

“ADULT LEARNING & COMMUNITIES IN A WORLD ON THE MOVE: BETWEEN NATIONAL TENSIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL CHALLENGES”

UNIVERSITY OF LOWER SILESIA, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
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“Rewriting sociality“ – sociographicity as a concept to comprehend emancipatory practice and social change

Civil learning, emancipatory practices and processes of social change are in the focus of this paper. The authors will explore the dialectic relation between structures and subjects and the interplay of individual and collective modes of learning. We argue that theories dealing with this dialectical relationship overlook the relevance of civil spheres and new learning environments (such as social movements) which offer opportunities for a learning society. The meso-level draws attention towards an important intermediary space for civil bargaining that resides “between systemic macro-structures and the biographical micro-world, two spheres that are drifting further and further apart” (Alheit 1999: 79).

Against this background the paper will highlight the ability of social actors, groups and communities to critically reflect on sociality, and the question of how spaces of living together are created and constructed with respect to: Equality, dignity, social recognition and living and education opportunities. These reflections involve questioning established social relationships and inherent power regimes, the impact of these power-structured relations for individuals, social groups and society, and frame society as something that has the ability to learn. The theoretical concept of sociographicity is employed to map processes of rewriting sociality, and relate this process to biographical learning, community learning, and societal learning. Sociographicity can be described as the ability of individuals and social groups to critically reflect on sociality and, according to the concept of “biographicity” (Alheit and Dausien 2000), to experience social spaces and relations as “mouldable” or “shapeable”.

Sociographicity is collaboratively elaborated by the two authors in order to reflect on processes of rewriting sociality. This reflection draws on empirical research of both authors on social movements, emancipatory practices and social change processes (e.g. biographical accounts of students, an in-depth study of a community in struggle and a module on praxis; learning processes of social movements, learning dispositions in the context of social inequality). We review biographicity as a rich and generative concept, and an important fundament for understanding processes of rewriting sociality. Further the relation between sociographicity and biographicity, conceptual overlaps and differences will be highlighted. Finally, the paper focuses on some aspects of social movement practices which seem to be relevant for conceptualising sociographicity.

References

Alheit, P. (1999). ‘On a contradictory way to the Learning Society: A critical approach’, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 31(1), 66-82.

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Alheit, P. and Dausien, B. (2000). 'Biographicity as a Basic Resource of Lifelong Learning'. In P. Alheit, J. Beck, E. Kammler, R. Taylor and H. Salling Olesen (Eds.), *Lifelong Learning inside and outside schools*. (p. 400-422). Roskilde: University of Roskilde, University of Bremen, University of Leeds.