultures (Christensen, Dupont, Gale & Hansen, 1997; Larson 2004; Klindt & Sørensen, 2010), significant learning activities (Antikainen, 2006) and changing value contexts (Lynch, 2008) constitute how people perceive adult education and training. Research within this tradition reveals severe discrepancies between the dispositions, rationales, cultures and value context of low and unskilled workers on the one hand and the educational optimism forming the policies on lifelong learning on the other (Paldanius, 2002; Lynch, 2008).

The tradition can be divided into different perspectives. One focuses on the meaning of education and training in the wider context of peoples' lives. This perspective reveals that the meaning of education and training can change during the life-course as a result of significant learning experiences and in relation to significant others (Antikainen, 2005). It also reveals that peoples' lives take place in a social realm organised into different value contexts, and that peoples' choices can only be understood in relation to these shifting value-contexts (Lynch, 2008).

Another perspective focuses on culture and habitus as explanatory factors, revealing a widespread wage earner culture or life form with a certain kind of working class habitus dispositioned for stability, righteousness, devotion to duty, quiescent toward education and reluctant to change (Paldanius, 2002, Klindt & Sørensen, 2010). The significance of culture is also in focus in studies examining how psycho-social factors in workplaces determine employees' orientation towards education. It is argued

that the wage earner culture is taught by socialisation at work in relation to peer- and pressure-groups (Larson, 2004).

The interest in explaining resistance or reluctance towards education has led to empirical studies with some methodological biases. The empirical studies are mainly conducted in workplaces where adult education and training are initiated, assuming that explanations for non-participation can be located amongst the employees and generalised to the target group. And even though how workplace cultures affect workers' perception of adult education and training is examined, the significance of the specific work is not explicitly addressed (e.g., the division of labour, the content and organisation of jobs, the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills or the degree of autonomy). By omitting the specific work there is a risk of naturalising the cultures and habitual dispositions revealed in the studies and, thus, overlooking how they are formed and maintained through specific subjective and collective experiences conditioned by specific historical changes in the labour market and in work places.

The absence of empirical studies examining the relation between the changes in the local labour market, specific jobs and peoples' orientation towards adult education and training is striking. It becomes even more striking when reviewing research examining learning cultures and training strategies in companies. They tend to have a more comprehensive approach and explain the use of adult education and training as affected by both internal (cultural) and external factors (e.g., the supply of labour, the content and organisation of specific work processes and technological changes affecting the skill need) (Kock, Gill & Ellström, 2007; Riddell, Ahlgren & Weedon, 2009; Hefler, 2010). This awareness of both organisational and societal factors is in contrast to studies examining unskilled workers and their orientation towards adult education and training. A rare exception is a Swedish study examining the relation between workers' engagement in and outside work and their specific jobs. It reveals that the content of the job, the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills in the job, and opportunities for job development play a significant role in the employees' engagement in and outside work. And this is assumed to be significant for their interests in different kinds of adult education (Larsson, Alexandersson, Helmstad & Thång, 1991).

Although the previous traditions reveal a correlation between labour market position and motives for adult education as well as the significance of the long arm of the job when it comes to participation in adult education, the fifth tradition addresses only to a limited extent how engagement in work practises conditions how people perceive their need and opportunity to participate in adult education and training. Although pointing to the necessity of examining the meaning of education from the perspective of the target-group, they do not explicitly address how this perspective is not arbitrary, but situated in and conditioned by the engagement in specific work lives. They thus fail to address how unskilled work is significant to how the employees perceive the meaning of education. Furthermore they tend to overlook the ambiguities and potential conflicts in peoples' actual work situation and what this means for their perception of needs and opportunities to engage in different learning activities.

Understanding participation by examining discursive change

In addition to the five traditions outlined above, another tradition can be identified. The sixth tradition focuses on the discourses in transnational and national policies (Biesta, 2006; Fejes, 2006; Rubenson, 2006) and in the research field (Ahl, 2004) and how they define participation. This tradition is dominated by research drawing on post-

structuralist approaches and policy analysis that reveals how the discourses concerning participation in adult education and training change historically. Contributions forming the post-structuralist 'turn' in research of adult education highlights the political nature of the concept of lifelong learning and the relation between the policy discourse, research, knowledge, available subject positions, distribution of power and inclusion/exclusion. By illuminating how the concepts (e.g., adult education, lifelong learning and educable subjects) applied in research and policy change historically and determine what counts as legitimate positions and knowledge, they contribute to the field of critical research on adult education and training. They reveal how changing discourses embody changing patterns of inclusion and exclusion and how the current discourse on lifelong learning individualises the risk of exclusion while requiring that everyone take responsibility for maintaining national competitiveness by engaging in lifelong learning through recurring participation in adult education and training, thus perceiving and conducting themselves as adult educable subjects (Fejes, 2006). But even though it reveals the social construction of legitimate subject positions, this tradition does not provide an adequate answer to the question of why some people and groups are less likely than others to position themselves as 'adult educable subjects'. Moreover researchers 'have to go further than just provide critical discourse analyses. What is called for is the construction of understandings of participation that can inform a counter hegemonic struggle aimed at affecting policies on lifelong learning for all' (Rubenson & Salling Olesen, 2007, p. 1).

   In order to understand why people working in unskilled jobs seem to be less likely than others to position themselves as educable subjects it is necessary to return to the research question forming the fifth tradition. It is necessary to try to understand the meaning of adult education from the unskilled worker's perspective and examine how their perspectives are embedded in specific life histories and conditioned by experiences gleaned through their engagement in a specific historical, social and material work life. In the following paragraph I will therefore argue for a refinement of the fifth tradition by emphasising the significance of specific kinds of work and work experiences.

Understanding orientations toward adult education by examining work experiences

The claim, that everybody has to maintain employability by participating in recurrent education and training makes it crucial to understand how different kinds of work form distinctive conditions for workers to positioning themselves as educable subjects and engage in adult education and training. This can be done by examining how peoples' work life experience condition, their formation, maintenance or transformation of certain self-perceptions and orientations towards adult education and training.

   Viewing work as a central sociological category when trying to understand peoples' self-perception and orientations has been contested by late- or post-modern sociological approaches, arguing that sub-cultures or lifestyles are more appropriate categories to understand identities. But this conclusion is too hasty. In globalised capitalist society, work (waged labour) is the most common form of societal and individual production, reproduction and means of societal inclusion (Nielsen, Larsen, Salling Olesen & Weber, 1994). Work forms the context for substantial social interaction, practical involvement and learning processes (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Billett, 2006) and it influences how people develop their capacity to act both

individually and collectively as well as how they perceive themselves and their situation:

> Work is one of the essential activities in which the work capacity as well as the general capacities of the individual is produced, enhanced and developed. Each of the subjectively meaningful experiences in work comprises aspects of threat, aspects of consolidation, and aspects of learning. The identity process comprehends them all. (Salling Olesen & Weber, 2001, p. 47)

The content and organisation of a specific type of work implies specific affordances (Billett, 2006), learning environments (Jørgensen & Warring, 2002) or learning trajectories (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The character of the job has significant influence on the opportunities to participate in learning activities both in formal educational settings and in informal and non-formal learning activities on the job (Jørgensen & Warring, 2002; Illeris, 2004; Desjardins et al., 2006,). This implies that different jobs or kinds of work afford distinctive learning trajectories and contexts for the identity process (Archer, 2000; Salling Olesen & Weber, 2001). Therefore work has to re-enter the theoretical framework whilst examining how people form the perception of themselves and their needs and opportunities to engage in learning activities. It is necessary to view work not as an abstraction but as historical and material social practices where people are physically, practically and socially engaged (Archer, 2000) in jobs with certain content and organisation conditioning their performance and giving rise to specific experiences and concerns (Kondrup, 2012).

In order to understand how different groups have specific conditions for positioning themselves as educable subjects and how they engage in different learning activities it is therefore crucial to examine how peoples' self-perception and their perception of needs and opportunities to engage in adult education and training is conditioned by their engagement in specific historical, social and material (changing) work practices.

One way of grasping the relation between the engagement in specific work practices, capacity building and the formations of perceptions of one's self and the world is to apply the dialectical concept of "experience" developed in the Frankfurt school's critical theory. It is crucial to underline that the concept of "experience" differs from the everyday notion, which is captured in the concept of "immediate experience". Experience, on the contrary, is a phenomenon with three modalities, relatively independent but mediated through each other: immediate experience, life (historical) experience, and objectified experience (cultural knowledge). The subject is continuously engaged in certain practices in specific social and historical situations giving rise to certain immediate experiences. Through this engagement the subject builds consciousness and internalises a certain version of cultural knowledge (e.g., language, concepts, beliefs, techniques, and norms). Life historical and objectified experiences become predictions for the perception of immediate experiences and subjective action. Experience is thus, per se, both historical and social (Salling Olesen, 2002).

By applying this concept of experience, the question of why people in unskilled jobs are less likely than others to position themselves as educable subject becomes a question of how engagement in unskilled work gives rise to certain experiences that form peoples' perception of the meaning of adult education and training. This approach acknowledges the significance of engagement in specific work practises, with attention to ambiguous or conflicting experiences that cause (potentially) ambivalent orientations towards adult education and training.

The significance of work experiences can be examined through a life historical approach by conducting life history interviews. This can illuminate how peoples' perception of their need and opportunity to engage in adult education and training are conditioned by their life historical experiences as well as their current concerns and notions about the future. And how these experiences, concerns and ideas are not arbitrary, but formed by experiences gleaned from engagement in specific historical, social and material work practises (Kondrup, 2012).

Conclusion

Within the research field focussing on recruitment to and participation in adult education and training six traditions can be identified. They contribute with different perspectives and approaches to understanding and explaining why adults participate in different kinds of formal education or not, and how the meaning of education and training changes, both in the discourses that form education policies and in peoples' lives according to significant learning experiences or changing value contexts. They furthermore reveal that people working in unskilled jobs participate in adult education less frequently than other groups, are more reluctant to participation and generally have an instrumental orientation towards education.

Research aiming to explain this from the perspective of the target group tends to explain it by either motives or orientations formed by specific cultures, value contexts or habitual dispositions. But it tends to underestimate how these motives or orientations are produced and reproduced through a continuing experience process conditioned by people's ongoing engagement in specific historical work practices. Ignoring work as specific historical, social and material practices runs the risk of naturalising work and overlooking how both the content and organisation of jobs are results of historical social processes. Ignoring the significance of work experiences risks naturalising the habitual dispositions and cultures, making them the explanans instead of explanandums. This tends to make underlying conditions invisible (e.g., different kinds of work, the division of labour, the organisation and content of specific jobs and changes in the labour market), which are critical for how people experience needs and opportunities to participate in different kinds of learning activities and thus how they perceive the meaning of adult education and training. Finally, this review reveals a tendency to assume that people have unequivocal preferences when it comes to participation or non-participation in adult education and training. This is caused by a lack of attention to the conflicts and ambiguities in peoples' work life and to how these are internalised and generate ambivalent orientations towards adult education and training.

This article reveals a widespread tendency to underestimate the significance of peoples' engagement in specific work, and therefore ignoring how the labour market provides distinctive conditions for different groups to position themselves as educable subjects and to engage in adult education and training.

It is necessary to pay closer attention to peoples' specific work lives in order to comprehend why people working in unskilled jobs, most in risk of redundancy in a labour market characterised by increasing demands for formal qualification and re-skilling, are less likely than other groups to position themselves as educable subjects and engage in adult education and training. It is necessary because engagement in a specific work life forms specific historical, social and material conditions for peoples' experience processes, and therefore also for the formation, maintenance or transformation of orientations towards adult education and training. The relation

between engagement in work and orientations towards adult education and training can be examined by applying a dialectical concept of experience, emphasising that peoples' experiences forming their perceptions of themselves and the world are not arbitrary; they are situated in a specific (work) life history.

By applying a life historical approach based on a dialectical concept of experience, researchers within the field of work and learning, lifelong learning and participation research will be able to examine how orientations toward learning activities are situated in and conditioned by engagement in specific historical work practises. Thus new insight into how engagement in unskilled work provides certain (and maybe relatively poor) conditions for positioning one's self as an educable subject and engage in adult education and training can be achieved.

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Core activities and career pathways of independent trainers-consultants in France

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Abstract

This paper presents some of the key findings from a 2013 survey achieved with a representative sample of 101 independent trainers-consultants, members of a French trade union. These results highlight more particularly their socio-demographic characteristics, their core activities and four main career pathways identified. This survey was part of a two years action research, conducted in a partnership between this professional trade union and university laboratories in the field of adult education. The aim was to improve the understanding of this specific professional group, of its on-going professionalization process and its visibility as one of the actors of the continuing education and vocational training (CVET) system in France.

Keywords: independent trainer-consultant; career-paths; professionalization; continuing education and vocational training

Introduction

Vocational education and training (VET) has gained greater importance on the European and national social and political agendas over the last years. Considering the demographic and economic challenges, the needs for a sufficient and highly qualified labour are leading to major issues concerning the teachers and the trainers. While the growing importance of lifelong learning entails changes in the form and process of learning and impact on trainers' role, their practices, their identities and their training are still under-researched, compared to the detailed knowledge developed at european level and national level for vocational teachers (Cort, Hartkönen & Volmari, 2004).

According to the investigation achieved in the research project *Professionalisation of VET teachers for the future* (PROFF), coordinated by TTnet[1] Denmark and TTnet Finland, many countries are or shall soon be seeing shortages of VET trainers**.**

Previous studies have shown that training of trainer provision is inconsistent (Brown, 1997). Quality and competences of trainers in continuing vocational education and training (CVET) and adult learning are considered as a condition for ensuring high quality workplace training, as one of the strategic objectives of European cooperation in CVET (Council of the European Union; European Commission, 2010). Among the diversity of CVET trainers' profiles, the independent trainers or self-employed trainers represent a professional group little known.

An analysis of continuing education and training by the DARES, shows that individual trainers (formateurs individuels) account in 2011 for approximately 13493 of the 58668 training providers on the French market, that is to say 23%. Several events, such as the crisis of 2008 and the current one, have since altered the environment of their activities, and led to question their place, and for some of them, their survival (Delort & Lê, 2012). Based on the observation of both weak visibility and limited recognition by institutional and economic actors, one of the two trade unions representing about 200 independent trainers-consultants in France launched a call for partnership in 2011 to conduct a research with the aim to explore the professional identity of their members and the long-term evolution of their activities.

The first part of this article starts with an insight into the continuing vocational education and training (CVET) system in France, the occupation of trainers and the trade-union movement representing independent trainers-consultants. This is then followed in the second part by the participatory action research methodology after reviewing the research question. In the third part, the survey results concerning some socio-demographic characteristics, the core activities and the career paths identified for the 101 respondents will be presented, before pointing out in the conclusion three lines of tension to consider in the on-going professionalization process of this occupational group.

Independent trainers-consultants in the French context of CVET

Lifelong learning is a national obligation according to the French policy of vocational education and training (VET). It includes initial vocational training and continuing vocational education and training (formation professionnelle continue). CVET is in France the area of training for the persons who have left initial education and training (formation initiale). It is intended for people, already part of the workforce or entering in working life, to help them remain in employment, develop skills, acquire levels of qualification, find or return to work.

They can access training in different ways, with regard to their individual status (employees, job seekers) and their age (under 26, 26-45, over 45). CVET depends on various partners, such as the state, the regions, firms and social partners. Collective bargaining plays an important role in this system to develop and implement two categories of training: training for people in work, in the private and public sectors as well as self-employed people; training for job seekers.

Already in the 1960's the development of continuing education has been considered as a priority in facilitating the transition of the traditional labour force into new industries. The French law, dated 16th July 1971, introduced the principle of the right to continuing training, with an obligation for firms to fund continuing training and

the right to training during working hours. Since then CVET has been considered an independent area of labour law. This principle of private financing of training activities created a market for continuing vocational training.

Since 2000, major reforms have been undertaken (Law of social modernisation January 2002, Law of liberties and local responsibilities August 2014, Law of Lifelong guidance and training 2009) to adapt the French CVET system facing the pressure of global economic changes. Various measures are also implemented in consultation with the public employment services, the territorial level, local authorities (regions, departments), employers, and social partners.

To anticipate skill needs, the state implements a variety of devices. Among them, the contracts prospective studies (contrats d'études prospectives) are intended to allow the state and the social partners to establish a joint diagnosis of a sector and possible actions. Regional observatories for job and training (Observatoires régionaux emploi-formation) collect data on employment and training for a prospective analysis of qualifications in each region. Since 2003 each branch has also to set up a prospective observatory for occupations and qualifications (Observatoire prospectif des métiers et des qualifications). These observatories provide prospective monitoring in the evolution of occupations at national, regional, European and international level trying to anticipate transformations, emergence and disappearance of jobs.

In recent years many initiatives were taken to introduce quality criteria for the VET system. At national level, the Outline Financial Legislation Act (LOLF) of 1 August 2001, introduced culture of results and making public action more effective. In addition, the Research, Surveys and Statistics Development Department (DARES) of the Ministry of Employment, the Evaluation, Forecasting and Performance Department (DEPP) of the Ministries of Education and of Higher Education and Research, and the Centre for qualifications Studies and Research (CEREQ) all compile statistics and conduct studies to assess the effectiveness of the policies implemented.

At regional level, the regional councils, which are now in charge of apprenticeships and vocational training for young people and adults, have adopted 'quality charters'. These documents are co-signed by vocational bodies representing particular sectors, or by training organizations that enter into contractual agreements with the region. At training provider level, a number of quality labels were introduced in France in the early 1990s, with a view to certifying the quality of training organizations and trainers.

Continuing vocational training providers (organismes de formation)
To provide CVET and use the funding devoted for it through a mix of corporate contributions and public financing, training organisations need to fulfil a formality of registration with the Government administration responsible (DIRECTE). According to key figures on continuous education and training by the DARES, there are of 58 668 training providers on the French market, with a total turnover of 13.1 billion euros, for 23.8 million people trained. Only 18 101 of these providers offer training as their main activity (Delort & Lê, 2012).

Individual trainers represent approximately 23% of the total number of providers, 3% of the total turnover and 7% of the public trained. The training providers can be distinguished in two main categories: Public and semi-public bodies; private training bodies. The first category includes three types of bodies: the establishment reporting to the Ministry of Education such as the GRETA and the National Centre for Distance Learning (CNED); bodies covered by other ministries, such as Ministry of Agriculture for agricultural training centres, bodies run by the regions, such as the National Adult Vocational Training Association (AFPA), through the final transfer of responsibility of

January 2009. Non-profit making associations, private profit-making enterprises and self-employed trainers, compose the second category of private training bodies. All of these bodies can offer and deliver training services to people in work, self-employed, job seekers and other individuals requiring continuing vocational training.

The occupation of trainers in France
Various types of trainers correspond to the various dimensions of the French VET and CVET systems. Their recruitment, training and career paths differ according to their activity. The terminology teacher versus trainer can be clarified as follows (Centre Info 2004). In initial vocational education and training, the teacher operates in the formal education system - the school (schools, colleges) and universities- regardless of the level of education. The apprenticeship master is the employee responsible for training the young apprentice in the company. CVET in its complexity represents a multiplicity of actors whose training is not always the main activity. The access to functions and training professions is much more flexible than initial training. The trainer is a professional engaged in the activities of continuing vocational training within the enterprise or outside, and generally in private training markets. More specifically, it is a pedagogue who pursues his/her activity with and for adults. Other actors are involved in the training process: consultant, training manager in a training centre or company, in-company tutor.

The status of trainers is not regulated. There is no national legislation governing the status of trainer or other actors of the training. Most trainers are working on private-law contracts. They are chosen for their qualifications, competencies and professional experiences related to a specific area. Initially, the adult education and training was intended to be different from the traditional school model, with more flexible training contents than in initial education and training that could be tailor made at the request of the 'client'. For this reason, the trainer must often design and adapt the training content according to the needs of his/her public. The trainer occupation is a relatively new one, whose emergence was favored by the law of 1971. This occupation is multiform with regard to the various statuses that it covers: full-time employees, part-time employees, individual contractors, freelance in a hosting company (portage salarial), or independent with liberal status.

Levels of training of trainers are various, ranging from French baccalaureate plus 2 years of studies (level III) to doctorate. Their work consists mainly of three types of activities: training development (designing, conducting, evaluating training schemes); animation of face-to-face training sessions; accompanying adults in training. The third activity tends to develop in a role of methodological support, due to distance training schemes. Other actors of CVET fill very diverse functions, such as the coordination between the training centre and the company (coordinators), the administrative and financial training management (training managers), the vocational guidance and counselling (counsellors), the management consulting in company (consultants).

Pottier (2005) analysed three critical moments by showing the development of trainer figures in France in narrow correspondence with institutional and legislative developments. Although the practices of adult education already existed in the nineteenth century, especially in some working-class education movements, it is at the end of the Second World War, that the question of adult education and training quickly became a central issue and training for trainers a condition of economic and social development. Their profile was either that of occasional trainers, managers trained to teach in their company, following the model of 'On-the-Job Training' coming from the United States or that of one of working-class education activists, trained in different

techniques to teach in various situational sites. From 1983 to 2000, the number of people working in the adult training sector was multiplied by four, under the effect of the founding law of 16 July 1971. The consultant figure appeared at that time in the adult training sector in connection with the transition to the lifelong learning paradigm. The trainers as an occupational group present three main characteristics:

- **A composite identity,** difficult to frame, reflecting the heterogeneity of the professional training system, realities of work and employment conditions, variety and instability of the work profiles as well as weak regulation of activity until then in CVET system. If the work of Fritsch (1971) identifies early indicators of professionalization of trainers, that of Gravé (2002) led him to distinguish several types of trainers[2] and to conclude the 'un-decidable' nature of the identity of trainers, while noting the absence of a sense of belonging to a recognized profession.

- **The identification of divisions,** on the one hand between the world of public education policies that work for the integration of job-seekers and the development-oriented skills training in large enterprises. On the other hand, a second division occurs between trainers-consultants who respond to requests for problem analysis and training design, manifesting, according to Lescure (2009), a positive identity and other trainers involved in general public schemes related to employment policies. It has also been observed that in the world of management consultancy, where a form of symbolic prestige is crucial in relationships with customers, the title of 'consultant' is more appreciated as a 'better sell' than 'trainer' with regard to clients such as executives and managers.

- **A plurality of professional positions,** between on one hand the senior, the mid-career, junior, highlighted by Hoareau (2009). The seniors constitute an active minority with a strong professional identity, imposing their practices. They master their client list, choices of collaborators and claim an 'artisanal' know-how. The mid-career trainers are trying to expand their clientele outside subcontracting and in innovative sectors of training development, while the juniors are adopting new practices of subcontracting with private organizations. On the other hand, Ardouin's research work (2007) shed light on a variety of statutes and positions in relation to the type and distribution of training and consultancy.

The representation of independent trainers-consultants in trade-union movement
To understand the history of the representation of independent trainers-consultants in a trade union movement between 1990 and 2010, a limited qualitative survey was additionally conducted from May to June 2013, with the contribution of Alain Delahousse, senior consultant in Human Resources. This survey targeted the founders[3] of the present trade-union partner in the research. The four semi-structured interviews achieved were seeking to explore the circumstances of the founding of the trade union movement, its evolution over time and reflections for the present and the future. The data gathered provide insight into certain periods in the history of the dynamics of this movement, while leaving many blind spots. Accordingly, the results produced are to be considered as provisional, being based on restricted items, which do not provide at this stage the expected principle of scientific reliability.

The construction of the professionalization of the independent trainers-consultants appears as a continuous and recurrent concern since the creation around 1980 of a pioneering union in the representation of trainers, without any differentiation of status (salaried or independent). In 2000, a schism took place, giving birth to two other labour unions, in addition to this initial organisation. These two new labour unions represented independent trainers and consultants in two distinct regions in France. In 2011, these two professional labour unions merged, to form the present labour union, initiating the call for partnership in research.

In the French union landscape[4], there exist since this merger, two labour unions of independent trainers and consultants, each claiming to have about 200 members and seeming to be in competition. Setting up training workshops for trainers and summer universities appears as a constant thread in the actions undertaken in view of professionalization. These initiatives are present since the beginning of the first trade union movement. This trend seemed particularly pronounced in the late 1990s, with the creation of a specific training programme and a certification as 'trainer-consultant'. Nevertheless its impact remains unknown and unexplored.

If the interest in professionalization is still very present in the union partner's communication, it seems more connected to an affiliation with AFNOR[5](X50FP commission) and to the designation of Independent Consultant-Trainer. This strategic choice to base the professionalization on frameworks aiming at the standardization of training processes calls into question the intention expressed in numerous speeches from the trade union for differentiation of their members in terms of added value. The marker of this differentiation would be the production of tailor-made services that requires more needs analysis prior to the training conception than a standardized and normalized response. The lack of reference to professional training cycles and activities[6] developed since the 1970s for adult trainers in France, is another salient point, which questions the existence of high-level knowledge and know-how, as hypothetical attributes of a profession.

The finding of a wide variety of education and training types as well as levels among the quantitative survey respondents does not constitute a solid enough foundation to support this point and discern what specificity, what basic knowledge to emphasise. Concerning the debate focused on whether independent trainer-consultant can be considered as a profession like professions in law, in accounting, or medicine, the approach of Freidson will allow some answers in the conclusion of this article. According to Freidson (2001), most work is controlled through a combination of three logics: the professional logic, the bureaucratic logic, and the market logic. The professional logic is a way of controlling the work by rules and standards defined by the professionals themselves. The bureaucratic logic concerns rules defined by the state or by organizations and the market logic refers to all power in the hands of consumers. To constitute a profession, the members of an occupation must have autonomy in their everyday practice and control their own work, through several means (Freidson 2001): a knowledge monopoly, a clear division of labour, strong professional education and research, ethical rules and standards, an ideology by asserting commitment to quality of work rather than to economic gain. Some other structural attributes based on the work of Wilensky (1964) can be added:

- A profession is a full time occupation
- A profession has established a training school that may be affiliated with established universities

- It has formed a professional association, which clarifies professional tasks and seeks to eliminate practitioners that do not meet professional standards
- It has a code of ethics for regulation within the profession as well as between professional and clients.

Participatory action research methodology

In this part, after a recall of the research question, the general framework for our participatory research action will be presented and a critical reflection on some sources of adaptation and variations in the research process.

Research question

The title of the participatory action research called 'Independent Trainer-consultant in 2021' places it in both a logic of cartography for the trade union and its members and in a prospective logic. Members of the trade union were interested in exploring the possibility of building the professionalization of independent trainers-consultants, taking into account the pre-supposed diversity of their profiles and activity systems. The central research question to address was formulated as such:

- Is it possible to build the profession of independent trainer-consultant?
- A complementary question was: On what can this construction be based?

With regard to the research question, the concept of 'professionalization' needs to be clarified.This concept remains difficult to approach because of numerous and various definitions, as the work of Roche (1999) and Agulhon (2001) shows. A first axis of our research work has focused on clarifying this concept, which appeared essential in order to enable trade union members to understand its meaning, with the aim of its appropriation.

The sociology of professions in France developed later than in the United States, leading to recent interest in the field of managers and liberal professions, particularly by Gadéa (2009) and also Dubar and Tripier (1998/2009). Wittorski (2007), in a synthesis of many works, distinguishes three meanings from the observation of social uses of the word that were used for the research.

The first meaning carried by social groups is 'professionalization-profession' in a sense of '**manufacturing a profession**' and a '**professional group**'. The second meaning carried by education and training organizations is the '**professionalization-formation**' in a sense of '**manufacturing a professional**', that is the development of skills of individuals by articulating training and work situations. The third meaning carried by public or private enterprises, government departments under the influence of New Public Management (NPM[7]) is linked with the generalisation of the word skill, from 1970-1980, in the sense of '**professionalization-effectiveness of work**', that is to say, the search for 'flexibilization' of people, the development of approaches by occupational frameworks (Pesqueux 2006). Based on these approaches, the central research question was further operationalized with four sub-questions:

- Can training consultants become an autonomous and recognized professional group?
- What can be said about their work?

- How do they learn their activities?
- How can training and consulting activities be better organized and delivered?

Framework for the multi-year participatory action research

Largely based on Paulo Freire (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, participatory action research has found extension through many others work (e.g. Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Hall, 1994). Initially used to empower oppressed groups in Third World countries, it has a wider use in developed countries. The participatory process itself aims at raising the consciousness of participants so that they may feel empowered to become research partners. This participatory action-research articulated two phases, over a period of two years, with a budgetary allocation of 5000 € per year for the universities partners. The first phase took place from September 2011 to June 2012 and the second phase from September 2012 to November 2013.

A third phase was initially considered to compare the research findings at the European level, but did not occur due to several sources of adaptation and differences, which will be discussed below.The research method was designed to be participatory on four levels: the research team, the focus groups, the trade union members and the steering committee. In phase one, a research team was constituted in a partnership approach by three researchers from universities and three volunteer members of the trade union among which two were also having research activities and experience. The first stage combined a literature review, a workshop and an exploratory investigation. The workshop, carried out with eight people, five union members and three researchers, has developed a tool to feed analysis activities and identities during an exploratory survey, achieved with seven semi-structured interviews (volunteer independent trainers-consultants) and one pre-online survey on the website of the trade-union, based on one single question: *If you had to present your activity as an independent trainer-consultant to someone who wants to do so, what would you say?* It allows gathering thirteen responses out of 200 members.

At the end of the phase one, the hypotheses of low visibility of the independent trainers-consultants, members of the trade union and of professional identities in tension were confirmed. A correspondence between the variety of independent trainers-consultants and the three characteristics of the occupational group of trainers explained before was confirmed. At the end of the first stage, the objectives of the second stage were specified, by refocusing on the analysis of the activity:

- What do independent trainers-consultants do and how?
- How are activities distributed over different segments?
- What professional knowledge is mobilised? What ethical conceptions are implied?

This methodological choice was validated at the reporting steering committee of phase one, with the representatives of the trade union office, and then presented by three members of the action research team during the General Assembly of the trade union in 2012. On the methodological level, the second phase mainly concerned two workshops; a focus group with trade union members (8) on the entry into the profession and on activities; a focus group with representatives of the trade union office (7) on possible orientations in professional development; and two inquiries: a qualitative one into the historical dimension of the union, limited to volunteer founders (four semi-structured interviews); a quantitative one based on an online questionnaire. The research team proposed this last action after the cancellation by the board of directors of the trade

union of a research seminar envisaged with members in one of the partner universities. The presentation of the questionnaire to twenty volunteer members (2 groups in two regions) led to a focus on the analysis of activities and professional skills (56), in a framework both diagnostic and prospective, integrating socio-demographic dimensions and a perception of the current and future situation. One hundred and one past fully informed online questionnaires were processed by simple sorting, cross-sorting and multidimensional analyses.

Sources of adaptation and variation in the research process
The adaptation to the field is analysed hereafter, as well as some sources of variation in the research process, at two levels: the work program and the implication of the actors involved.

Adapting to the research field

By the review of the first phase of research, the fragility of the interfaces with the board of directors and the regional delegations, the weak mobilization of the members and the interferences with other actions launched by the trade union were pointed as obstacles in the participatory research process. In an attempt to overcome these obstacles, the research team proposed a work seminar 'Action Research' organized in one of the partner universities end November 2012. The idea was to have a time for exchange and debate with the trade union members to verify the relevance of the work done in the first phase and to initiate the work for the second phase by bringing out unifying themes and stimulating professionalization in the medium term. This proposal was not adopted in particular because of its proximity with another scheduled event in early November 2012 of the trade union. The idea was then adapted by the research team under the format of study days in late January to generate a collective dimension required for the action research process, to launch the quantitative survey and conduct interviews with volunteer members of the trade union. The project was not validated by the board of directors, the research team had to adapt and re-examine its work schedule by including as an alternative two regional meetings in the form of a workshop, carried out with a weak mobilization (total of 20 participants).

A delay in the completion of the second phase

An overall delay of four months occurs between the initial and the achieved schedule. It can be explained by the adjustments mentioned above: back-and-forth movements in the decision making process about the validation of the survey, a processing time of survey results lasting longer than initially planned, a period of hesitation and confusion in September with an uncertainty on the continuation of the second phase until its conclusion. This delay was generating tensions, which weighed on the action-research process, on its rhythm, on a progressive appropriation of the results produced by the members and on their valorisation.

A degree of variable involvement depending on the actors

Busy schedules for all actors and the tensions generated by the adaptations and the delay had also an impact on the involvement of the partners in this participatory action research. An action-research is also a meeting between cultures and the issues of the actors involved. This learning dynamic needs mutual trust and time to develop. In a constrained environment, the collective dimension has struggled to emerge. The

learning dynamics was all the more reduced which limited the deployment of the action research process.

Core work and career pathways Identified

In this third part, some survey results are presented, starting with socio-demographic characteristics of the 101 respondents and followed by the core activities and the career paths identified.

Socio-demographic characteristics

- An equivalent distribution among men (48%) and women (52%)
- A rather old population in the work world: 52.5 years on average (less than 50 years: 38%; from 50 to 55 years: 27%; more than 55 years: 35%)
- A great seniority and professional experience, a professional origin in the field of CVET for half of the respondents, and a relatively recent activity in the consulting activity and the status of independent

Age/ years of experience	Statistical distribution (101 respondents)
Age	- Under the age of 50: 38%; from 50 to 55 years: 27%; over 55 years: 35%
Experience in the field of CVET	- Under 15 years: 50%; over 15 years: 47%
Experience in consulting activity	- Under 10 years: 60%; over 10 years: 30%; No answer: 9%
Experience as independent	- Under 10 years: 60%; over 10 years: 36%

- About 40% with a status of independent as liberal profession, 30% with business legal status (Limited Liability Company, EURL), 13% auto-entrepreneur and 11% manager of service company or umbrella company (portage salarial).
- An unequal geographical distribution: establishment on 14 regions out of 22. Main concentration on the regions Ile de France, Loire and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur.
- A continuous investment in training for a third of the respondents with diplomas mainly distributed across the levels of French baccalaureate plus 3 to 5 years studies.
- Three main training fields: Management - Communication – Sales.
- Training public mainly composed of executives & managers, company employees.
- A volume of activity equivalent to less than 90 days per year for two thirds of the respondents and more than 91 days for one third.

A core of work in training activities
A predominance of training activities over all others was brought to light, with a statistically substantial over-representation of the independent trainers-consultants (ITC), who devote more than 60% of their time to it. The results concerning the design

and marketing activities are very close: about one ITC out of five devotes more than 30% of his/her time to it.

With regard to the time devoted to the consultancy activities, about one ITC out of six devotes more than 30% to it. Finally, time devoted to development and continuous education and training represents less than 30% for 72% of the respondents. The average of time devoted to the five core activities allows the following 'ideal-typical' representation.
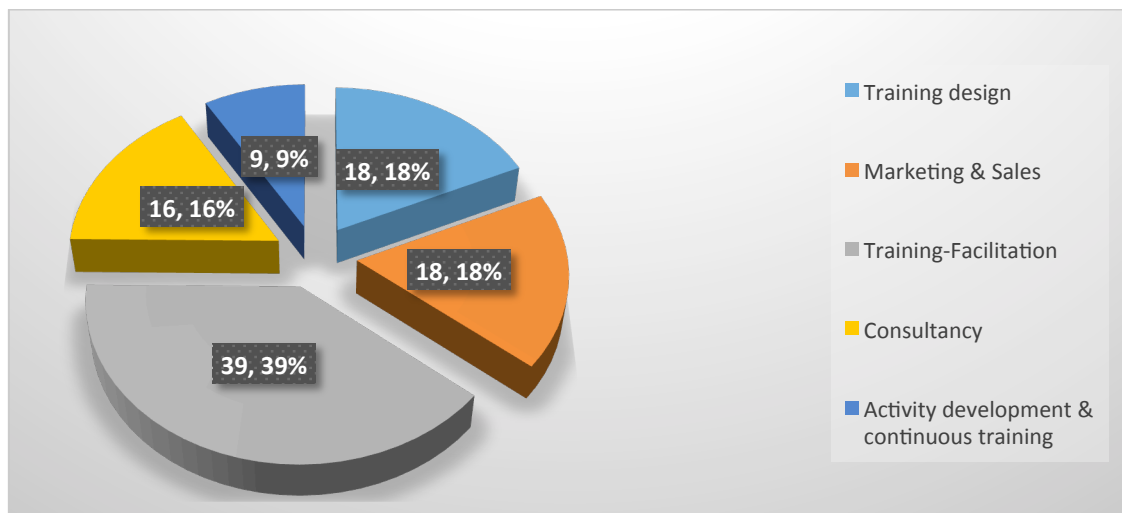

Figure 2: Representation of average time devoted to the different activities in %

Based on these data, it is possible to identify that the 'core of work' consists of the activity of training (about 40 % time devoted), to which functions of design and consultancy are aggregated (for about the same time), as well as an important part of marketing and administration activities (about 18 %). The 'development of own activity and continuous education and training' part remains the most limited, or perhaps the most constrained.

However, a more attentive examination of the items of this activity segment highlights two observations: Ensuring monitoring and training (items 1, 3, 4, 6) is shared by the majority of respondents (63% to 85%). The production of writings for dissemination and facilitation of networks once again divides the inquiry sample. In addition, certain sections of activity appear as marginal, such as activities related to answering call for tenders, marketing activities (little or not at all effected for 42% of respondents), administrative and management activities (70% not much or not at all).

A variable level of mastery depending on the competencies
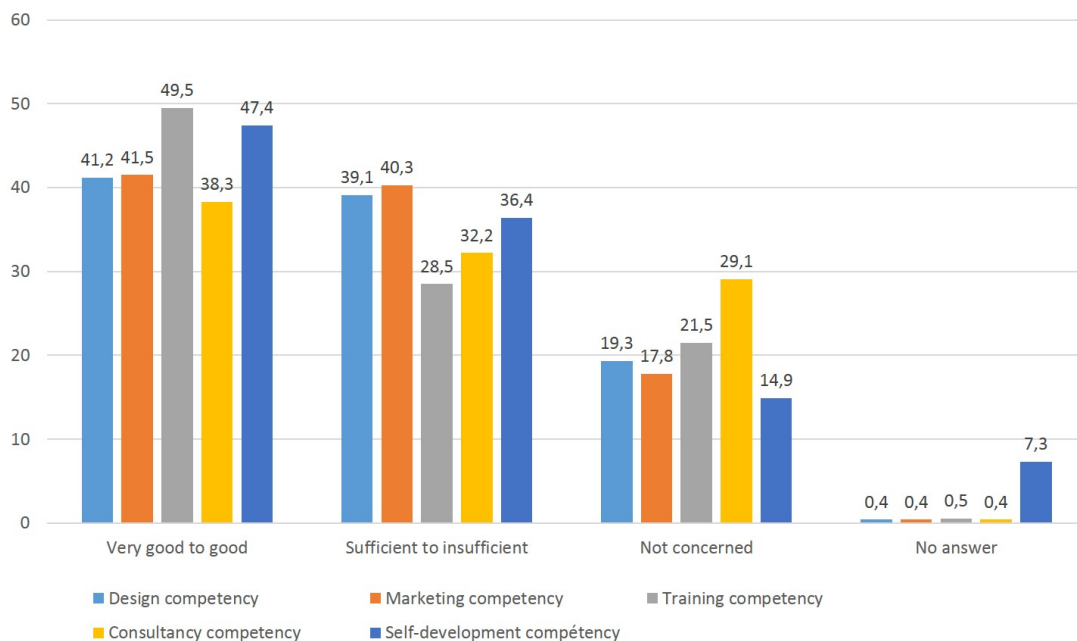
Figure 3: Self-evaluation of mastery level by respondents

In sum, whatever the competencies segment may be, the level of mastery is considered to be from 'very good to good' for 38 to 50 % respondents, with the highest percentage for the core 'Training' competencies. These competencies concern the knowledge of tools and pedagogical methods, the conception of pedagogic tools adapted to various market segments, the development of pedagogical programs. It should be noted that nearly one third of the respondents declares itself not concerned by the core 'Consultancy' competencies, which notably includes the accompaniment of a salaried person to define and implement a professional project, and identifying the required skills for it.

A contrasting perception of the utility of these skills for the conduct of one's activities
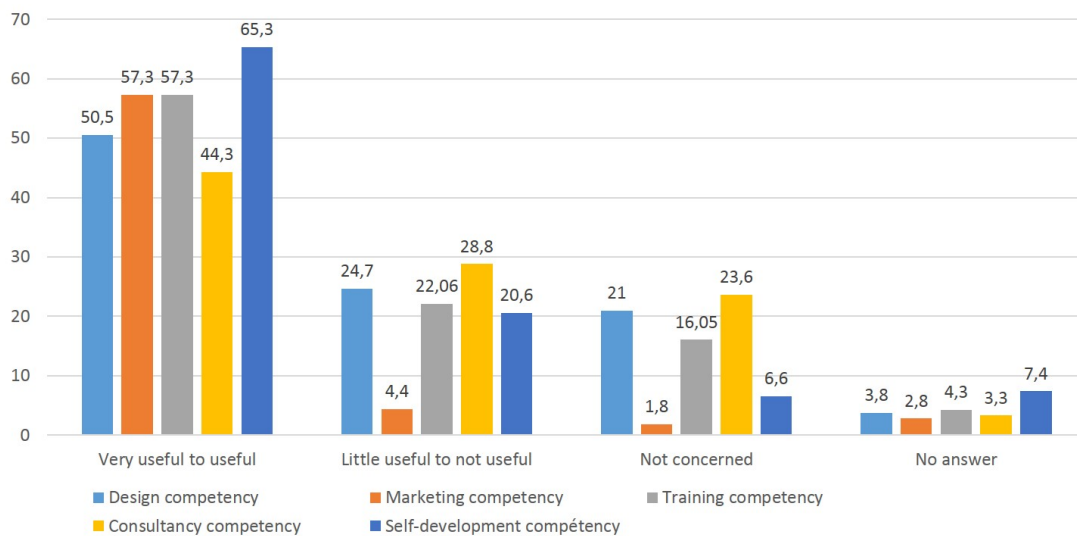

Figure 4: Self-evaluation of utility degree of each core competency by the respondents

The degree of utility of these competencies for professional life is considered for 40 % at 66 % of respondents 'to be very useful to useful'. The presence of training needs, inferred from crossing these two evaluations, is more sensitive for commercial and training design competencies than for the segment of competencies in training facilitating and in consultancy. Finally, a strong concern for the development of activity and own continuous education and training is noticed.

The identification of four 'typical career pathways'
The analysis of career pathways was conducted by crossing data gathered through open questions on the main highlights of the professional pathway that led to their current activities. As part of the first phase of the action research, three types of career pathways were identified through interviews and focus groups: 'by chance but intentional', as a 'break-through' and in a 'generational' order.

The analysis of verbatim as 'typical career pathway' (in the sense of 'ideal type' of Max Weber) is not a description of reality but a forced categorization that seeks to achieve some understanding of this reality. These 'typical career paths' allow actors in that field to examine their own situation and career pathway. Additional data collected in phase 2, led to enumerate four 'career paths' as representative elements to understand trajectory or state (illustrative quotes).

- **A natural pathway**, which takes form in time as a continuity. A priori it concerns to the older members of the profession who refer to the 'generational' dimension where entry into the profession appears to have been recorded in a conflict or a rupture but as a kind of 'evidence', in an environment when entry was easier than nowadays (training development, growth, recognition and need

for external expertise). This 'natural' dimension is based on a high education and training level, a network and credibility in the field or intervention. It seems that the independent trainers-consultants appear less in a system of 'hard proof' but more in a legitimacy built 'along the way' than resulting from a struggle. *Desire to share my knowledge, my discoveries, tools and methods to develop the potential and the individual and collective resources (q137).*

- **A career pathway in a sector that I identify with.** The field or specialty of activity identifies the ITC. This dimension refers to an expertise level (degree, experience, training, technical, sector) and/or a position in a methodological 'niche' (skills assessment, skills development). *At the end of 25 years wage-earning activity in a multinational firm (marketing and marketing function), I decided to create my own society specialised in consultancy and training (2010) (q134).*

- **A *why not me?* career pathway,** refers to a choice due to an external failure (unemployment, mobility, return to France), difficulties and recommendations to overcome them. *After a period of unemployment and difficulties in reintegration into a company in my area, I decided (on the advice of a consultant) on the profession. First I built a training organization and have been independent since (2000)' (q104).*

- **A career pathway constructed at a biographical stage** with a more positive view of the constraints or breaks and a feeling or desire for freedom. *At 45, I told myself that all parameters were met to try my luck and start my own activity (q28).*

Conclusion

The results of our survey show that the independent trainers-consultants, members of the trade union partner of the action-research, cannot be yet regarded as a profession. The trade union movement of independent trainers-consultants has been developing from the 1980s in a dynamic of social confrontation, i.e. in disputes with other professionals and labour groups for recognition among policy makers and institutional and economic actors in a field that is in strong evolution in France and more generally in Europe. It has resulted in much tension throughout its development between continuity and rupture. Three lines of tension appear to us particularly useful to underline, in order to stimulate reflection and to guide action in the sense of a consistent development of the professionalization of the independent trainers-consultants.

The first line of tension concerns the difficulty in identifying a 'core occupation' from which essential high-level knowledge could be analysed and promoted. This difficulty results partly from the disparity of activities and of positioning, and partly from strategic choices by the labour union to increase the number of members. It appeared difficult to count precisely the membership and its evolution in the history of this union. The use of unstable terms shows an approach generally defined by marketing actions, segmenting between members, members up to date with membership payment, sympathizers, and prospects. This raises several questions with regard to representativeness and to sustainability of a labour union for an occupation widely unknown to the general public in France. Is a more limited membership (representative of specific high-level knowledge) better or a large number of indeterminate members? How can a new generation of trainer-consultants be developed and integrated, taking

into account the current average age of the respondents (52 years) and their entry in this job in the context of a second career? Moreover, the 'core occupation' that emerges from the results of the action-research is in line with a preponderance of the 'Training' activity, revealing a dissonance with that of 'Consultancy', which is asserted more in the communication strategy of the labour union.

The second line of tension occurs at the level of professional ethics, strongly insisted on in discourses. In difficult economic times, the risk with regard to the 'concern for the other', constituting the act of educating and training, is to focus on the 'concern for client needs' in a business sense in a market in rapid concentration, abandoning the 'concern for adult learners'. Ethical questioning means asking questions concerning oneself as a trainer-consultant, but also and especially relating to the other and the effects of training and consultancy practices and values on his/her future. The issue here at the level of the labour union is the distinction to be made between thinking in terms of 'code of conduct' in the sense of rules to be applied and thinking in terms of an ethics charter, that is to say, values, responsibility that construct meaning.

Finally the third line of tension is between three entangled levels: that of individual strategies of the respondents (competition, cooperation, networking, qualification through training) to cope with a certain isolation and pressures felt in their activities; that of the recognition of the independent trainers-consultants as a professional group, based on the added value they bring to the market of adult professional training; and that of the institutional recognition of a labour union as a social actor that tries to participate in decisions concerning its members' social concerns. These three levels need to be distinguished, to examine the role of the labour union and the nature of its actions, and to build a sustainable professionalization for independent trainers-consultants, in a participative and democratic process.

Notes

[1] The TTnet network was established by Cedefop in 1998 as a pan-European forum for key players and decision-makers involved in the training and professional development of vocational teachers and trainers. In agreement with the European Commission, TTnet was discontinued in 2011 and its activities were taken over by the thematic working group on professional development of trainers in VET.

[2] He identifies various types of trainers: 'The insertion trainers', 'trainers-facilitators', 'technical trainer', and 'training advisors working in companies'.

[3] Of a list of a dozen individuals, communicated by the partner labour union, four accepted to participate.

[4] Report on the labour union situation in the training sector in France. Eight unions have been listed, of which six in the branch of training companies, two unions (Employers), one for work-training organizations, the other for training organizations of the social economy and two for independent trainer-consultants.

[5] AFNOR is an international services delivery network that revolves around 4 core competency areas: standardization, certification, industry press, and training.

[6] To name a few: those of Bertrand Schwarz, Gerard Malglaive, the University Centre of Economic and Social Cooperation (CUCES) training centre trainers CNAM (C2F), the agency for the development of lifelong learning (ADEP).

[7] The 'New Public Management' refers to the project to infuse entrepreneurship in the state apparatus by introducing market principles of the market in its operation. This project has its roots in Britain in the 1980s. It combines three principles of action -socio-economic effectiveness, quality of service and efficiency, by focusing on programming, coordination, evaluation, implementation of indicators for activity, budget and financial management.

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Social gravities[1] and artistic training paths: the artistic vocation viewed through the prism of the concept of temporal form of causality

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Abstract

This contribution is based on a previous research dedicated to the life paths of art school graduates whose empirical data consisted of 13 autobiographical interviews. It cuts these paths into biographical periods and attempts to throw light on the relationships they have between each other. This contribution starts from an observation: in spite of candidates being admitted to an art school and obtaining the same degree, their artistic vocations take several different directions and are highly polarized in terms of social origins. This article brings out this dichotomy through the concept of temporal form of causality. It highlights biographical logics that determine the achievement of the artistic project by articulating archaeological and procedural analysis of the biographies, and it points out a certain number of social gravities that find their origin in the social space and that become significant over the life paths.

Keywords: Biographical research; vocation; identity; life paths; temporal form of causality

Introduction

> *There is a rumor of time which is both sublime music of the spheres and ticking of a time bomb.*
>
> (d'Ormesson, 1998, p.33)

Our work is situated within the field of biographical research in education (Dominicé 1990; Delory-Momberger, 2005; Field, Merrill & West, 2012; Horsdal, 2011). This contribution is based on a previous research dedicated to art school graduate's life paths (Pita Castro, 2013). That initial study aimed at bringing out the processes involved in

becoming an artist. Three steps structured this study: (i) *reconstructing the pathways of young art school graduates by using narrative resources,* (ii) *analyzing these pathways in order to* (iii) *understand some identities.*

This contribution starts from an observation: in spite of being admitted to an art school and obtaining the same degree, the artistic vocation takes several directions for different graduate students. Some identities are marked by suffering, non-recognition and failure, while others are characterized by euphoria, recognition and success of the initial project. Some narratives mingle with the sublime music of the spheres, while others seem to be accompanied by the ticking of a time bomb. This paper questions the biographical logics that put a strain on artistic vocations. It attempts to bring to light the gravities that hinder the achievement of the artistic project and that impact the identities.

The link between life narratives and identity is central in the study on which our contribution is based. It finds its origins in the work of Ricoeur (1990), which is related to the relationships between life stories and identity. For this author, the answer to the question *who am I*? traverses the narrative and suggests to interpreta life as a story. The life story 'redeploys' an identity, which, through the transposition into words, finds an opportunity to assert and to recognize itself (Ricoeur, 2004). It helps us to seize identity as a process and as a product by dialectising 'idem-identity' and 'ipse-identity', thereby moving beyond the classical aporia of identity. Life stories make it possible to access the construction of an identity by linking it to biographical dimensions.

The works of Dubar (2006, 2007, 2010, 2013 in collaboration with Paiva) and of Demazière & Dubar (2007) have also been decisive for the elaboration of this research. The authors deal with identity through a sociological and nominalist approach. This general perspective is valuable inasmuch as it anchors self-narrative, according to the nice formula of Ricoeur (1990), in power and legitimacy relationships that configure the social space. What it emphasizes 'is not the psychological and cultural personality (in the sense of 'basic personality') [but] the symbolic – and most of all language – form in which [people] tell about themselves, argue and express themselves' (Demazière & Dubar, 2007, p. 304). It postulates that 'analysing the "worlds" mentally built [by people] from their social experience [set up a mediation to rebuild] typical identities in a specific social field' (Dubar & Paiva, 2013, p. 99). The concept of 'field' is significant here. It invites us to take seriously the existence of a set of tensions that handle identities according to forms of interaction but also to 'biographical logics'.

The work of de Coninck & Godard (1990), from a sociological perspective, have shown that any attempt to account for life courses assumes that, 'a minima', the links between events and actions are taken into consideration. Biographical research may [indeed] not evacuate 'the question of chronological sequences [...] except for purely and simply being diluted and merged in an exploration of systems of representations, which is not shameful, but is something else' (p. 30). The authors invite us to pay attention to the modes of 'sociological construction of the biographical temporalities and [to] the causality forms that arise from them' (p. 26). It is for this reason that they forge the concept of temporal form of causality. In order to highlight 'biographical logics' that shape the artistic vocation, this contribution has recourse to this concept. It distinguishes, implements and articulates two sub-categories, the 'archaeological form' and the 'procedural form'.

Emblematic courses

The pathways of art school graduates embody and exacerbate a tension between an aspiration for self-realization that configures identities since the advent of modernity and the structural and cultural uncertainty, which is specific to a modernity that can be described as "advanced".

Vocation and self-realization

The works of Schlanger (1997) propose an archeology of the concept of vocation and enable us to grasp the part of originality inherent in this notion in the modern universe. In modernity, vocation is inseparable from a rehabilitation of the personal desire, from a democratic ethos, from a valorisation of the activity and from secularization.

In modernity, the answer to the question 'what will I do with my life?' lies primarily in 'the privacy of the inner-self' (Schlanger, 1997, p. 10). It involves (and requires) that we first look at the inside before looking outwards, while engaging in an activity with which one identifies and which therefore fosters self-realization. It is this 'subjective moment' (ibid.) that helps us to identify the aspirations which life is entrusted with. Modern vocation refers to dimensions that are linked to the person and that characterize him. It is related to expressivism (Taylor, 1998), a particular form of individuation, which increased at the turn of the seventies (Martuccelli, 2002), in which the dimensions that make up the originality of people is supposed to have an impact on the way they build their lives and fulfil themselves.

Modern vocation is associated with a certain utopia: it claims that happiness lies in productive activity where desire and disposition are intertwined and it audaciously bets that happiness will one day be the fate of all. This utopia and this bet, however, fail to address the conditions that are necessary for the democratization of the particular form of individuation that it proposes.

An open vocation

Lives devoted to art have become since the advent of modernity 'an extreme and highly valued type of individual existence' (Schlanger, 1997, p. 13). The artistic professions offer an 'approximate housing' (Schlanger, 1997) to the individual who seeks his way in the world. This vagueness is part of their power of attraction. They allow themselves to be configured by whoever invests in them. They just indicate a way of being and an activity. 'Instead of ready-made positions that involve set beforehand tasks obliging people to be adjusted with' (Sapiro, 2007, p. 5), these professions are primarily 'positions to do' (ibid.), to build and to develop by whoever is dedicated to them.

Regarding this aspect they differ from highly organized and hetero-determined professions. They step back from the application of rules, standardization, imitation and conformity. They give priority to singularity and personal distinction.

Empirical investigations show that the number of art schools students has increased. Art studies became accessible to everyone. Today, everyone can identify with art, aspire to become one day an artist, expect to confirm the belief in their personal identity (Dubar, 2007), incarnate this identity in the world and be socially recognized (Honneth, 2000). However, inequalities persist, determinisms keep acting, even though the idea that 'one was born as an artist' prevails in a vocational meaning (Heinich, 2005). Beyond this representation, we must consider that 'one becomes an artist' and that 'biographical logics' and socially configured inequalities occur within this process.

Uncertain careers

Building a career in the art is an uncertain project. Social objectification of the artistic value is done through a series of competitions (Menger, 2010) and this value is therefore revealed retrospectively. It is due to the lack of absolute criteria for determining the artistic value beforehand (Heinich, 2005).

An excess of human resources is essential for the proper functioning of this sector, and it has an impact on the careers and destinies of the artists or those who aspire to become one. Aesthetic innovation is achieved at the price of 'a growing inequality between those who make a benefit from their reputation [...] and those who are used as an extra strength' (Menger, 2010, p. 66).

Investment in artistic activity is most likely not to lead to success. In the arts, inequalities are considerable, all of them being (and this is the paradox) 'under the painless and exciting appearance of a ring of stars' (Menger, 2002, p. 35) where 'the most amazing apology of inter-individual competition' (ibid.) takes place.

The artistic vocation is certainly an opportunity for anyone who wants to accomplish. Getting involved in this project, however, means engaging in a career whose outcome is uncertain. The projection of an artistic career path is particularly delicate. Yet some engage in this direction and choose artistic training, guided by the desire to have their identity confirmed and achieved. They plan to 'accomplish in the uncertain' (Menger, 2010).

Identity and autobiography, identity and ordeal

Identity and autobiography

A series of works, inspired by Berger & Luckman (2006), consider language as a key in building and maintaining the social. In this perspective, the social is defined as 'a set of meanings, beliefs, attitudes, action orientations that are internalized by individuals-subjects but also potentially expressed by individuals-authors of their works and their words' (Dubar, 2006, p. 208).

Identity can be considered as a reflective face of the self (Berger & Luckman, 2006), as the answer to the question 'who am I?' which is inseparable from a place in the social world. Identity then implies a transposition into words, which uses and organizes outstanding and variously valued categories (Dubar, 2007).

In accordance with the interactionist paradigm (Menger, 2010), this contribution studies the identity building process within two axes: diachronic/biographical and synchronic/relational. It thus proposes to consider social space and individual time (Pita Castro, 2014a), with regard to its narrative reorganization, in the analysis of the construction of identities. It takes into account a double interaction: between oneself and others, and between oneself and oneself.

Identity construction involves two types of acts giving shape to identity configurations (Dubar, 2010), in other words, to an architecture of categories. Acts of assignment/proposal of "virtual" social identities (identities for others) lead to transactions in synchronic/relational terms between assigned/proposed identities and assumed/incorporated identities.

Acts of belonging to "real" social identities (identities for oneself) lead to transactions on the diachronic/biographical axis between inherited/acquired identities and aspired identities. The first act, derived from the perspective 'for others', defines who you are. The second one, derived from the perspective 'for oneself', defines who you want to be or think you are. It implies reading one's trajectory from a biographical perspective. Between these two types of acts, once the primary socialization (dominated

by the logic of internalization) has been completed, harmonious relations are not self-evident.

The relational transaction leads either to (1) relational regimes of cooperation-recognition, or to (2) relational regimes of conflict-non-recognition. Biographical transaction leads on its side either to (1) an interpretation of one's biographical trajectory in terms of continuity-reproduction, or to (2) an interpretation of one's biographical trajectory in terms of rupture-production (or even a rupture without production in case of crisis).

This paper makes use of autobiography, which implies a reflexive activity, a retrospective look and the creation of an intelligible story. It is the narrative of the development of an individual personality (Lejeune, 1996). It involves exploring and crossing a diachronic axis according to the current narrative. It thus puts in tension the identity of the narrating person with the identity of a main character, who changes and transforms as the story goes and who is none other than himself. It unfolds a current identity in order to reflect its construction.

The autobiographical activity requires a periodization in the biographical flow (Lejeune, 1996). In each period, a 'world' (in the text) is stabilized and a subject (the main character) takes shape and finds its place (or is assigned one). Every period thus proposes a periodised identity. The different periods of the narrative are connected with each other by continuities and ruptures that determine the permanence and the change occurring in the identity of the narrator.

Closely linked with interactionism, which considers the individual as the synthesis of distinct and distant successive 'selves' (Menger, 2010), the use of autobiographical narratives is then supposed to help recover the layers that constitute the individual in this reflexive dimension of identity.

Identity and ordeal

These various periods, cut into sections by the narrator in the flow of his/her experienced life, end up being precariously balanced. The autobiography is indeed marked by imbalance. It focuses on turning points in lives, on rupture and change, on moments from which shaping processes emerge (Baudouin, 2010).

Periods (with identities) do not indeed define the basic structure of the autobiographical narrative. This structure lies on the side of the ordeal. Every narrative includes a self-structuration via narrative codes inside the discourse (Ricoeur, 1983). The ordeal is the basic unit of narrative economy. Telling one's life then means managing and organizing a number of ordeals within various periods that the narrative cuts in the biographical flow. Autobiography is the verbalization of successive ordeals that have marked the author and that have contributed to his development. They allow understanding the construction of the main character (Greimas, 1970; Propp, 1965) and seizing the identity transactions that lead to biographical and relational regimes, which characterize the various biographical periods.

Any ordeal has been the subject of a neat narrative treatment. With reference to the narratological work of Genette (1983), we can propose a strong link between narrative treatment modalities and speed of the narrative. The slower is the speed of the narrative, the more it develops episodes, which, from the author's point of view, have marked one's life path. The objectification of the speed of the narrative, which could be represented in a graph (see Pita Castro, 2014a), facilitates the identification of moments that determined the construction of identities.

Time and causality

Narrative and retro-diction

The work of Ricoeur (1983) reveals to us that narratives work on and with time. Narrative is a chain of events and actions, and it seeks a certain number of narrative patterns from which it connects these events and actions in order to offer a story heard as an intelligible whole.

Narratives massively invokes the subordinating conjunction, 'the because', articulating consecution and consequence (Paluku Tsongo, 2013). It makes work together chronological links and logical links. As a seasoned historian, Veyne (1971) points out that 'it is vain to oppose a narrative story to another that would have the ambition to be explanatory; explaining more means telling better, and in any case we cannot tell without explaining' (pp. 131-132). Finding the causes means 'telling the fact in a more penetrating way' (p. 131) and thus 'exposing non-event aspects' (ibid.) that the narrative organizes and updates in its specific temporality.

The narrator of a story uses a logic of retro-diction. He goes back in time and offers a reconstruction 'of processes that have contributed to the production of what actually happened and that prevented the other options from coming true' (Grigon, 2008, p. 85). Biographical research cannot therefore escape from the description and analysis of the sequences that configure individual lives and that are reflected by narratives in their own way.

Temporal forms of causality

Biographical research works on and from the narrative reconstructions, articulating consequence and consecution. It therefore cannot omit a chronological perspective and a formalization of links.

Speaking of causality does not mean here yielding to the temptations of determinism and positivism. In a logical-experimental framework, causality is realized in a closed model. Since A and B are both isolated and temporally remote events, A is the cause of B provided that A is prior to B, that no other event comes between them and that the conditions remain constant. In this context, time is not considered and the master of all variables is presupposed. What is, however, forgotten here is the fact that 'historical observation [...] can never end up in an experimental situation which cuts the observed variables' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 24) and the fact that it is dealing with phenomena stuck in (and made up by) time.

The concept of temporal form of causality takes seriously the time variable and is especially accurate when the researcher holds the empirical basis of life stories. However, it implies abandoning the opposition between "ballistic" approaches and the ones based on meanings built by the actors for the benefit of their articulation. De Coninck & Godard (1990) identify three additional models to account for life paths from a sociological perspective. We consider two here.

The archaeological model

The first model used in this paper is the one called the 'archaeological model'. It is unique in that it involves locating a point of origin from which 'other events will take place' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990). It assumes the possibility of 'finding an initial state' from which it is conceivable to point out the temporal relationship between events. In this model, everything arises from this initial point. In its strong version, it makes the hypothesis of a causal engendering, by derivation, of the destinies. The life paths are (with more or less emphasis) 'under the control of forces that derive their properties from the past' (Menger, 2010, p. 36). With this model, ballistic metaphors are

on the horizon. In order to account for the life courses, he proposes to proceed by summarizing 'previous causalities' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990) until reaching the shooting parameters that are behind the projection.

The perspectives opened by the school of Bourdieu belong to this model. They pose an internalized past working in the present and imposing its inertia. The concept of habitus accounts for this presence and perseverance. It formalizes the existence of a past, which is rooted in the present and determines the future by dictating its 'way of being', daily or by 'successive fits and starts' (ibid.). These perspectives enact agents who are more or less consciously 'haunted by their past' and dominated by a tendency to reproduce what a 'symbolic freezer' (ibid.) holds beyond the passing of time.

In this context, early socialization acquires considerable explanatory power. It stands out as the guarantor of 'the strength and [of] the longevity of internalization effects' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 37). Time is then conceived as 'an updating time of the potentialities contained in the origin' (ibid.).

<center>The procedural model</center>

The second model used is the procedural model. It refers to a dynamic causality. It claims to describe the 'process itself' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990). When we have to formalize the processes taken and realizing over time, we must at least use this model. It is indeed 'through the formatting of the studied process, through the construction of the logic of progress or of the chain of events that causal connections will be drawn' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 34). This model does not attempt to identify a cause entirely contained in the past. It rather focuses on evolutions over a 'process in the making'. It thus invites us to implement longitudinal studies[2].

Archaeological model and procedural model deserve to be articulated. We can indeed (1) only report a process in reference to its initial state and to the causes that have initiated it, but (2) these causes are "acting" in changing conditions. The agent is of course haunted by his past, but his story has to be considered as a capital to invest or to achieve over time.

The procedural model particularly turns its attention to the 'passages' between 'states'. Several subfamilies can be distinguished. Two of them explicitly raise the issue of sequences. The first one, called bifurcative, looks to 'disruptive moments in themselves' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 34). The second one, called energetic, focuses on 'investments needed to produce these ruptures' (ibid.).

The bifurcative perspective conceives existence as divided 'into calm sections, where things are on-going, and into decisive moments where everything is put back into play' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 36). Between two bifurcations, 'an archaeological logic prevails [in that] the output of the last bifurcation defines the relevant initial conditions for the next section' (ibid.).

The energetic perspective postulates the existence of probable fates (dependent on archaeological logic). The agent can, however, avoid them by investing energy in moving against inertial forces.

Presentation of the corpus

Our contribution considers thirteen pathways: six are from Fine Arts school graduates and seven are from fashion design school graduates. Three of them come from an upper social class (two Fine Arts graduates and a fashion design graduate), four of them are from a popular social origin (fashion design graduates) and six of them come from a

middle class (Fine Arts graduates). The art school is public and is located in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Its admission implies competitive entrance exams.

The life stories collected were (co-)produced in an interview situation. They were produced within two and five years after the end of the initial artistic training. Young people were between 25 and 30 years old.

They were invited to focus on events, meetings and actions that they found significant throughout their pathway in the arts. Instructions given proposed to invest the genre of autobiography: 'I ask you what your autobiography is'. Interviews thus unfold identities throughout the academic-professional axis (Galland, 2007), whilst redeploying the dynamics between innovation and sedimentation that contribute to the construction of personal identity (Ricoeur, 1990).

The narratives were cut into three periods: the artistic vocation, the artist's training and the professional integration of the artist. The first two periods explore the archaeology of the art school graduates. The period of vocational integration crosses the ordeal of the transition from initial training to the working world (Pita Castro, 2014b) with the archaeology of the art school graduates.

Elements of analysis

Linking identities and social origins leads to a polarization statement. Identities of the young people who come from a upper social position (three fashion design and Fine Arts graduates) articulate biographical regime of continuity and relational regime of recognition. All these young people continue to subjectively feel like artists after completing their training and they are integrated into professional legitimized networks of arts.

They define themselves as artists and carry out a socially recognized artistic activity. The situation is completely reversed in the case of young people who come from popular social classes (four of them, all choosing fashion design training). These young people are indeed subjectively distant from the artistic project and/or do not get integrated into professional legitimized networks of arts. In this case, identities articulate biographical regime of rupture and relational regime of non-recognition. For the other young people (middle social classes), no logic is observed. Situations and identities are various.

How to bring out the polarization of the fates when we consider the two extremes of the social space? Can we settle kinds of springboards and gravities that are put together, concentrated and updated by the pathways of these two extremes? How to understand that the fates of young people who followed the same training and were validated and certified by the same training institution are dichotomized at this point within a period between two and five years after training? This is what this paper attempts to enlighten with the help of some research results and under the light of temporal forms of causality seen above.

The archaeological or the shooting settings

The biographical period preceding the entry into the art school helps us to reconstruct the meanings attributed to the artistic project. These meanings appear largely correlated to their original environment. The analysis of this biographical period thus allows the formalization of 'shooting settings' that are put into words by narratives, giving access to the archaeology of the artistic project.

Figure of inheritance: appropriation and continuity

> Our inheritance is not preceded by any testament. (Char, 2007)

The figure of inheritance has been reconstructed from the narratives of young people coming from upper social classes[3]. It is inseparable from a process of appropriation of a heritage, which suggests standing out and being assertive. This figure brings together narratives from Fine Arts graduates (two of them) and fashion design graduates (one of them) belonging to families where *art* and *intellectual* categories are connected between each other and valued. The artistic project articulates these two categories.

The family invites here to a 'personal affirmation' and to 'experimentation'. A pathway corresponding to its aspirations has to be found.

> We do not come from a family where money is important. The aim is to find yourself, to be happy and to live your passion. The notion of money comes next. (Camille, a fashion design graduate)

In this figure, the 'you will be an artist is an implicit invitation that springs from a trans-generational underground path' (Delcourt, 2013, p. 46). Art is also "part of life". Young people are thus impregnated with it since their childhood (books, paintings, exhibitions, events, lifestyle).

> If I had to start my "Once upon a time", I think I would maybe start with my family! [...] There are art books everywhere at home. There are paintings. There is always a piano. Art is part of life in fact! (Christophe, a Fine Arts graduate)

In these families, one parent is or has been an artist, as some notable predecessors. Art always takes the 'characteristics of [one or more] tutelary figures' (Ravet, 2007, p. 63).

> Closer to me, my mother is a Tibetan art and civilization historian. She is a Tibetologist. But before that, she was an artist. If you want, she is from the generation of the New Yorker artists in the seventies. She knew John Cage, all those people! (Christophe, a Fine Arts graduate)

In the project of becoming an artist, there are significant others (Berger & Luckmann, 2006) with whom the individual identifies. This project is part of a shared 'world' that gives form to the hard core of self-definition. The person internalizes this 'world' during the primary socialization, and a set of validations helps him to consolidate it.

This is an 'implicit transmission [that], beyond an opening to [arts makes] evident' (Delcourt, 2013, p. 46) the will of becoming an artist. By taking back to him 'a piece of [that] history' (ibid.), the person can 'express his way in a serene climate' (ibid.). The family does indeed not manifest any opposition to the artistic project. It is an 'unconditional support'. Young people are also here familiarized with the gravities of the artist's life and with values and standards that govern the world of art.

> [My parents] warned us! There was no secret. They warned us that it was a little harder [financially] at this time. [...] We did not have the same timetables as the other children, because they took us with them everywhere. (Camille, a fashion design graduate)

On the biographical axis, the figure of inheritance is characterized by a regime of continuity-reproduction. Inheritance is however not passively received nor continued.

Active appropriation is indeed at the heart of this figure. It is necessary to assert oneself in a singular way by taking inheritance back to its own account. The significance of the artistic project lies in the process.

Figure of countered vocation: reappropriation and rupture

> This feeling, this invincible desire to return, immediately reveals to him the existence of the past, of his past; in the house of his life, windows appeared. (Kundera, 2000, p. 76)

The figure of countered vocation includes all the narratives (the four of them) of young people from popular social classes. All are stylists. These people come from families for which the categories of *work*, *gold* and *stability* are central. In these families, a qualified artistic activity is present in childhood.

> I always liked to have fun with my mum by making carnival costumes. I have a grandmother who sews, I have a mother who sews, but for pleasure. I have a great-grandmother who crocheted, too! There are still in the family some people who were in, well, not professionally, but in that context. (Fanny, a fashion design graduate)

This activity, however, is linked here to the categories of *pleasure* and *leisure*. *Art* cannot constitute a "real job anyway". The family is opposed to such a project. In contrast to the figure of inheritance, opposition to the project of becoming an artist comes from the close entourage. A whole 'world'—the one, which the person belongs—delegitimizes the project of turning *art* into a profession (these two categories cannot be articulated here).

> I wanted to go to the Arts Deco after compulsory school. [...] But I was very influenced by my father at that time. It was for him that I got my diploma as a sport saleswoman. He disliked the artistic dimension. (Ileana, a fashion design graduate)

We find in this figure a cleavage between work (related to a constraint) and leisure (linked to pleasure), which is characteristic of the lower social classes (Negroni, 2007). This cleavage structures the 'world' to which the person belongs, his essential own home.

The person first accepts this dichotomy. *Art* cannot be a real job... It is obvious. He then embarks on a vocational path, which is defined as *pragmatic*, *serious*. But he will get lost in a pathway that was not his but for which he says he was always made. This path can be completed (saleswoman, trading), but these young people are actually waiting for something else. The artistic project continues to live clandestinely. The person accepts his/her fate, but keeps a certain distance. Total adherence is impossible. In the narratives, it is an unexpected event that will give rise to 'diving into the world of dreams, of childhood' (Negroni, 2007, p. 129). It will enable the artistic project to resurface, to win through the strength of the evidence. This is then the "click".

The heart of this figure lies in the re-appropriation of that dream, assuring a reflective unit to the identity. The choice of an artistic training is required here as a bifurcation which originates with an earlier passion which surreptitiously continued. The re-appropriation of the project and the identity affirmation here imply a radical break with the original environment and a considerable expenditure of energy. It is indeed in this figure that the energy expenditure accompanying the artistic project is the most intense. It is proportional to the fate that the person said they had to break with in order to finally be themselves.

However, the person is isolated in his/her aspirations. The family does not support them. It is vigorously opposed to them. The theme of the social place and its recognition permeates this figure. Getting into the art school means reaching the place that socially defines the person and then eventually being "somebody". It means being recognized, validated and supported, and no longer being alone against all. It means becoming the "artist" that one always has been.

> It is being someone. I have a little problem with self-confidence, with being someone for others, you know? Then, well, being an artist, I was someone in another's eyes, and then consequently in my mind. (Ileana, a fashion design graduate)

The admission to an art school establishes a regime of recognition-cooperation, which is awaited and finally realized. It gives rise to reinsurance and to confidence in the validity of the project. At this time the person can socially exist as an artist.

This figure is particular in that the artistic project finds its completion with the admission to the art school. Young people do not indeed formulate any clear career plan. Everything happens here as if the confrontation between opposites amplified a phenomenon of 'identity overbid' (Martuccelli, 2002) and exaggerated the notion that one was born to this. Entering an art school means finding a favourable context to affirm what kept being denied. This admission gives consistency to identity and concludes the process.

> I did not project myself after training. In fact, I had no idea of what I would do in fashion design. But it was really a dream! It was pretty confused. It was a bit the ideal image of a stylist. However it was not a very concrete idea, not a realistic one. (Helen, a fashion design graduate)

Retrospectively, the person who tells his life story says that choosing the artistic path was inseparable from an imaginary of glossy paper, made of glitter and glory. When young people describe their social background, they speak of it (afterwards) in terms of *simplicity*, *honesty, authenticity,* which are positively valued. Autobiographical narratives recount a gradual distancing from the world of art...

Emancipation from a trajectory and from an environment characterizes this figure. The idealization is particularly strong here. It is proportional to an initial distance and to a lack of knowledge. The project outlines are particularly unclear. Narratives characterized with this figure reveal the clarification and the progressive awareness of an impossible identification with the world of art.

Opposite to the narratives from which the figure of inheritance was forged, the artistic project is revealed in its fragility. It is not securely connected to the primary socialization. Some values are barriers and some skills are missing. By contrast, heirs have always been impregnated and, like 'Obelix, [...] fell into the pot when he was very small' (Péquignot, 2009, p. 46). They are identified with inherited values that are consistent with the world of art, and they master the necessary skills to become an artist.

The updating of the archaeological, or from where social gravities emerge
Figures of countered vocation and inheritance focus on, collect and polarize elements situated on the basis of trajectories that partially parameterize the achievement of the artistic project. These elements, referring to what can be described as archaeological, occur throughout the narratives.
The procedural model helps us to formalize self-updating times. The objectification of the speed of autobiographical narratives allows us to identify the moments when, in the

stories, crucial events happen. This paper focuses on three of them that are decisive and that are reconstructed from a comparison of all the collected narratives.

In the case of young people from popular social classes, this self-updating is done by successive fits and starts (crises are indeed narrated there). In contrast, for people from upper social classes, it is rather the logic of constant and daily strengthening that dominates, whilst art school contributes to reaffirm and to keep the world and the identity internalized in primary socialization. In our corpus, the stories of young people from popular (but also middle) social classes reveal then inequalities and implicit evidences that are partially conditioning the artistic vocation.

The artist (also) participates to a world

One of the key moments relates to the discovery of the world of art, values and norms that organize it and on which the *participation* to a common world is based. This discovery is enhanced by the training system, as the art school gives access to professional worlds of art and ways of being an artist (Mill, 1992) to be explored.

This discovery can have destructive consequences. Because of it, the artistic aspiration can literally disappear. It is particularly devastating in the case of young people whose stories have been grouped under the figure of the countered vocation, as the distance between their social background and the world of art is important for them. These narratives strongly emphasize a distance, which has always been present, underlying and suddenly revealed in the narratives. Ileana notes, for example, that point.

> I think I had always had a kind of dilemma. I have never loved, even when I entered the fashion design school! (Ileana, a fashion design graduate)

In all these narratives, the world of art is opposed to the values, which the person has inherited and which are deeply rooted in his original social background.

> It is futility and "show off" above all. [...] An overplayed world, completely supernatural and completely light years away from my values. [...] Simplicity, authenticity, job well done. The world of fashion is completely the opposite, it is a world made of "showing how one is the best, the most stylish". It is a world of big mouths. (Ileana a fashion design graduate)

Workshops, competitions and guest artists contribute to this discovery. A revelation occurs; the distance is insurmountable. Personal identification with the artistic project may cease. In the narratives, a subjective distance with the artistic project takes then shape. The person becomes aware of a possible affiliation. He can certainly continue his studies, but something definitively breaks in himself while facing 'reality'.

> [About a competition] I was put in the middle of journalists. I really felt very small. And I said to myself: "It's not me here, it's really not me!". I am a simple person. (Fanny, a fashion design graduate)

This experience 'disgusts*'* her. She finds 'people who did not fit me'. The same distance is posed in the narratives of Ileana, Juliette and Helen as a result of experiments confronting the professional world of art and the ways of being an artist. At that time all of them are aware of an *arrogant, overplayed* and *superficial,* a world of *jackals* and *sharks*.

On this occasion, the 'self' is captured in its differences, but it claims having always resided in the distance. It cannot identify with this world because the distance is too

important, and in fact it was already on-going. A dilemma was acting beneath the surface, until "clicks" and "evidence" occur.

The art school is a secondary socialization scheme (Berger & Luckman, 2006). What is at stake here is the continuation of what primary socialization has started shaping. The greater the distance is, the greater this secondary socialization requires a reconstruction work and the deeper it involves revisiting one's identity, rebuilding one's house and reconfiguring the core of self-definition. In the case of young people whose narratives have been grouped under the figure of the countered vocation, it requires a real identity conversion. In the light of our narratives, it however appears impossible. The world of art is too heavily hitting the core of self-definition, and socialization processes do not seem accurate to accompany this conversion.

This is the first social gravity, which is given here to see. The seeking artist from popular social classes who once aspired realizes that he does not really belong to this world, and that he cannot join it. For young people whose stories have been grouped under the form of inheritance, proximity is much stronger. Training forces to an articulation between primary and secondary socialization, but it is easier for them. The modifications are carried out at the margin. They do not have to revisit the foundations of their house (Berger & Luckman, 2006).

The artist is (also) an intellectual

Training paths biographies are marked by a strong requirement: to intellectualize artistic productions leading to a reversal onto oneself. This is a consequence of customization and swelling discourse occurring in the arts as well as of evaluation criteria that have become fuzzy (Heinich, 2005).

> We are asked to draw on our guts, on what we have! We were asked to focus on our own navel, to put out what we had in our guts. (Camille, a fashion design graduate)

The art training system forces to put into words the coherence and the meaning of productions that are connected to the personality and interests of the junior artists, and it concerns narratives of Fine Art graduates as well as the ones of fashion design graduates.

> They asked me to really think about my work. [...] I had no self-reflection about that... I was asked to put things into words and to be able to explain and justify myself. (Helen, a fashion design graduate)

The trainee artist cannot then be satisfied with a simple expressivity, nor can he/she be satisfied with *doing* or *technical* mastery. All the narratives clearly distinguish the *talking* from the *doing*, as they distinguish what concerns the 'ego' from the *technical*. Training systems value the 'ego' and the *talking* and neglect or even devalue the *doing* and the *technical*. In order to be a fully qualified artist and to succeed his training, the person must articulate the 'ego' and the *talking*, which means intellectualizing a job that has its source in itself.

This constraint reveals a second social gravity. In the autobiographical narratives from which the figure of countered vocation was formed, there are moments that shed light on this social gravity. In these narratives, the relationship between the 'ego' and the *talking* is problematic. Confronted with this requirement, these young people struggle. This is the case of Helen, who cannot articulate her productions with her discourse.

> I do not feel in my place! I eventually wondered what I was doing there, why others succeeded there and not me. It was quite confusing in the sense that it was a self-questioning based on my abilities, on what I'm really made for, because I could not see what was wrong. (Helen, a fashion design graduate)

It is also the case for Juliette, who refuses to intellectualize her work, thus opposing the *doing* to the *talking*, as Ileana and Fanny did.

> When you take a concept, it takes over from the object itself, and then, quite quickly, it was really the object that was missing, we were too much in the intellectualization of the object, which in the end is a garment, I mean. (Juliette, a fashion design graduate)

In order to explain this difficulty and this refusal, archaeological reasons are required for the analysis. The figure of the countered vocation had dissociated *art* and *intellectual*. In these narratives, ordeals are related to moments when articulation has to be done.

These narratives tell a break, unlike those from which the figure of inheritance was forged. In them, the period of the vocation was indeed characterized by an invitation to find oneself, to explore, to experiment, but also by a valuation and a familiarity with intellectual dimensions, which have always been present alongside the artistic dimensions. In these narratives, the artistic project (as a reflection of primary socialization) is consistent with what the training requires. There is continuity between past and present, between exigencies of the training and skills that are developed during primary socialization.

The requirement of turning towards oneself and putting things into words is easy there, as a logical continuation of a past, which prepares for success. On the opposite, all the narratives from which the figure of countered vocation was developed enlighten a past that does not prepare for success. There is more than anywhere else doubt, wandering and difficulty. These young artists succeed in getting graduated by the art school, but are overtaken by a subjective non-membership with a vision of art which is too *intellectual*, away from "job well done" (aggregating and articulating the categories *doing* and *technical*).

The artist is (also) relational

Another key point concerns what can be designated as 'professional meetings'. The analysis of the processes involved in becoming an artist highlights the importance of these meetings. Training systems, by inviting renowned artists and offering participation in competitions, offer a favourable context for these meetings. They open networks, allowing the insertion of the aspiring artist. On this point the narratives thematise a before and an after.

> [Referring to the contrast between before and after the art school] We lose [the opportunity] to attract the right people. At school everyone speaks with you, that means curators, art critics, intermediaries, mediators as well. Because they are paid. Afterwards, there is nothing anymore. Because you are in a fairly big vacuum, where you have to find your place. (Henry, a Fine Arts graduate)

Within the limits of our corpus, the one who becomes an artist finds his first insertion when he is in the art school, thanks to professional meetings it promotes. This is the case of Camille, Christophe and Henry.

> [On the occasion of a competition] My mom sees the pair of shoes, it is called Moebius, the shoes are called Moebius! And she tells me in front of the guy: "Hey, look Camille, it is the name of your cat! ". So I get to know the guy. I tell him it is the most beautiful pair of shoes I have ever seen. He tells me he is the one who made it. He tells me he loves my dress, that it is incredible. I tell him that I made it by myself. And then he shows me a small demonstration of shoes on a screen display, then you know. And all the demonstration of the Moebius strip. It is a shoe, which is made of a single strip. And I tell him it's amazing, my dress, it's made of the same approach! [...] I let him my contact information. He contacts me several weeks later. He is going to open a fashion design studio in China and he proposes me to come live with him, to set up a clothes department there. (Camille, a fashion design graduate)

This meeting allows a smooth transition from school to work. It reduces the ordeal constituted by this transition (Pita Castro, 2014b). Entering the 'big'[4] art network helps to become an artist. When entering into this wider network, the aspiring artist gains in surface (Castel & Haroche, 2001) as well as in identity consistency (Roulleau-Berger, 2007). After completing the training, professional meetings are more difficult or impossible. In our corpus, professional integration is realized during the training period, never after. Everything happens as if it were too late once training is behind. The opportunities have gone.

Through the analysis, a statement is clear (it converges with a set of researches dedicated to life paths of art school graduates): Narratives of people who come from popular social classes never describe a decisive meeting which would lead to a professional network, while all the narratives of the heirs account for such a meeting (Péquignot, 2009). The heirs succeed in 'opening the right door at the right time' (p. 46), unlike the narratives from which the figure of countered vocation was built. In these, the network, the large one, remains closed. Reaching it is impossible.

These meeting moments reveal a relational competence (necessary to become an artist) shown by the heirs. It is a kind of interpersonal skills, an ease to sell oneself and to talk about oneself and one's job. We guess here a third social gravity. The heirs know and master the 'explicit and tacit rules' (Péquignot, 2009). They are aware of the importance of networking and they know how to take profit from it. They also benefit from (socially constructed) self-confidence and from the upgrading of an artistic project that has been validated by their families. This 'persistent support from the family' (Ravet, 2007) feeds a self-confidence that must be considered as a decisive factor of success.

Conclusion

The sociological and historical works related to identity models converge toward a definition of the pre-modern identity as 'established and predefined from outside' (Rosa, 2010, p. 278, underlined by him).

The consideration and the description of the individual are correlated with his place as well as his inclusion in a social order, which is relatively stable and perceived as immutable. It is with modernity that a first crack occurred. It contributed to build a gap between the self and the world (Martuccelli, 2010) and initiated a process of individualization. It is only then that identity could become self-determined and constitute a reflexive project, and that the modern figure of vocation found a space for its diffusion while being run through by a utopian democratization.

The definition of who you are no longer only proceeds from the outside, and does not only come from a relatively fixed past, but largely depends on the way life is organized and on the choices that govern this organization. With modernity, the self and the reflexive project fit together, and the horizon becomes charged with alternatives considered as feasible.

It is within this general framework that we must situate the evolution of the theme of vocation. Like the Calvinist vocation (Weber, 1904-1905/2003), the modern vocation is linked to worldly order and working life. In the Calvinist conception, however, work through which people have to be fulfilled is inseparable from a condition that must be accepted. This form of vocation perpetuates the social baggage. Modern vocation demands a certain affinity between doing and being, as well as the ability to choose.

Modern vocation is crossed by this democratic utopia. It exacerbates the ethical model that shapes our contemporary societies, where 'nothing is worse than the feeling of having wasted your life [and where] nothing, at first, [is] more accessible in appearance than this objective: all individuals can realize their life' (Martuccelli, 2006, p. 361). In this model, everyone is responsible for the success and failure of his life. It carries the representation of a society composed of individuals, blind to the collective dimensions that configure inequalities.

The field of art is particularly concerned with this ethical model. Nowadays it is considered as disconnected from inheritances. It describes itself as 'open to all', provided that people have got a gift and a talent whose origin is always more or less mysterious. This semantic masks what overflows and precedes the artist and, eventually enables his affirmation, his self-realization. In this context, failure cannot be attributed to the deficiencies of the individual. This article has some criticism intentions: to emphasize what overflows and precedes the individual.

Art studies have become democratized. The figure of the countered vocation carries echoes of this opening. It makes a radical and profound break with an initial background. The identities on the basis of this figure are however marked by suffering, difficulty and failure. They testify to the inertia of trajectories. The aspiring artists from a popular social class fail to be an artist in spite of the determination they have shown, despite the energy needed to break away from their destiny. All these paths lead to failure, but also to the feeling of being responsible for this failure. They carry social gravities that are occulted by the discourse of the gift and talent.

Without abandoning the openness to the possible and the self-affirmation, the figure of the countered vocation forces to look toward the past, the internalized categorization grids and the skills that are there developed or not. These narratives rehabilitate ballistic metaphors (Bidart, 2010). They show the weight of the initial conditions. They give to see a past that holds and prevents the full realization of a desired and envisaged possible, despite an admission and a diploma narrated as strong signs of achievement and recognition.

By mobilizing the concept of temporal form of causality, our research has taken seriously the time variable identified in the narratives, while honouring at the same time the non-event. It considers the inequalities that are distributed in social space but also the processes that make them acting. It points out what is related to initial conditions in the life courses, but also the way these initial data are updated over time within autobiographical narratives. The analysis considers that 'archaeological variables make sense when being involved in the process' (de Coninck & Godard, 1990, p. 48-49). Nevertheless, throughout narratives, the social space, which was already there makes its comeback. This paper has highlighted the modalities of this comeback.

This contribution proposes three social gravities. They are updated within the training system. They give to see the importance of primary socialization and pose the problem of its articulation with the secondary socialization process that is implemented by the art school.

The project to become an artist is triply threatened, by the discovery of a world of art which is too distant from inherited values, by a conception of the artist seen as an intellectual, and by the weight of interpersonal skills, self-confidence and confidence in one's project. These social gravities are concentrated in narratives belonging to the figure of the countered vocation, while a certain number of springs emerge from the narratives characterized by the figure of inheritance.

Art has throughout its history been distinguished from craft and profession. Artistic skill requires a talent above all learning and teaching (Heinich, 2005). The training system is expected to provide the conditions for revelation and deployment of artists who have to break with their inherited institutions and frameworks.

In this particular context, teaching and practice cannot on their own guarantee the artistic skill. The training systems that we analysed primarily require an 'identisation' (Tap, 1980). They request that the aspiring artist builds a singular artistic positioning, and for this work, history and personal values are decisive (Pita Castro, 2013). The accompanying actions are central. They allow the interpretation of 'technical choices and constraints in terms of intention, self-expression and emotional involvement' (Menger, 2010, p. 247).

The analysis of the narratives imposes an observation: the training systems studied are focused on the construction of this singular artistic positioning but they largely abandon the management of the effects that the discovery of the professional worlds of art and the construction of a professional network have on the students. For heirs, the discovery of the world of art requires marginal changes. They also feel at ease when they have to build a network. For those who are grouped under the figure of the countered vocation, discovering the world of art emphasizes the need for a substantial change. They have to manage a distance, strangeness. They also feel very uncomfortable when they have to build contacts that will open networks.

Accompaniment should probably be strengthened and expanded. We should not only support the construction of a singular artistic positioning but also accompany (i) *the elaboration of a professional identity which sometimes involves managing a distance and* (ii) *the construction of the professional network.* In the training systems studied, accompaniment seems to be required to achieve a real democratisation of the possibility to become an artist.

Notes

[1] In this contribution, the term 'gravity' is related to the weight that social background exerts on the individual's biographical trajectory.

[2] By configuring long temporality, life narratives open to a longitudinal approach. They are divided into periods and propose transitions between these periods.

[3] Figures refer to typical identity configurations that are forged through comparison, nomination and translation work (Demazière & Dubar, 2007).

[4] We have indeed to distinguish the institutionalized and recognized 'big' artistic network from the 'small' artistic network, which is marginal, situated at the periphery and inseparable from a discourse made of suffering and shortcomings.

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Between practicing and rehearsing: cultural awareness challenges in the military

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Abstract

In this article, we confront the tradition that understands cultural awareness training as the individual acquisition of intercultural competences with recent developments in the theorizing of culture and education. The question we ask is how to understand cultural awareness training if dealing with cultural diversity is not depending on individual competences but rather on the interaction between people on the ground. We will take three steps to discuss this point. In a first step we consider the challenge of cultural diversity for military organizations. The second step consists in a reflection on the notion of intercultural competences and the idea that intercultural competences can be acquired by individuals. In the third step we develop an alternative understanding of the preparation for intercultural interaction, based on Sennett's distinction between practicing and rehearsing (Sennett, 2012).

Keywords: cultural awareness; intercultural competences; diversity; military training; small culture paradigm

Introduction

Cultural awareness training is not a new phenomenon in military organizations (Haddad, 2010; Winslow, Kammhuber, & Soeters, 2004; Wunderle, 2006). Starting from the so-called area studies and simulation games and the first research conducted in the framework of the intercultural management (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1993), military organizations have increasingly employed various training methods to prepare their staff for diverse operational contexts. Mainly after the negative events in some operations, respect for diversity was considered as an added value; because it would develop everybody's potential for the organization and

contribute to the operational strength of the military. The challenges related to cultural diversity will remain paramount and will continue to influence any military organization, both internally and externally (Manigart & Resteigne, 2013). It is therefore important to ask how cultural awareness training can be optimised and more attuned to diversity. In this article, we confront the tradition that understands cultural awareness training as the individual acquisition of intercultural competences with recent developments in the theorizing of culture and education (Calhoun & Sennett, 2007; Hodkinson, Biesta, & James, 2008). Within social and cultural pedagogy, it is more and more argued that dealing with cultural diversity is something that defies the language of learning developed in the literature on intercultural competences and attempts to measure the added value of those competences (Biesta, 2005). The measurement of intercultural competences and their framing in terms of added value for human resources management are at odds with what is exactly at stake when we deal with cultural diversity. Intercultural competences refer here to a skill set that includes awareness of one's "self" in the context of culture, an open mind towards and appreciation of diversity and other "operationally" relevant cultural elements like the physical environment, the economy, the social structure, the political structure, and belief systems (Watson, 2010, p. 94). Because those intercultural competences are very often considered as a more generalizable skill set than the language proficiency, two separate training paths tend to be maintained in military organizations.

Based on these objections, we try to formulate some tentative answers to the critique of cultural awareness training understood as learning intercultural competences. The question we ask is how to understand cultural awareness training if dealing with cultural diversity is not depending on individual competences but rather on the interaction between people who determine outcomes that are always somewhat unpredictable and not fully predefined. We will take three steps to discuss this point. In a first step we consider the challenge of cultural diversity for military organizations. The second step consists in a reflection on the notion of intercultural competences and the idea that intercultural competences can be acquired by individuals. In the third step we develop an alternative understanding of the preparation for intercultural interaction, based on a distinction between practising and rehearsing (Sennett, 2012).

The challenges of cultural diversity

We first ask ourselves why military organizations have to engage in cultural awareness training and why cultural diversity appears to be such a huge challenge. There are internal and external reasons for military organizations to engage in cultural awareness training. First, there is the undeniable growth of internal diversity. Due to the difficulty to find sufficient numbers of new recruits, many military organisations have opened their door to women, civilians, contractors and even non-nationals. A second reason for engaging in cultural awareness training is the increasing prevalence of external diversity. This is the result of increased multinational cooperation where we can find on the ground a division of labour between participating countries (Resteigne & Soeters, 2010). Challenges not only arise from different cultural values or norms, but equally from different procedures, equipment and daily routines. The external necessity for cultural awareness training emanates also from the difficulties of current battle spaces which are increasingly complex and populated by a wide range of groups motivated by various intentions. Far beyond the traditional logic of friend and enemy, military

organizations need to be able to deal with cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences among the local population (Winslow et al., 2004). Success in operations is only possible by knowing and approaching different groups in appropriate ways. A certain amount of cultural sensitivity is indispensable to avoid unnecessary hostilities and solve conflicts in operations.

Cultural diversity is challenging because of the increased internal and external necessity to deal with differences. It would however not be much of a deal if we were only able to grasp and define what is going on when we deal with cultural diversity. This is however not the case. This challenge is related to the fact that the experience of cultural diversity is confusing and not fully understandable. Cultural differences defy clear understanding, because they refer to confrontations playing out at the level of our basic understanding and sense making of the world around us. The experience of cultural diversity is an experience that subverts our understanding of the world. The confrontation with mere differences is never neutral; it affects our beliefs and emotions (Ramaekers, 2010). That means, borrowing the words of Nancy (1997), that cultural diversity can be experienced, but this experience cannot be appropriated. Appropriation means that we know and define some phenomenon, that we understand and objectify it, can make predictions and specify how it relates to the rest of the world. Appropriation implies that we can take a distance from a phenomenon and that we can define appropriate reactions in an objective way. This is however not possible for intercultural interactions, because these experiences affect ourselves and involve our subjectivity. How we look at the world and how we look at ourselves is being touched by the presence of other ways of sense making and identity building. The fact that we ourselves are at stake in experiences of diversity can generate a certain amount of stress and anxiety.

It is not possible to fully understand others, just as it is not possible to fully understand ourselves (Blasco, 2012). It is therefore also not fully possible to define how we relate to others and how we have to deal with others. There is always a kind of essential openness. Culture is always unfinished and is continually happening (Calhoun & Sennett, 2007). It is not fully possible to predict how intercultural relations will evolve and how any predefined result can be guaranteed. Checklists and detailed instructions will not be a guarantee to success. This has to do with the fact that people are all the time making sense of themselves and the world around them. Sense making is a non-closed and non-ending practice, which makes checklists and detailed instructions always running behind facts. Making new sense is something that happens to us and to others, without being in full control. The confrontation with cultural diversity is the confrontation with another worldview and another practice of sense making. The fact that we see the world around us through cultural lenses (Arai, 2006) affects our own sense-making and our own understanding, which leads to new sense making and possibly to new checklists and instructions. Something happens to us in intercultural interactions, we see ourselves and the world around us with different eyes. And others too, will experience something unforeseen in the confrontation. The intercultural experience is playing out at the level of understanding and beliefs; it results sometimes in unexpected behaviours, but not automatically in mutual understanding and agreement (Todd, 2011). This brings us to another way of describing the challenge ahead. Even if some authors have tried to identify a certain degree of homogeneity and common cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1993), cultures and, consequently, cultural differences *change* over time and in every place. New experiences and increased interactions with culturally diverse groups lead to

alterations in understanding and worldview, and often to unpredictable behaviours. One problematic misunderstanding in theory and practice is that cultures are too easily considered as homogeneous and fixed entities. Cultures are often seen as "a fairly static, contained and identifiable object" (Van Oord & Ken Corn, 2013, p. 2). In this reasoning, cultures are seen as a determinant of human understanding and behaviour. Culture is supposed to determine people's actions, perceptions, routines, responses. This view makes a distinction between culture on the one hand and behaviour, understanding, action on the other hand. Culture becomes something underlying but unaffected by experience and interaction. The consequence of such a view is that intercultural experiences and interactions do not change the culture which is imagined as being stable. Such interpretation of culture can be defined as an essentialist view or the large culture paradigm (Holliday, 1999, 2000). Descriptions of national, ethnic or religious communities with their traditions, norms and values belong to the large culture paradigm. Such descriptions are often presented during the pre-deployment training in military organizations (e.g. Wunderle, 2006). The danger of such large cultural descriptions is that people's behaviour is fully explained from their belonging to a community with a supposed shared cultural background. Defining culture as an all-encompassing whole does not necessarily lead to effective actions on the ground as it can keep our thinking of others bound to generalizations (Geertz, 1973). Daily life experiences are often very different from general descriptions, which might hamper effective interaction. Haddad (2010) describes for example how daily life experience during a peace keeping operation can be quite different from official discourses, training agendas and doctrines. Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari (2012) on the other hand, describe how dealing with internal diversity is much more dynamic than expected, and always contains elements of self-organization emerging at unit level. In concrete situations, it is often wise to be sensitive to what happens and to pay attention to what can be seen and heard. Russell-Farnham (2009) describes the necessity to engage with concrete people in the battle space and to be sensitive to their feelings, thoughts and experiences. The small culture paradigm is a necessary complement to the large culture paradigm and is better able to account for cultural change. Culture is a human activity in this paradigm. Culture *is* behaviour, understanding, action and perception. Culture is continuously being made and remade through activities and interactions (Holliday, 1999). Human experiences are the basis of any sense making and interactions with others provoke alterations in how we make sense of ourselves and the world. Experiences and interactions affect and change cultures. What we do and how we react to others in all kinds of daily interactions does matter and does change those involved. The small culture paradigm can help to develop a more balanced understanding of the challenge of cultural diversity and can help to react more adequately in culturally diverse contexts. Concrete intercultural situations are produced by the simultaneous presence and mutual influence of people from diverse cultures (Geertz, 1973). The mutual influence and interactions in a specific time and place produce unforeseen and unpredictable effects and dynamics at that moment and place. The effects are unpredictable because humans have a certain liberty or disposition to respond in new and different ways. People and cultures are continuously changing in an evolution that does not end and that is marked by interruptions and non-linearity. Interactions and experiences constantly lead to new small cultures and to new ways of relating to others. The large culture paradigm sees culture as relatively stable and focuses for example on books, traditions or even paintings and images as cultural artefacts. The small culture paradigm understands culture as a practice (Calhoun & Sennett, 2007). It focuses for example on the practice

of making images or paintings, of reading books, of performing traditional rituals rather than on decontextualized cultural artefacts. It focuses on human and non-human interaction in context. It focuses on "ways of making things, relating to others, constituting value, and engaging performances" (Calhoun & Sennett, 2007, p.6). Culture is something that happens to us and through us. It is made and remade in small interactions like a dialogue at a check-point and in big, meaningful events like the 9/11 attacks (Bosman, Richardson, & Soeters, 2007).

What is important in intercultural interaction is the openness and readiness to sense unforeseen behaviour and sense making. Often, success means being able to respond in concrete and surprising situations that are quite different from large culture descriptions. Responding to unforeseen intercultural situations is not only necessary in a condition of increased internal and external cultural diversity. It is also very difficult because it entails opening up to the risk of undergoing a change in our own perceptions and ideas, leading to changed practices. The best possible reaction to cultural diversity cannot fully be defined beforehand, because responding to cultural diversity entails changing definitions and guidelines on what is the best possible. There are many pleas for cultural awareness and for understanding the culture of those present in the operation space (e.g. Skelton & Cooper, 2004). What is not genuinely recognized, however, is that understanding is played out at the level of one's own basic assumptions. Understanding cannot be achieved without changes taking place in one's own perceptions and beliefs. The difficulty is that the best response is different in every situation; diversity entails that things are different each time and each place. This is quite a challenge for military organizations that work with predefined and approved goals, clear rules and directives for action and well-designed procedures. Dealing with diversity is a real challenge, not only to individuals who must respond to intercultural situations, but also to the whole military organization (Manigart & Resteigne, 2013). The challenge of diversity can be illustrated by an example of an intercultural interaction encountered by the US Armed Forces in Iraq and described by Skelton and Cooper (2014, p.12): "Iraqis arrested by U.S. troops have had their heads forced to the ground, a position forbidden by Islam except during prayers. This action offends detainees as well as bystanders." Wunderle (2006, p.2) comments on this example in a cultural awareness primer for US Armed Forces deploying to Arab and Middle Eastern Countries: "Tactics such as these might bestow short-term tactical advantages and might appear to be effective measures, but can undermine the long-term US goals for building stability in the region." Both authors use this example as a plea for cultural awareness training, and link the understanding and knowledge of cultures to appropriate reactions in ambiguous and uncertain circumstances. We agree with this line of reasoning, but also point to an unreported difficulty in what it means to understand and to respond to differences. The situation which is described here, involves cultural change. The forcing of heads on the ground provokes changes in the attitudes of Iraqis towards the American Forces. This concrete experience at that time and in that unanticipated situation, results in a negative change towards the Americans. The reaction of Iraqis was unforeseen and it probably took a while to find out why bystanders became "a hostile mob" (Skelton & Cooper, 2014, p.12). If Americans would have hold Iraqi heads to the ground in order to take care of wounded bystanders, the same hostile reaction would probably not have taken place, which makes it clear that reactions, although related to Islam (big culture), are negotiated by sense making and unpredictability in concrete interactions (small culture). Cultural specific knowledge is not enough to deal with this situation. Understanding and adequate responses go hand in hand with cultural change on the American side, and this

seems to be happening in the reflections of Skelton and Cooper but also those of Wunderle. They try to understand what happened on the Iraqi side, and their perceptions alter at the same time. Wunderle (2006, p.2) literally describes his altered perception when he says that this tactic "might appear to be effective" but in fact is not. The forcing of heads to the ground was indeed designed as an effective tactic. The confrontation with others in a concrete interaction led to a new self-perception, namely that the tactic is ineffective and might undermine success in the long term. Understanding what happened entails a new perception and might lead to new tactics. This is challenging, goes along with uncertainty, and involves choosing and redefining the best way of making an arrest. The best solution for this situation does not stem from the application of simple checklists or instructions. It demands a questioning of tactics and a balancing of different interests, like safety, long term goals, and respect for others. The example shows that not only individuals have to respond in a cultural sensitive way; intercultural diversity also plays out on the organizational level where decisions about tactics have to be made.

Intercultural competences

In the second part of the text, we discuss the way in which learning to deal with diversity has often been understood (Perry & Southwell, 2011). Cultural diversity is often seen as "a potential obstacle to the efficient running of the military" (Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, 2012, p.195), and learning to deal with diversity is often seen as the acquisition of individual competences that are supposed to contribute to the overall performativity of military organizations. The definition of intercultural competence and the accompanying conceptualization of learning as the individual acquisition of competences depend on specific assumptions and definitions of differences, of learning, of effectiveness and of culture (Biesta, 2005; Rathje, 2007). In this part of the text, we discuss these four assumptions and argue that the idea of individual acquisition of intercultural competences has some shortcomings and needs to evolve into a more nuanced approach. The first assumption is the way in which differences are framed. The concrete and manifest differences related to cultural diversity are often associated with potential problems and threads to success (Todd, 2011). Cultural diversity is something that is assumed to be a potential obstacle and harm to solidarity and cohesion, which is considered necessary for effective military functioning (Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, 2012). This kind of assumptions played an important role in arguments against the integration of women or gays in the armed forces. The idea is that differences hamper the bonding process and cohesion, and thereby undermine operational strength. This is a very specific way of thinking about differences that not necessarily reflects the dynamics of intercultural interaction on a concrete level (Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, 2012). On top of that, such assumptions can even install a problematic and counterproductive orientation in training programmes (Engelbert, 2004). Facing those very common critics, we need to make a distinction between social and task cohesion. If cultural diversity can, at the short run, be detrimental to social cohesion, common drills and training can ensure the necessary level of task cohesion (King, 2006). Beyond the importance of bonds of comradeship, the decisive rituals which bind military groups together are the formal processes of training and, mainly, communication drills. The assumption that diversity means problems is also related to a strong distinction between *us* and *them*. Van Oord and Corn (2012) call this tendency the "balkanization of

difference." Balkanization refers to the process of disintegration that took place in the Balkan region of south-east Europe. It entails an often unintended process of disintegration and separation related to the assumption that there is a big gap between cultures and people. The concrete differences that go hand in hand with cultural diversity are thereby seen as an essential identity difference that is almost impossible to bridge. It is assumed that cultures and people are "hermetically disconnected units, unless they are deliberately connected by means of an intercultural bridge" (Van Oord & Corn, 2012). This is however not the only way to look at differences. One does not need to essentialize differences. It is exactly the reduction of concrete differences to an essential identity difference that made the Balkan Wars possible (Nancy, 2000). Identities are thereby seen as closed units which can be appropriated and exist separately. Such a vision makes it impossible to appreciate the connections between cultures and people that are always already in place. There is thus also a more nuanced appreciation of differences possible, in which concrete differences do not stand for one essential identity difference. Nancy (2000) argues that humans are always connected and disconnected at the same time. There is no absolute separation between cultures and people and, referring to the famous concept of Karl Weick (1976), they must been rather seen as "loosely coupled" units. There are always elements that bind together, the bonds between people are however also never absolute. There are differences between people belonging to the same culture and there are points of connection between people from different cultures. A more nuanced approach to differences does not deny problems related to cultural diversity, but makes them concrete instead of absolute. Instead of reducing concrete differences to an essential identity difference, it is also possible to understand that "people differ differently" (Van Oord & Corn, 2012, p. 7). The differences we encounter in concrete interactions are each time different. The second problematic assumption is that learning intercultural competences is often understood as an individual acquisition. Some intercultural learning models emphasize the different components of intercultural competences, namely knowledge, skills and attitudes. Such models make listings of knowledge, skills and attitudes that need to be acquired in training and are called compositional models or list models (Rathje, 2007). Other approaches, called developmental models (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), emphasize the different steps an individual learner needs to take to become intercultural competent. The developmental approach of Bennett (Bennett, 1986; Bennett & Bennett, 2004). makes a distinction between six different steps in becoming intercultural sensitive (denial, defence, minimization, acceptance, adaptation and integration). In social and cultural pedagogy, there has been a lively and partly still on-going debate as to whether learning has to be understood as individual acquisition or rather as participation in social and cultural practices (Sfard, 1998; Fenwick, 2000; Hodkinson, Biesta, & James, 2008). The difference between the two views is that in one view learning takes place within the individual and in the other view, learning takes place between individuals operating in concrete situations. This latest view emphasizes that learning takes place in context and that learning encompasses more than an individual acquisition. While individual learning models tend to focus on the cognitive domain, situated learning models also focus on the concrete bodily interaction in which much more than cognition is at stake. More nuanced models argue however that there is "no reason why individual learning cannot be addressed from within a broadly situated or socio-cultural perspective" (Hodkinson, Biesta, & James, 2008, p.30). Learning to deal with cultural differences can be based on such a nuanced, socio-cultural view of learning. Such a view does not only focus on the individual acquisition, but places the individual in the

intercultural situations and acknowledges the situational conditions that have an effect on learning. Intercultural competence is then understood as the learning process by which people deal with each other and create new behaviour in the context of their interaction. Intercultural competence is the ability to find ways of dealing with each other through the creation of adapted behaviour, routines, communication, understanding, values. The outcome of intercultural competence can be defined as the creation of new forms of cultural traits: "Intercultural competence is best characterized therefore, by the transformation of intercultural interaction into culture itself. Depending on the type of interaction, the normality and familiarity created in this process forms the basis for future communication, cooperation or coexistence" (Rathje, 2007, p. 263). The learning that is at stake here, is not only cognitive but rather emotional and practical. At the same time it does not separate and decontextualize individuals, but places individuals in the physical, social and cultural dynamics and entanglements taking place in the field. Learning can be defined as becoming (Hodkinson, Biesta, & James, 2008, p.30); the reactions in intercultural situations and the creation of solutions in the field become part of those involved. This is not only an individual learning process, but a thoroughly social, situational and cultural process in which individuals depend on their own reactions as much as on the reactions of others. Intercultural competence, then, is not something defined in abstract lists or in a series of steps. It is the learning that is involved when we find answers in concrete intercultural situations. A third assumption of intercultural competences is that they will provide benefits for the organization and will lead to more effective results. Cultural awareness training is often also understood in goal oriented terms as a means to an end. The end or goal is nowadays more and more described as success or as effectiveness in dealing with intercultural situations (Rathje, 2007). What counts as effective and as success, however, depends on cultural judgments about what is desirable (Biesta, 2007). Success in the field is always concrete and related to particular prescribed goals. It is clear that those goals are based on cultural judgments about what is desirable for the military organization. We wonder however whether it is possible to define *learning* intercultural competences in terms of predefined and attainable goals, precisely because every intercultural interaction puts cultural judgements in motion. A more nuanced approach would define intercultural competences not only as a fixed goal, but also as a process that is never fully ended or reached. Collins and Pieterse (2007) propose such a process perspective on intercultural competences. Intercultural competences then are not something that can progressively be acquired, but something that asks a continuous engagement and commitment. Understanding intercultural competences as a fixed goal can lead to a "harmful and limiting interpretation of what competence actually is" (Collins & Pieterse, 2007, p.15). It can lead to the idea that, once intercultural competences are acquired, no more efforts are needed to deal with diversity. It can also lead to a limited and measurable interpretation of intercultural competences, only containing predefined knowledge, skills and attitudes. Intercultural competences can thus also be defined as a process: "a process that involves engaging in an honest exploration of one's experience of racial and cultural reality" (Collins & Pieterse, 2007, p.15). This process is an on-going process that cannot be fully captured in predefined goals, as it demands the invention of new culture and new behaviour adapted to the situation. Predefined goals are not intercultural competent instruments, because they are not sufficiently open to change and to intercultural interaction playing out exactly on the level of what is judged to be a worthwhile goal. Fixed goals also place excessive demands on individual intercultural competences and ignore the importance of external

conditions to which individuals have to respond (Rathje, 2007). The goals perspective can therefore be completed with a process perspective which allows setting the goals themselves at different moments in time. The goals of intercultural awareness training, in order to be truly intercultural, have to be subjected to a process of permanent evaluation. This is exactly taking place in the writings of Skelton and Cooper (2004) but also Wunderle (2006) on the practice of making arrest in Iraq. Predefined goals presume that we already know in advance what the best way of dealing with cultural diversity is, while a process approach also takes into account what happens during the interaction and allows new and better ways of thinking and doing to emerge from intercultural interaction. The fact that differences are often seen as potential problem, that effectiveness is often seen in goals oriented terms and that learning is often seen as individual acquisition points to a last assumption in our discussion. The underlying definition of culture is often too much in line with the large culture paradigm alone. There is often a very specific definition of culture and individuality at work. Individuals are seen as belonging to a specific culture, which is a closed system of symbols and traditions valid for a community of individuals (Engelbert, 2004). Intercultural interactions are seen as something individuals can control and appropriate after due training, understood as the individual acquisition of predefined intercultural competences that would guarantee success. The danger of individualizing or privatizing intercultural competences can also be shown when we define culture as a public matter. Geertz (1973) defines culture as a public matter that we should not confound with knowledge, skills and attitudes possessed by an individual. Knowing how to do things, developing the skills to communicate and having a respectful attitude is not the same as the concrete interaction in practice. Culture is the interaction itself, not the individual competences that are necessary for interaction. Intercultural interaction is just as well a public event with different people interacting and making sense of the event in their own way (Todd, 2011). Individual competences should not be confounded with concrete human interaction. Intercultural interaction is a public matter between people in a specific situation, not a private matter like individual knowledge, skills and attitudes. Public action cannot be reduced to a mere effect of successfully acquired private competences. Public action is shaped in interaction with others who have their own sense making and unpredicted responses to our unpredicted responses. Public interaction is a matter of searching and trying the best response at that moment, based on good preparation, but not reduced to pre-established definitions of good behaviour. Trainings based on a confusion of controllable private competences and not fully controllable public intercultural interaction will not be our best option for dealing well with diversity. If intercultural interaction is often confusing and unpredictable, we should take cultural changes and sense making processes into account when we train people for intercultural interaction. Embracing a more nuanced idea of preparation for intercultural interaction, would not only take the large culture paradigm into consideration, but also the small culture paradigm.

Preparing = practising + rehearsing

The third part of this article develops an alternative understanding of the preparation for dealing with cultural diversity. This theoretical understanding of preparation can be translated in concrete cultural awareness trainings. We propose to develop trainings that take the two divergent and sometimes conflicting paradigms of culture into account and

that accept both the usefulness and limitations of thinking cultural awareness in terms of intercultural competences. One important observation by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009, p.9) is that "there was (and still is) no widely accepted model for training and assessment of intercultural 'readiness'." In other words, the difficulties related to intercultural interactions and the difficulties related to dealing with cultural differences mean that we still do not fully know how we can prepare people for intercultural interaction. Intercultural situations and experiences cannot be fully appropriated; one consequence is that the training for intercultural situations can still not be seen as a well-defined undertaking, leading to certain success. The reason for this has already been discussed; the meaning of success and the meaning of being prepared is put at stake in intercultural interactions. The confrontation with a different orientation to the world and different identity constructions touches one's own fundamental assumptions and identity constructions. The question thus remains on-going: how to prepare people for intercultural practice in the context of military organisations?

Based on our previous analysis we argue that there are two ways of looking at preparation, and that training need to be based on both. Sennett (2012, p.6) uses the preparation for music performances as an important example in his analysis of how people with "separate or conflicting interests" learn to cooperate. Sennett (2012, p.15-16) describes a difference between practising and rehearsing in making music. This difference can be translated to the preparation for intercultural interaction:

> In making music, there's a basic distinction between practising and rehearsing; the one is a solitary experience, the other is collective. Common to both is the standard procedure of attending initially to a whole score, then focusing on particular testing passages. The two forms of work on music divide, first, because rehearsing drags musical habits into shared consciousness. When practising alone, the musician goes over his or her part again and again so that passages become ingrained routines; this is especially necessary for the musician preparing his or her part for public performance – only a very few performers (…) can commit a score to memory after a couple of run-throughs. The danger for the rest of us lies in losing sight of how ingrained passages sound to others. In rehearsing, one player can jolt another into this awareness.

The preparation for musical performance as well as intercultural practice does not only consist in the individual learning of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It also consists in a movement of turning outwards in order to play music with others or in order to reach objectives in diverse contexts. Individual musicians who practice a score of music learn the notes, learn the skills to play the notes and develop their own interpretation of the music. When they go to collective rehearsals, another type of preparation takes place. This preparation is no longer the acquisition of new knowledge or skills, since they already know the notes and know how to play it. It is a process of inventive mutual adaptation, which is according to Sennett (2012, p.14) not without conflicts, as many good musicians find it difficult to play together and to interpret music in confrontation with others: "Though they may know their own part perfectly, in rehearsal they have to learn the ego-busting art of listening, turning outward." Rehearsing is an action whereby musicians learn to listen to each other, learn in confrontation how others hear their own playing of the score, and learn to play together to reach an interesting music performance. Learning to perform together or learning to deal with each other in order to reach a result is taking place between them. It is a process of confrontation and loss, where musicians have to give up their individual interpretation of the music and interact with others. It does not mean they have to reach full consensus, it means that they have to build their cooperation from the ground up. They build a new interpretation of the

music through discussion and "through little dramas of deference and assertion" (Sennett, 2012, p.15). The preparation for intercultural situations can be understood as practising and rehearsing. While practising is a process of individual acquisition, rehearsing is a process of turning outward to others. What is at stake in preparation understood as rehearsing is being attentive for others, listening to them and make them listening to you. It is about becoming aware of what happens out there and about trying to find responses that are adapted to the situation. This kind of preparation will not give competences that can be used, this kind of preparation helps to be able to respond adequately to new situations by being present in the situation and by attuning (literally in music rehearsal) to what happens. Preparation here is an exercise to be present in the situation (Masschelein, 2008). The biggest obstacle for being present in a situation is that we already have all kinds of judgements about others, about how the music should sound and about what is going on. These judgements make that we don't fully listen, look or perceive the complexity of the interactions. Becoming attentive in rehearsals means that we have to interrupt our judgement and listen how our music sounds to others. It means that we have to listen over again to the music and that we have to build up cooperation, which is a process of invention. In intercultural situations attention also means that we have to focus on our senses rather than only on already made judgements. Adequate reactions are reactions that pay attention to the situation, that are justified in the situation. This means that it is not always possible in advance to know what is adequate. Adequate reactions sometimes need to be invented in the situation, based on good preparation, which entails acquisition of competences and exercising attentiveness to situations. When we think about preparation only in terms of the individual acquisition of competences, we address people as separate individuals who have to work on themselves (Masschelein, 2008). This is weird, because we are preparing people to operate in sometimes high-risky situations in which their life depend on others, or in which others play an essential role. It does therefore seem no more that obvious that preparation should also entail activities in which we relate to others, learn to orient ourselves to others, or learn to turn ourselves outwards instead of inwards. We should not only constitute people as competent individuals, but also as relational beings, caught up in connections and disconnections with others that always partly escape appropriation. Preparing for intercultural interaction is not only preparing to be in control, it is also preparing to be not fully in control. We do not have control over what others say to us, do to us, or how they call upon us (Masschelein, 2008). Learning to deal with diversity is learning to react in situations of mutual dependence. The experience of intercultural situations is always slightly confusing, because it is not an experience of ourselves individually. Intercultural experience comes to us as an experience of being with others. This experience has to do with being caught up in a situation where I and others mingle up in interaction (Nancy, 2000). Even in hostile interactions there is form of being mingled in, although by far not all intercultural interactions at home or abroad are hostile. Preparing for such confrontation is not only done in the safe acquisition of competences, but also by being in contact with whom we need to establish "a relation of giving and receiving" (Masschelein & Simons, 2002, p.605). Preparing for intercultural situations needs doing, undergoing intercultural experiences. No individual learning can replace collective experience: "The usefulness of reflexivity in dealing with cultural encounters, whether in-the-moment or retrospectively also, depends on the extent of our past experiences. Someone with little experience of unfamiliar environments, for instance, will not have the same range of experiences to draw on in approaching the question of otherness as someone who is

well travelled and/or accustomed to dealing with strangers" (Blasco, 2012, p.482). This does not mean that sufficient experience alone will do the trick, as each interaction is unique and asks for new adequate reactions. It is the habit of relating to others that matters in intercultural experience, the habit of sensing connection and disconnection and of finding unique answers in that place and time. Finding answers is not only a matter of active control, but also of passive sensing and of responsive answers. 'Practising' individual knowledge, skills and attitudes is important as a preparation to intercultural situations. Next to this, there is also need to 'rehearse' with others. This rehearsing enables relating to others and allows the individual to experience the confrontation of self and other at the border of one's own sense making and identity building. Rehearsing involves being attentive to others, and is something we give rather than have. We change or transform who we are by this attention. What our self means and what our fundamental judgements are undergoes a confrontation at the borders of self and other. Rehearsing is relating to others, it is the dealing with others that has a preparatory impact, and teaches us to make sense in unforeseen situations. The idea that preparing for intercultural interaction can be seen as rehearsing is based on the small culture paradigm and on the idea that people always make new sense of themselves and others. The large culture paradigm still remains important in order to acquire sufficient knowledge about other assumptions, values and worldviews. An adequate knowledge about the larger framework in which individuals and groups operate must however not be limited to culture alone. Coulby (2006) shows that not only cultural knowledge is important to understanding people and groups, also wider historical, economic and political contexts play a paramount role in people's understanding and aspirations for themselves and the world. Political and economic motives play a major role in identity formation processes and in understanding the complexity of contestations and interrelations between groups in the battle space as well as at home. The small culture paradigm cannot replace the study of larger frameworks, it offers however a necessary complement.

Culture eats strategy for breakfast

In this article, we confronted an understanding of cultural awareness training as the individual acquisition of intercultural competences with more recent theorizing in culture and education, which emphasizes the changeable nature of culture and the social and cultural nature of learning. We developed a more nuanced understanding of preparation for cultural diversity incorporating both practising and rehearsing, understood as individual learning and as collective learning taking place between people interacting in concrete situations. Preparation is not only understood as an individual self that acquires competences, but also as a transformation of oneself and one's understanding of the world. Preparation is not only an inward process entailing the enlargement of the self, but also an outward process entailing experiences of being not fully in control and of dealing with others played out at the border of one's identity and sense making. As it is also the case for private companies (and was famously illustrated by Peter Drucker's quote *Culture eats strategy for breakfast)*, recent experiences in operations like Iraq or Afghanistan have reminded us the crucial role of understanding cultural factors as an operational necessity. The difficulties encountered for stabilizing various regions where tribal linkages are at stake but also the amount of casualties resulting from green on blue attacks emphasized the importance of communicating and

building swift trust with indigenous forces and local actors. Even if we know that, from a military perspective, it is not the cultural dimensions per se which are of first importance but rather their impacts on the organizational objectives and, in this case, on the conduct of military operations. With that in mind, military organizations have tried to develop the intercultural competences of their military personnel. Depending on the countries, cultural awareness training has taken various forms. Some use lectures and short lectures but, if too short, they tend to confer a false sense of fully understanding the cultural complexities of the area of operation and, if too expanded, a sense that culture is impossible to fully understand. Others have used cultural awareness 'pocket' tools like smart cards. But, referring to simple terms with do's and don'ts, those tools tend to reduce human interactions to generalizations that can be described in an IKEA-style manuals (Bergman, 2013). Despite recent greater consideration for cultural dimensions, the field of cultural awareness still remains a weakness for many military organizations; they continue to consider those dimensions as less important than the kinetic ones. Also at the institutional level, the existence of a gap in the training of intercultural competences has been stressed (e.g. during the summit held in October 2013 at NATO headquarters on "*Assessing the impact and role of cultural awareness and public perceptions in NATO operations*"). One of the difficulties seems to refer to the lack of common definition of cultural awareness but also the level of expertise military personnel should reach. As previously mentioned, the concept of culture and its operational considerations are not easy to define and, consequently, to implement neither to measure. But, from our perspective, because there is no universal or *one-size-fits-all* approach to teach culture, there is also no standardized training of it. Instead of focusing on a pre-deployment training of those intercultural competences, we need to develop a more holistic approach in the educational curriculum. Because learning while being deployed can lead to major failures, learning by practising and rehearsing seems definitely to be a better option. Practising during the educational process and, in a second stance, rehearsing it during the pre-deployment training -with immersion training based on real life exercises- is one of the most effective ways for developing a cultural sensibility among military personnel.

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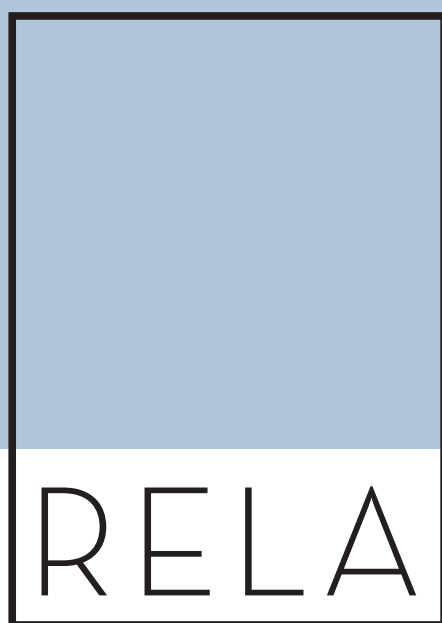
Aims & Scope

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

RELA invites original, scholarly articles that discuss the education and learning of adults from different academic disciplines, perspectives and traditions. It encourages diversity in theoretical and methodological approach and submissions from non-English speakers. All published contributions in RELA are subjected to a rigorous peer review process based on two moments of selection: an initial editorial screening and a double-blind review by at least two anonymous referees. Clarity and conciseness of thought are crucial requirements for publication.

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