

Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

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Adult Education Society - Belgrade

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ESREA 9th Triennial European Research Conference

**ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH AND PRACTICE:
BETWEEN THE WELFARE STATE AND NEOLIBERALISM**

19 – 22 September 2019

Book of Abstracts

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BELONGING TO A PLACE OR NOT – IMMIGRANTS’ PERCEPTION OF PLACE AS A SPACE FOR LEARNING

Laura Formenti, Silvia Luraschi
University of Milano Bicocca, Italy

Ali Osman, Camilla Thunborg, Agnieszka Bron
Stockholm University, Sweden

This symposium aims at discussing the concepts of place and space with regard to immigrant’s perceptions and learning when arriving to a new geographical place in a new society.

Space is a critical notion in the debate of immigration and integration of immigrants. It is about implications in how immigrants craft symbolic spaces of belonging in their host societies and find their position in the different spaces they are embedded and aspire to access in sometime un welcoming or at best suspicious host societies.

This symposium will discuss the concept of space and learning in relation to immigrant’s perception of the new place. Space is conceived as cognitive, relational schemes where the social world is produced and reproduced, comprehended, assumed and represented. Their sense of belonging to the new place, and making a living and life. We would be particularly interested in a discussion on:

- Theoretical notions of space and how we can theorise the relation between individuals, the place where they live and the social spaces they are embedded in and the dialectical relation between individual experience and the place.
- Discuss the methodological challenges in studying the notion of space in relation to immigrants’ life experience and how spaces produce, reproduced, shape the individuals that are embedded in these spaces, but also how they shape the different spaces they are embedded in.
- How we can analyse cross- spaces that migrants are embedded in and how these spaces facilitate or limit their action/agency. Document empirically and conceptualize the embeddedness of immigrants in transnational spaces and their strategies to respond to their own needs and/or the needs of relatives in the home country; and/or the needs of their host country.

The symposium uses examples from research on immigrants in Sweden and Italy.

The symposium is significant to the research theme as immigration is a central topic in neo-liberal times. It is also relating to how place is perceived by immigrants and become spaces for learning. It also pays attention to how biographical approaches could be seen as ways of both understanding the complexity of integration as well as a way to enhance integration.

The symposium will start with two presentations of papers, followed by a shared discussion, focusing on the theoretical notions of space, the methodological challenges and cross-space analyses.

PRESENTATION OF PAPER 1: SENSOBIOGRAPHIC WALK: ENHANCING A CRITICAL DIALOGICAL STORYING OF SPACES WITH ASYLUM SEEKERS AND NATIVE CITIZENS

Laura Formenti, Silvia Luraschi
University of Milano Bicocca, Italy

The paper describes a participatory research project in Northern Italy, Province of Lecco, involving asylum seekers, citizens, professionals, and artists, and aimed at contrasting current commonsense discourses, presenting asylum seekers as passive and completely dependent on external support (Chouliaraki 2012), or associated with illegality, violence, and crime (Bennett et al. 2013). The systemic analysis at a territorial level shows the lights and shadows of projects and activities developed by public administration and NGO professionals to support positive exchanges between asylum seekers and the host society.

As adult educators, we are convinced of the benefits of diversity, and the learning potential of difference. So, we seek to chronicle the differences in perception and their effect on the individual/collective strategies of space construction, inside and outside the hosting centers for refugees and asylum seekers (SPRAR), housing facilities (CAS), and public spaces. More specifically, our attention in this paper will focus on differences in “sensescapes” among subjects who live in the “same” territory. Space is concrete and symbolic, a construction emerging from ongoing interactions of/in material and immaterial worlds. Movement has a special role in it: we can only know the place by moving through it, using our bodies to perceive the quality of the environment, and developing a theory which is primarily based on emotions and relationships.

The overall approach of this study is based on embodied and embedded narratives (Formenti, West, & Horsdal, 2014), as an evolution of biographical methods in adult learning. The sensobiographic walk (Järvi-luoma, 2016), which couples a native with a migrant person for a dialogic interview ‘on the move’, is here used within an ethno-pedagogical and critical framework, to involve all the participants – researchers, migrants, social workers, and citizens – in the dynamic and dialogic co-construction of a layered and complex representation of space, starting from sharing their everyday experience, memories, and different perspectives. This method allows to chronicle the construction of space through an embodied here-and-now experience, connected to narratives of the there-and-then and reacting to the constraining presence of ‘the other’, bringing difference into the dialogue. The affective, dialogic, co-constructive nature of the methodology builds ‘a space’ which is unique to the conversation, and illuminates the multiple layers of interpretation which are possible.

We want to raise a critical debate about the common way of telling stories of migration and adult learning, by which the body is often excluded, the physical context objectified, and living human beings categorized. In order to do so, we will present some qualitative data from the sensobiographic walks, analyzed from the perspective of space in a *sensible* (Bois & Austry, 2007; Lachance, Edmond & Vinit, 2018) and biographical framework. This would bring, hopefully, to a wider pedagogical reflection about innovative ways to develop agency, justice, and an ecological relation with spaces (Higgins, 2016). These walks will enhance dialogue between (at least couples of) native citizens and asylum seekers, of different gender, age, and educational background. This could be a first and maybe small step, in the territory at hand, to sustain new forms of participation and solidarity.

PRESENTATION 2: FORCED TO STAY OR FORMING A SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE MILL TOWN

Ali Osman, Camilla Thunborg and Agnieszka Bron
Stockholm University, Sweden

The second presentation is a paper based on an ongoing research project called: Spatial pockets of (in-) equalities. The project aims at both exploring and enhancing the educational- and life careers of young adults (i.e. 18–25).

The paper takes its point of departure in the narratives of five immigrants' that were placed at two asylum seekers homes in a small Mill town in Sweden, and then moved to apartments in the same area. The paper focuses on how they perceive the Mill town as a social space and a space for learning. Departing from different concepts of social space, (Lefebvre, 1974) relational space (Massey, 2005) and translocal space (Hedberg & Carmo 2012) as well as perspectives on biographical learning (Alheit, 1994, Alheit & Dausien, 2002) and biographical work (Bron & Thunborg, 2016), the aim of the of the paper is to deepen the discussion of how biographical learning connects with space, how it can be further examined and analysed.

In the paper four biographical interviews with the five asylum seekers in the Mill town as well as semi-structured interviews with key persons in the Mill town, statistics and ethnographic data from observations of the Mill town are analysed and the findings discussed in relation to the debate of integration.

DEBATING PUBLIC POLICY FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE – ARE THERE TENSIONS AND AMBIVALENCES?

The convenors of the ESREA Research Network on Policy Studies in Adult Education: Rosanna Barros, John Holford, Marcella Milana and Vida Mohorčič Špolar

I. Summary:

In contemporary Europe central to the reform of the welfare state is a neoliberal redefinition of the means and purposes in government of public goods. Indeed, new forms of governance appeared, where networks and flows from heterogeneous sources and different kinds of organizations predominate and combine to bring local, national and global factors into public-private political agendas and their mandates. In this scenario, different national states have different capabilities for interacting with the global structured agenda for public policies (Dale & Robertson, 2014) .

Therefore, there is a need for debating how are the current redefinitions in government affecting national public policy for Adult Education in different contexts throw Europe. In particular there is a necessity to look toward the implications for the public institutions that should pro-