

Preface

In the emerging history of andragogy - the ‘Wissenschaft’ or science of the learning and education of adults - we find a continuous interest in adult education in other countries. Several names and ideas reached international currency in the century between Grundtvig (Denmark) and Freire (Brazil). The (English) university extension movement, the (Danish) ‘Folkehøjskole’, the (Swedish) study circle, and the (American) encounter groups have become models for adult education in many other countries; often the differences between the “borrowed” and the original have not been perceived. Research shows a lot of cross-cultural communication; an example is the British-Dutch-German relationships in adult education between 1880 and 1930 (Friedenthal-Haase, Hake & Marriott, 1991). International travel and exchange have, from the early years in the adult education movement, offered key educators of adults in various countries an important way to shape their international understanding; Lindeman (USA) traveled to Denmark, Mansbridge (Great Britain) to Australia, and Canada, and Borinski (Germany) to Scandinavia and Dziubinska (Poland).

Through decades, even today, the ‘international guild of adult education’ can be found in face-to-face meetings held in Frascati, Italy (Fourth Conference on Comparative Research in Adult Education 1988); Ibadan, Nigeria (International Conference on Comparative Adult Education 1991); Prague, Czechoslovakia (the World Congress of Comparative Education 1992); Ljubljana, Slovenia (the ‘Rethinking Adult Education for Development’ Conference 1993); Bamberg, Germany (first conference of the International Society for Adult Comparative Education ISCAE 1995), and Hamburg, Germany (the CONFINTEA V Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 1997) - to name a few of the older ones.

The book title claims ‘essential’ readings in International and Comparative Adult Education. These were the basic ideas to accomplish this expectation:

- The texts should document the long path of international/comparative perspectives in adult education and give examples of the work done.
- ‘Old’, original, classic texts, scattered throughout many places, should be made available
- The selection should help (new) researchers by supplying standards of comparative work, methods, and experiences (‘standing on the shoulder of giants’). To this end, we wanted to refer to reputable authors that have a name in the field and must not be forgotten.
- To keep it handy, the length of each text should be about 15 pages, but each text still has to be understandable by itself (a problem when cutting chapters out of a longer text). An introductory text was supplied where needed, referring to the context of the contribution and explaining what we saw as the specific values of the text.

Indeed, one might doubt that all texts can be labeled ‘essential’. But we hope that the selection will essentially contribute to the quality and historical foundation of international and comparative adult education. And we know: We had to leave out many essential texts that would have been worth including.

This book is not meant as ‘state of the art’, but as ‘the way of the art’, describing historical episodes, stations, and developments in international and comparative adult education. Most of the texts are published before the year 2000. Making available the ideas and experiences of previous scholars should help build a cumulative knowledge of our discipline. ‘State of the art’, representing the latest literature and developments, would mean a different book¹.

What we cannot finally decide - and the title of the book documents this: There exist different understandings of the term “comparative adult education”. In a narrow sense, it labels only research that includes at least two countries and the attempt to identify similarities and differences:

A study in comparative international adult education ... must include one or more aspects of adult education in two or more countries or regions ... one attempts to identify the similarities and differences between the aspects under study.²

However, there exists another wide-open understanding, including everything that deals with knowledge about international topics:

It is generally accepted that most of what is included under the rubric of comparative studies in adult education, at least in its published form, does not involve comparison in the strict sense.³

For our selection of readings, we decided to include a broad range of texts making available knowledge about other countries. Of course, a comparison can be made intra-national. However, because this publication should focus on the specifics that apply when comparing on the level of countries, we narrowed our approach to describing and comparing countries. Because that is the purpose of international comparative adult education: to provide us with knowledge about other countries. Even more: to let us understand better the learning and education in our own country. Even more: to open and widen our thinking about adult education, transcending it beyond the borders of our thinking what is ‘normal’ – to escape the ‘hermeneutic circle’, or at least soften the borders of our understanding of the rich wide world of adult learning and education. This better and broader understanding makes it especially important for the education of our students: to help them overcome some of the ‘natural’ borders in their perceptions and judgments.

Furthermore, not forgetting the ambivalently discussed ‘borrowing’ - alt-

¹ See for example *Internationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung*, 40(1) (2017).

² Charters, Alexander N., & Hilton, Ronald J. (Eds.) (1989). *Landmarks in international adult education. A comparative analysis* (p. 3). London: Routledge.

³ Titmus, Collin J. (1999). Comparative adult education: Some reflections on the process. In Reischmann, Jost, Bron Jr, Michał, & Jelenc, Zoran (Eds.). *Comparative adult education 1998. The contribution of ISCAE to an emerging field of study* (pp. 33-50, here p. 36). Ljubljana Slovenia: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.

though Bray (2008, p. 34) argues that “borrowing is perhaps a misnomer since it implies that the models will be given back after use, which is very rare”¹. Many examples of ‘transfer’ between countries can be found in the history of international adult education and will be found in the present and future. Borrowing is, of course, not understood as a one-to-one transfer but embodies various adaptations to the different cultures. Especially when it comes to funding, it is helpful to argue strategically with borrowing: Funding (political) organizations like the justification “to discover educational miracles abroad (‘best practice’) and to bring them home” (Käpplinger, 2017, p. 33)²!

This book is published in English, although the editor is German. English has become the ‘lingua franca’ for international exchange. This, of course, has advantages for professional exchange and marketing. But it also has disadvantages: Language is widely acknowledged as a possible pitfall. This can be proven in many of the following texts. In one of the early publications, Besnard & Liétard (1986, p. 4) noted in their editorial note: “the translation of the present text from French into English was made in ECLE [European Center for Leisure and Education, Prague]. Since there is uncertainty in adult education terminology world-wide, and important differences exist especially between French and English terminology, the translation was not easy”³.

But the problem goes beyond just translation: It makes no sense to refer to the knowledge and experience of the non-English research literature because the latter does not exist for the international readership. Pöggler⁴ already 1979 (p. 14) regretted that publications in not prevalent languages (‘ungeläufige Sprachen’) often are not adopted, and he especially named Dutch, Danish, and Swedish publications. “We should not forget that comparative research in adult education has also been undertaken since the sixties in South East Europe. It is a pity that the comparative studies ... are only available in the Serbo-Croatian language” (Pöggeler, 1994, p. 11)⁵. Today even German is no longer a language that can be shared internationally. By that, people from non-English countries, when working in the international context, lose most of their research background – theory, methodology, and content that is based on their native language. Quite drastically, Guo & Beckett (2007, p. 117) call this to attention:

the increasing dominance of English language worldwide is contributing to neocolonialism

¹ Bray, Mark (2008). The multifaceted field of comparative education. In Reischmann, Jost, & Bron Jr, Michał (Eds.), *Comparative adult education 2008* (pp. 33-44). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

² Käpplinger, Bernd (2017). Standing on the shoulders of giants – building on existing knowledge. *Internat. Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung* (pp. 29-42). Köln: Böhlau.

³ Besnard, Pierre, & Liétard, Bernard (1986). *Adult education in Europe. Methodological framework for comparative studies II*. European Centre for Leisure and Education. No 23. Prague.

⁴ Pöggeler, Franz (1979). Einleitung. In Leirman, Walter & Pöggeler, Franz (Eds.), *Erwachsenenbildung in fünf Kontinenten* (pp. 9-14). Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

⁵ Pöggeler, Franz (1994). Introduction – trends of andragogical research in Europe. In Jarvis, Peter, & Pöggeler, Franz (Eds.), *Development in the education of adults in Europe* (pp. 9-15). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

by empowering the already powerful and leaving the disadvantages further behind ... putting them in danger to losing their first languages, cultures and identities, and contributing to the devaluation of local knowledge and culture.¹

The language problem was also experienced when compiling this book. But what is the alternative? Without English, there would be no 'worldwide' exchange possible. It seems we have to live with that handicap. Perhaps today, at least for written communication, translation software offers some hope.

Of course, what needs to be considered is that the objectivity and reliability of the information differ, depending on which specific type of research they are generated. Some might better be labeled as 'report' rather than as 'research'. The work in the international field has more traps and pitfalls than in one's own country: personal blindness, political correctness, unavailable data, misunderstanding of language are just a few to mention. Many of the following contributions will deal with those problems, hoping that knowing them will make the international and comparative work sounder and more enjoyable.

Selecting texts for a reader becomes stressful after a short while. More and more texts show up, and it is painful to leave out possible texts that are also important. Hopefully, our selection will lead our readers a bit further into international and comparative adult education, will make more and more profound work possible, and ease the path to the cumulative knowledge of our discipline.

Many colleagues supported me with their advice, comments, and critique. Thanks to Lore Arthur, Marcie Boucouvalas, Michał Bron Jr, Martha Friedenthal-Haase, Chris Duke, Barry Hake, John Henschke, Alan Knox, Stuart Marriott, Ekkehard Nuissl, Katarina Popovic, Michael Schemmann, Alan Tuckett, and especially Bernd Käßlinger, who motivated me to build this book, and suggested the book-title. Looking back over decades, I also want to commemorate dear friends - Alexander N. Charters, Peter Jarvis, Jindra Kulich, Walter Leirman, Dusan Savicevic, Colin Titmus.

This book was prepared in the Corona-years 2020/2021. We were used to a world without borders. We were used to travels and face-to-face encounters with dear and valued old and new colleagues. These travels, the friendships growing out of this work, are persistently praised in many papers as one of the enriching outcomes of the international work. We hope this publication will keep the appetite awake to enter and stay in the field. Moreover, we hope that the good old times come back with open borders and open hearts for us and adult education.

Tübingen, March 2021

Jost Reischmann

¹ Guo, Yan, & Beckett, Gulbahar H.(2007). The hegemony of English as a global language: Reclaiming local knowledge and culture in China. *Convergence*, XL(1-2), 117-131.

Jost Reischmann¹ (2000)

1. The Meaning of ‘International Comparative’, Problems, and Perspectives²

Knowledge about the education of adults in other countries can be gained from various sources:

A first source, mostly evaluated as ‘pre-scientific’, comprises ‘traveler’s tales’, the reports we get from international travelers. Such reports are mainly delivered by traveling writers or vacation-makers, but also by scholars who attend a conference abroad and have to report to their funding agency - and publish this report at the same time in a journal. If these descriptions are more systematic, they are labeled ‘traveler’s reports’, or - if they are less systematic, ‘traveler’s tales’.

These types of international documents are mostly characterized as ‘subjective-impressionistic’. Their value is evaluated ambivalent: Critically it is argued that, because of the random observation and the subjective description, it is not clear how reliable and how representative the descriptions are. On the other hand, the plea is made that especially in this subjective focus of eye-witnesses there might be strength from this type of reports. In the framework of a new appreciation of qualitative research, these reports may find a new interest.

At the scientific level, six different types of international-comparative research are identified:

1. During the 1970s and 1980s mainly country-reports were presented. ‘Adult Education in the Republic of ...’ is a typical title of this type of report. These papers tried to describe the system of adult and continuing education in one particular country. They could be written by an author of this country or by a person from outside. Some of these reports were, and are, rather impressionistic. Others followed a well-developed outline and structure.
2. During and after the 1980s we find an increasing number of program-reports. These describe foreign adult education programs, institutions, and organizations. Examples of this type can be found in the publications of Charters/Hilton (1989) or the case studies collected by Knox (1989). Included in this type (sometimes presented in a separate category) are the topic-oriented studies or the problem approach: a certain topic or problem is discussed in the context of a nation.

Country reports as well as topic-oriented studies and the problem approach

¹ Jost Reischmann (<http://www.reischmannfam.de/>) is retired Professor of Andragogy at Bamberg University in Germany. He was President of the International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE - <http://www.iscae.org>) 1993-2010. In 1999 he was nominated and inducted in the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame (<https://halloffame.outreach.ou.edu/inductions/hof-1999/reischmann>).

² This paper is with slight changes based on Reischmann, Jost (2000). *ISCAE - International Society for Comparative Adult Education*. <http://www.ISCAE.org>.

focus more on 'international', less on 'comparative'. Because when only one country or program is presented, nothing to compare is available. When a number of country-reports or program-reports are collected in a textbook, the readers must draw the comparative conclusions themselves. Especially when an author presents his own country or program it is difficult to refer to another national system. If, for example, a German author describes a German program for a publication in English: should parallels be drawn to the English, Scottish, US-American, Canadian, or Australian systems?

3. A third type is juxtaposition. Data from two or more countries are presented. These reports show: In country A we can observe a, in country B we find b. A series of statistical reports represent this type. But no explicit comparison - where are the similarities, what are the differences? - is given. An example of this type in Germany is the international volume of the *Handbuch der Erwachsenenbildung* (Handbook of Adult Education, 1978), edited by Franz Pöggeler, or Peter Jarvis' 'Perspectives on Adult Education and Training in Europe' (1992).

This juxtaposition can also be topic- or problem-oriented when a topic is presented in a series of contributions from various countries: In Pöggeler's 'The State and Adult Education' (1990) a series of articles deal with the role of the state in individual countries.

4. The comparison goes one step further: It reports from two or more countries, and an explicit comparison is offered which attempts to make the similarities and differences understandable. ISCAE (International Society for Comparative Adult Education) uses here mostly the definition of its founding father:

A study in comparative international adult education ... must include one or more aspects of adult education in two or more countries or regions. Comparative study is not the mere placing side by side of data ... such juxtaposition is only the prerequisite for comparison. At the next stage, one attempts to identify the similarities and differences between the aspects under study ... The real value of comparative study emerges only from ... the attempt to understand why the differences and similarities occur and what their significance is for adult education in the countries under examination ..." (Charters/ Hilton 1989, p. 3).

An example can be found in the final chapter of Charters/Hilton (1989).

5. Finally, field- and method-reflections are seen as part of international comparative adult education: reflections about the methods, strategies, and concepts of international comparison, and summarizing reports about developments in the international comparative field on a material or meta-level.
6. A bit outside of this system, but still counted as part of the international tradition, are reports from the adult educational work of international and transnational organizations such as UNESCO, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank. [...]

A difficult chapter: International research and volunteering in an international society

It certainly is challenging to get a wider view of our world through an international orientation. But many handicaps make this work difficult. Just to name three of them:

The first handicap is *language*: international communication takes place in English. For the majority of the world this is a foreign language. Communicating, even more, publishing in this foreign language takes many times more effort than researching in the native context: In discussions, the native English speakers are always faster; in publishing the secretaries are often not trained to write English. For publication always a native speaker must be found for proofreading. Institutions, laws, political or cultural backgrounds are often so different that it is difficult to find an appropriate translation. The English literature often is not available, and it makes no sense to refer to the knowledge and experience of non-English research literature because it does not exist for the international readership. That means that people from non-English countries lose their whole theory, methodology, and content research background when working in the international context.

Another handicap is the *reliable attendance at central international meetings*. Person-to-person-contacts are absolutely necessary for this field. To enter this field and to stay in its network is nearly impossible without traveling and being visible. This means a high investment of time, energy, and money. And this investment has to be made also in times when no comparative project is carried out and no extra project money is available. This makes it difficult especially for young scholars to come into the field of international comparative adult education or to stay in it when a comparative project is finished.

Of course, international comparative projects have much *higher costs and a lot more problems* than research done in one country (see the vivid description in the contribution of Blais and Henschke in this book p. 285ff). A foreign partner must be found and has to be convinced to join a project. Many details have to be clarified before and during the research process and at the end for the publication, needing continuing exchange. In most cases, one partner has an extra load of translation, when the other partner does not speak his language. It is difficult to find foundations that are willing to support international projects. National foundations are often not interested in paying the costs of the foreign partner. Even when one researcher is able to travel to two or more countries and thus avoids the handicap of co-authorship, comparative research means a high money-, time-, and effort-investment. Regarding the outcome of these investments for the career of a scholar, it is often more beneficial to work at the national level. Funding and supporting agencies should do more not only to assist international comparative research projects but also to encourage the possibility of bringing young scholars

into this field. Also, ways should be found to support volunteering in international societies.

Perspectives

International-comparative adult education is basically justified on the grounds of two central arguments (for a more differentiated portrayal see Kidd (1975 – in this book p. 71) or Knoll (in Reischmann, Bron & Jelenc, 1999): On a practical level ‘borrowing’ is expected - that we learn from foreign experiences to adapt successful experiences for our own practical work and to avoid mistakes. On a theoretical level, it is expected that the international-comparative perspective helps to overcome ethnocentric blindness - that we learn, irritated by observations in a foreign context, to better perceive and understand our own field and system.

Certainly, cultural differences limit the transfer from one country to another. Comparative research - by helping to understand the differences/similarities and their significance for adult education - clarifies the possibilities and limits of understanding and borrowing. Both are indispensable in a world where in many countries experiences in the various fields of adult education are gained and needed.

The technical development in very few years has definitely made international communication much easier: Fax (meanwhile outdated), today E-mail has speeded up this exchange significantly. While for the 1995 conference of the International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE) E-mail could be used in perhaps 10 percent of the exchanges this increased to more than 80 percent at the 1998 conference. The ISCAE-report of these two conferences (Reischman, Bron & Jelenc, 1999) with editors in three countries and more than twenty authors could only be prepared in the given time with the help of E-mail. But technology is only one part of international exchange. International professional organizations as ISCAE (International Society for Comparative Adult Education, www.ISCAE.org), EAEA (European Association for the education of Adults), NIACE (National Institute for Adult Continuing education), ICAE (International Council for Adult Education) – just to name some - offer a person at the other end of the telephone- or E-mail-line. And they offer a chance not only to maintain virtual contact but also to have face-to-face-contact, serving the international comparison and cooperation

- by supplying a network of contacts to other comparatists,
 - by fostering exchange through conferences, and
 - by documenting and sharing the developments and standards in publications.
- These international professional institutions invite researchers to participate; they offer manifold chances for becoming active in the field by opening access to contents, persons, and institutions.

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2. History, Development

2.1 Significant Events in Comparative Adult Education¹

The selection covers some of the major meetings of scholars, publication of important works, and starting points of sustained efforts pertinent to the comparative adult education movement until 2000.

- 1949 International Conference of Adult Education (UNESCO) held at Elsinore, Denmark
- 1958 Publication of *Adult education: A comparative study* by Robert Peers
- 1960 World Conference on Adult Education (UNESCO) held at Montreal, Canada
- 1960 Founding of the International Congress of University Adult Education (ICUAE)
- 1964 Publication of *History of Islamic origins of Western education* by M. Nakosteen
- 1966 First International Conference on The Comparative Study of Adult Education at Exeter, (NH), USA
- 1967 First graduate course in comparative adult education offered by the Ontario Institute for the Study of Education
- 1968 Founding of World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES)
- 1970 Start of publication of series of annotated bibliographies by Kulich on adult education in Europe
- 1972 International Experts' Meeting "An Agenda for Comparative Studies in Adult Education", Nordborg, Denmark
- 1972 Third International Conference on Adult Education (UNESCO), in Tokyo, Japan
- 1972 World Congress of Comparative International Education Societies, Ottawa, Canada
- 1973 International Council of Adult Education (ICAE) founded
- 1975 Publication *Comparative studies in adult education: An anthology*. Bennett, C. et al.
- 1981 Publication *Comparing adult education: Worldwide* by Alexander Charters & Associates
- 1983 Publication of *Adult education in Europe*, by P. Maydl et al.
- 1985 Fourth International Conference on Adult Education (UNESCO) in Paris, France
- 1987 Comparative Adult Education Conference (Open University), held at Oxford, U.K.
- 1987 Founding of the Committee for Study and Research in Comparative Adult Education (CSRCAE)
- 1988 International Seminar on Comparative Research in Adult Education organized by Centro Europeo Dell'Educazione (CEDE), held at Frascati (Roma), Italy
- 1991 World Conference on Comparative Adult Education, held at Ibadan, Nigeria
- 1991 Founding of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA)
- 1992 Colin Titmus chaired a working group for comparative adult education at the VIII World Council of Comparative Education Societies in Prague, Czechoslovakia.
- 1992 Renaming of CSRCAE in "International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE)" at Anaheim, USA
- 1995 First conference of ISCAE, Bamberg, Germany
- 1997 UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education CONFITEA V in Hamburg, Germany
- 1998 Second conference of ISCAE, Radovljica, Slovenia

¹ Based on: Charters, A., & Siddiqui, D.A. (1989). *Comparative Adult Education: State of the Art* (pp. 20-22). Vancouver: Centre for Continuing Education. University of British Columbia,

4. International Adult Education

Jost Reischmann

4.1 Summary: Country reports, program reports, juxtaposition

This chapter gives some examples of studies that illustrate different types of and approaches to international and comparative work. Again, we refer to older sources to show how the field developed.

Around 1970 several projects started in Europe, presenting primarily country reports.

Council of Europe: “Permanent Education”

The Council of Europe, Council for Cultural Cooperation, Committee for Out-of-School Education, published, starting in 1968, a series of brochures in “Studies on Permanent Education”. This project can be labeled “topic-oriented”: Not countries are compared, but a specific selected phenomenon in each country: permanent education.

22 brochures with 17 to 98 pages were published until 1974, partly concerning countries (France, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, Italy, and Spain), partly with general references to the idea of permanent education (i.e., “Permanent Education. An agent of change in the present educational system” (6/1969), or “Permanent Education. Future shape” (15/1970)). 32 experts¹ from 12 West-European countries participated in the preliminary work leading to the study “*Fundamentals for an integrated educational policy*” (21/1971, p. 55 ff.). In this brochure – similar to the other “general” brochures - no reference is made to any of the previous country-reports in this project. The country reports were not used as a data basis for further deliberation and had no visible influence on the general reflections. Many of the country-studies include a good proportion of school education. It seems it was easier to describe school systems, as they are highly structured, bureaucratically organized, thus could be easily documented.

These papers contain many “would”, “should”, “could”: Not presenting facts, but hopes for the future. One example from the Denmark-study (2/1968, 6f): “It

¹ Luciano Benadusi, Rome, Italy. Tessa Blackstone, London, UK. Franco Bonacina, Rome, Italy. Jean Capelle, Bergerac, France. Werner Clement, Innsbruck, Austria. Louis Cros, Paris, France. Bernhard Dieckmann, Heidelberg, West-Germany. M. Dubois, Boulogne-Billancourt, France. F. Edding, Berlin, West-Germany. Kjell Eide, Oslo, Norway. H.H. Frese, Leiden, Netherlands. Robert Hari, Geneve, Suisse. Mark Hodges, London, UK. Erik Holst, København, Denmark. Henri Janne, Bruxelles, Belgium. Georges Lanteri-Laura, Strasbourg, France. Ulf Larsson, Stockholm, Sweden. J. R. Lauwerys, London, UK. Francois Lebouteux, Paris, France. Martinez Lopez, Madrid, Spain. A. Moles, Paris, France. Hans-Erik Östlundh, Stockholm, Sweden. Werner Rasmussen, Copenhagen, Denmark. Hedi Rudolph, Berlin, West-Germany. J.A. Simpson, Exeter, UK. Bertrand Schwartz, Nancy, France. Michel Tardy, Strasbourg, France. Hans Tietgens, Frankfurt, West-Germany. Ingelise Udjus, Oslo, Norway. H. Veldkamp, s’Gravenhage, Netherlands. Aldo Visalberghi, Roma, Italy. Ernst von Weizsäcker, Heidelberg, West-Germany.

should be possible to define a number of key problems, which then could be treated simultaneously and separately ... One could envisage several important results ... which might be the basis for introductory discussions ...". And then follow 25 statements of wishes, what could be done in the future.

To stay fair, the context of this project has to be taken into account. Tietgens, in the introduction to his country study of West Germany (4/1968, 1), describes: "The Council of Europe has requested a plan that might serve as a guide for the long-term development of the educational system. This survey is designedly *Utopian*, i.e., forward-looking; ... is more in the statement of aims". Written to hopefully influence future political decisions, it is not addressed to a critical scholarly audience. However, in at least one respect it contributed to international adult education: A network of specialists was coming into existence, covering West Europe, making it possible to contact others in the field for further cooperation, and personal appreciation. Considering the travel possibilities of those days, expensive telephone calls and communication in different languages must have been challenging. We, being used to e-mail and Internet and instant connections, should respect the input this generation had to invest.

The "ECLE-project"

From 1975 on, the UNESCO-sponsored project "Organization and Structure of Adult Education in Europe" was managed by the European Centre for Leisure and Education (ECLE) in Prague. It started with country-reports in 1977 (the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and France), in 1978 followed Hungarian People's Republic, Yugoslavia, and the German Democratic Republic. Eleven country reports were published, before 1982 an Annotated Bibliography (No 13), and in 1983 a "*Methodological Framework for Comparative Studies*" (No 14 and 15) was supplied. Five more country studies followed (Portugal, Soviet Trade Unions, and Trade Unions in France, USSR, and Ireland). 1986 a reworked "*Methodological Framework for Comparative Studies II*" (No 23) by Pierre Besnard and Bernard Liétard was published.

That may surprise: It would have seemed more appropriate first to supply a methodology the country reports could build on. And disappointed was, who expected in this publication an "Analysis of Adult Education Systems in Europe" (as the subtitle promised). Instead, a sophisticated "frame of reference" (p. 7) is offered with a wide selection of possible variables, often presented in empty charts or tables, where someone (?) could fill data in. This publication remains on (over)complex theoretical deliberations, is by no means a comparative analysis of the "Adult Education System in Europe". Perhaps an explanation might be that here - as well as in other "International Comparative" research groups - a split between two groups might exist: the "Do-ers", who in the unglorious field of practice write reports about their country, and those who, sitting in their warm offices, develop ideas how everything could be made better.

Knoll (1999, p. 22f), who was the author of the country report on West Germany (No. 8) in this project, states: “The country reports to be found there [the ECLE-project] are descriptive without any harmonizing scheme of categories, without any previous hypothesis and they regard themselves as a juxtaposition, which does not ... undertake a comparison. A comparative ‘manual’ ... has been kept under lock and key by UNESCO in Paris ever since it was written.”¹

Titmus (1999, p. 39) argues why the ECLE project may have avoided comparisons: “In order to encourage friendship they [Inter-governmental agencies] have avoided offending member states. Comparison may risk giving offence, because it brings out differences as well as similarities and may thus be suspected of implying criticism of certain states ... Juxtaposition does not have this disadvantage”².

Two warnings can result from this project:

- Just to add papers as they come in without guiding and focusing ideas does not lead to a convincing contribution to international or comparative adult education. And:
- That an institution that pays for a project must respect the interest of the member states can become dangerous.

For sure: The reader of this project experiences manifold international topics. But as the authors or the working group could not find a summary themselves, also the reader sees himself confronted with bits and pieces without a clear outcome.

Another observation seems worthwhile to mention: The Council of Europe, as well as the ECLE project, published their work in a very low-level format. Both are typscripts, written by typewriter and multiplied by typography/hectography. Was a normal book-printing too expensive? And - as this technology limited the number of possible copies - was it desired that these publications were not too widely spread?

Poeggeler “Erwachsenenbildung in fünf Kontinenten”

In 1979 Franz Pöggeler and Walter Leirman edited “*Erwachsenenbildung in fünf Kontinenten*” (Adult education in five continents) as Volume 5 in the series “*Handbuch der Erwachsenenbildung*” (eight volumes between 1975 and 1981). A private editor could do what international agencies could not do: A “real” book with a real publisher (Kohlhammer, Stuttgart) and public availability, with 420 pages and 32 experts from 32 countries.

¹ Knoll, Joachim H. (1999). Development and fundamental principles of international and comparative adult education research. In: Reischmann, Jost, Bron Jr, Michał & Jelenc, Zoran (Eds.) (1999). *Comparative Adult Education 1998* (pp. 19-31). Ljubljana, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.

² Titmus, Collin J. (1999). Comparative Adult Education: Some reflections on the process. In: Reischmann, Jost, Bron Jr, Michał & Jelenc, Zoran (Eds.) (1999). *Comparative Adult Education 1998* (pp. 33-50). Ljubljana: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education..

The longest part of the book (p. 15-372) consists of country reports, followed by two today still interesting general, mostly historical contributions: Seifert (p. 373-382) gives an overview over the international and supranational developments in Europe, especially from 1960 on, and the organizations created for supporting adult education (i. e. UNESCO, Conseil de la Coopération Culturelle CCC, International Congress for University Adult Education ICUAE, International Council for Adult Education ICAE) and their activities. And Knoll (p. 382-397) describes in detail the German connections to the “World Association for Adult Education” in and after the 1920th as well as activities in the 1960th and 1970th (esp. UNESCO and OECD), supporting internationality in adult education. Both refer to many European developments but do not build on the previous country reports.

Pöggeler’s book was published in the German language. That limited its international reception. And it limits it still today. Certainly, Seifert and Knoll’s contributions would have been a valuable addition to this book. But offering a book in English, we decided not to include contributions in other languages. As was said in the preface of this book: “It makes no sense to refer to the knowledge and experience of non-English research literature, because the latter does not exist for the international readership.” That is bitter: Research work in languages other than English gets lost for the international exchange.

Kulich’s bibliography

Jindra Kulich (1929-2009), born in Prague, immigrated to Canada in 1954. After graduation from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver (UBC), Jindra became there the director of the Centre for Continuing Education and a pioneer in the field of comparative adult education. His academic interests lie in the comparative study of adult education, emphasizing Central, Eastern, and Northern Europe, and he has published widely in this field both in North America and in Europe. But as an essential contribution to international and comparative adult education may be seen in his “*Adult Education in Continental Europe: An Annotated Bibliography of English-Language Materials, 1945-1969.*”¹ This annotated bibliography brings together most of the English-language materials on adult education in Continental Europe published during the 25 years since the end of the Second World War.

Roby Kidd mentions in his foreword: “It was said of one novelist that even if he were the compiler of a telephone book he would succeed in putting it in exciting prose. So far as we know, there has been no such claim for a bibliography.” Nevertheless, with this bibliography Kulich realized two things: First, he

¹ Kulich, Jindra (1971). *Adult Education in Continental Europe: An Annotated Bibliography of English-Language Materials, 1945-1969*. British Columbia Univ., Vancouver. Center for Cont. Education. Toronto: Ontario Inst. for Studies in Education. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.916.2694&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

documents how much already was written at that time about adult education in Continental Europe - this bibliography has a total of 857 annotations, 25 countries are covered. Also included is a list of periodicals he systematically searched.

Second, this bibliography can serve as a tool for researchers and scholars to find literature, widely and often hidden, scattered to various sources.

He later extended and focused on his bibliographic work and published a “*World Bibliography on International Comparative Adult Education 1945-1995*”¹. Here he collects publications written in many languages. Today, it is still challenging to go through that list and find remembered authors and topics as well as forgotten ones – a bonanza for historically interested researchers.

Alan B. Knox: A Global Perspective on Synergistic Leadership (1993)

Alan Knox was chairman of the Department of Continuing and Vocational Education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He contributed in many respects and many countries around the world over decades to international and comparative adult education. The foreword of his 1987 publication “*International Perspectives on Adult Education*”² (p. v) already pointed to manifold activities and initiatives in the international career of Alan Knox: “from 1979 to 1984, he served as editor-in-chief of the Jossey-Bass sourcebook series, *New Directions for Continuing Education*, and was president of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education during 1984-1985. His international activities include work with the U.S. Information Agency, the Agency for International Development, and UNESCO; and contributions to the *International Review of Education*, the 1979 *World Yearbook of Education*, and the 1985 *International Encyclopedia of Education*. Dr Knox received a Fulbright grant for the summer of 1987 for research in Yugoslavia on comparative adult education” (p. v). He continued this productive life into the present; in 2017 he published “*Mapping the Field of Adult & Continuing Education. An International Compendium.*” (Stylus, Sterling VA, Four Volumes).

In the 1980th he started the ambitious collaborative study “*World Perspective on Adult Education*”. This is an essential contribution to international and comparative adult education – in scope, covered countries, case coordinators, and numbers of collected case studies. Also, the birth of that project seems typical for an international venture: “The basic ideas for such a project was formulated ... in conversation with a longtime friend, Dusan Savicevic, now professor emeritus of adult education, University of Belgrade ... Conversations at international conferences and correspondence with colleagues in adult education from many countries led to a preliminary project plan” (p. xiii).

¹ Kulich, Jindra (1996). *World Bibliography on International Comparative Adult Education 1945-1995*. Vancouver. 86 pages.

² Knox, Alan B. (1987): *International Perspectives on Adult Education*. Columbus OH: ERIC.

In thirty-two countries he found “Case Coordinators” who asked people knowledgeable about specific program areas to write case descriptions of adult education programs in their respective country. In the end, he had collected 175 case descriptions. He used this database for an own voluminous study “*Strengthening Adult and Continuing Education. A Global Perspective on Synergistic Leadership*” (1993, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass) - with an impressive reference list of 44 pages. Based on the data of the case descriptions, he arrived at rich recommendations for strengthening planning in adult education agencies.

In addition, he made these case descriptions available through the ERIC system (on microfiche¹). So, this material became available to researchers throughout the world for their own analyses and comparisons – another developmental step in sharing data for international usage.

Such a project usually is appraised by the outcome of its initiator. That certainly is important. But in a collaborative international project, another hidden value should not be ignored: the effects it generates on the side of the contributors. To make it a personal statement: When Alan Knox asked me to be case coordinator for Germany,² this challenged me in a threefold way: First, to reflect on my own country - what could be valuable enough to present to an international readership? Second, to reflect on adult education in other countries. And third, to grow into the network of “the internationals”. This invitation changed my perspectives and biography fundamentally. The book at hand would not exist without that starting push.

¹ Microfiche is a photographic film-card; it stores photographed documents in the small space of the microfiche card. A special device is needed in order to magnify the contents to read the information. With the advent of digital storage options, microfiche lost its importance.

² Reischmann, Jost (ed.) (1988). *Adult Education in West Germany in Case Studies*. Frankfurt Basel New York: Lang. <http://www.reischmannfam.de/lit/1988-AdEdinGermany.pdf>

Jost Reischmann

10. Observations and Perspectives

At the end of a voluminous book with many texts, the question may arise as to what - in short - might be some main observations and insights, as well as suggestions and perspectives. So, in this closing chapter, some issues are selected from the previous chapters that shed clarifying light on the developments of the field. In addition, some suggestions are offered helpful for future work. (The specified page numbers refer to pages in this book)

1. A clear observation is that a **high number of publications** about international and comparative adult education are available in the English language: This book contains a total of 351 references, added up from all contributions. That seems to be a lot; however, overwhelmingly in these 351 references, authors are named only once or twice. It seems there exists nearly no “standard”-literature which “all” contributors use. The highest entries included UNESCO (12, different documents), Charters/Hilton (10), the two ISCAE-publications (Comparative Adult Education 1998 and 2008) (10), Titmus (10), Knoll (6), Hake (5), Jarvis (5), Knox (5), Merriam (5), Reischmann (5) (not counted were the self-citations in the author’s own contribution).

That means: It can be expected that future research work will include references to this specialized literature; but also, more efforts are needed to standardize the shared body of knowledge in the field. “Standing on the shoulders of giants” would not only promote quality, but would also help to unite the field.

2. **Different types of research approaches** are considered to be associated with international and comparative adult education. Bereday names 4 “steps” (p. 46): Description, Interpretation, Juxtaposition, Comparison. Reischmann reports seven “types of international-comparative research” (pp. 13-14): traveler’s tales, country reports, program-reports, juxtaposition, comparison, method-reflections, and reports from international organizations. Sometimes these different types are described as historical steps from simple to complex (Reischmann, pp. 13-14; Bereday, pp. 38f), but they also can be seen as platforms of their own value.

For future research, it would be helpful if researchers were to localize their work explicitly within these different options. The given literature reflects the strengths of each approach and, by using this knowledge, weaknesses can be avoided or at least mitigated.

3. Two different groups of arguments were found explaining the value of the international aspect: a practical one and an intellectual one.

The **practical** one is usually labeled “borrowing”, and there are many examples of transfer from one country to the other. This approach, however, is often criticized, for example, by Kidd in 1975 (p. 75): “In earlier times, comparative

education was fostered with the definite purpose of ‘borrowing’ successful forms and activities from abroad to be adopted in one's own system”.

The **intellectual enlightenment-oriented** argument is well documented in Kidd's list (1975) of goals (p. 75). Already, however, Sadler, as early as 1900 (p. 21), claimed: “The practical value of studying ...the working of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and to understand our own”.

While the academics highly valued these enlightenment-oriented goals, the “real world” remained more on the practical side. So, for example, UNESCO's “Hamburg declaration 1997” (p. 235) claimed: “intercultural education should encourage learning between and about different cultures in support of peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, justice, liberty, coexistence and diversity”. Moreover, Chapter 9 of this book has many examples, that suggest when international organizations take over international projects, more “down to earth” goals are expected, for example, when in UNESCO's “Sustainable Development Goals” 17 goals are declared “to transform our world”.

This tension between different goals will continue to exist in the future. Both principles have their own good reasons. Comparativists should describe what advantages they expect when they decide for one or the other goal - this would make the perspective of the research better understandable. Furthermore, perhaps also to reflect explicitly whether it is possible to combine them.

4. This book confirms in several contributions a postulation that was mentioned already in the early development of comparative education: that **context** is one of the most important factors in analyzing educational systems. For example, Sadler in 1900 (!) (p. 21) claimed: “we should not forget that the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools”, and (p. 24): “It is a great mistake to think ... that one kind of education suits every nation alike”. Similarly, Titmus in 1981 (p. 114 ff): “adult education practices can only be understood as products of the national culture in which they exist”. Jarvis in 1992 (p. 129) affirms: “any comparative study of the education of adults requires a comparative study of the societies themselves”. Several of the contributors showed how this could be done, and displayed evidence of how this raised the value of their research: Marriot (2.3), Titmus (4.2), Reichart (4.4), Charters/Hilton (5.1), Seitter (5.3), Egetenmeyer-Neher (5.4), Merriam (5.5), Sun/Erichsen (5.6).

These examples illustrate that reflections on the respective culture contribute to a better understanding as to why things are as they are. This observation may also be a suggestion for researchers to form a basis support for their research.

5. Research is always performed by humans who have their own cultural backgrounds. This “selective perception” threatens, especially in international projects, the perception of “the other”. Bereday (p. 41) claims “never-ceasing watchfulness by the observer to control his own **cultural or personal bias**”.

Artur (3.5) reflects on her “bi-cultural journey”, Reichart (4.4), checking difficulties and obstacles in her presentation about Krygyzstan, shows how this danger can be reduced. Merriam (5.5) as well as Sun & Erichsen (5.6) illuminate the dramatic differences of perspectives on adult learning and education between different cultures. Moreover, Bron (7.1) specifies pitfalls in comparative studies based on cultural misunderstanding.

Therefore, a perspective might be that authors and researchers in international comparative adult education explicitly reflect on their cultural or personal bias. It helps, before starting such a project, to collect information about the history and culture of the other country, try to find other literature or pieces of research, and develop a specific mindset: to be open, listening, and curious. As Sun & Erichsen expressed: “In order to listen and learn from the reality of the East, we believe one’s mindset must be altered so openness and appreciativeness will come into play so we can recognize values we may otherwise miss” (p. 232). This request sounds easy but definitely is not. Nevertheless, here applies a principle true in many life situations: It is better to do it half good than not starting to try!

6. It seems that our “essential readings” in the years up to 2000 were written mainly by **white, western males**. Already the Exeter-papers (p. 62) request in 1966 a wider approach: “conferences on the comparative study of adult education should include representatives from Far East countries as well as South American countries ...”. However, when collecting selections for this book (in 2020), we still could not overcome these limitations - even with the best intentions. At least the available publications draw this picture. Merriam confirms a Western bias: “Most of what we know about learning has been studied and written about by scholars in “Western” countries” (p. 205). In Peter Jarvis’ “Twentieth Century Thinkers in Adult Education” (London, 1987) all 13 “thinkers” are male. That narrows the views that could be richer if this selection would not apply.

As described in chapter 9 some changes seem to emerge in the new (21st) century. Especially the international and transnational agencies reach out to far more regions of the world. The question remains: Is this an opening for mutual understanding, or again “careless over-applying [of] Western norms and values” (Sun & Erichson, p. 232)? It seems there is still a long way to go ...

7. The contributions in this book show a clear development: In the beginning, we find primarily **individuals** that generate the international and comparative knowledge, as Kidd 1975 pictures (p. 73): “comparative adult educationists ... working almost in isolation”. This scenario changed, as described in chapter 4.1 (Council of Europe, ECCLE, Knoll p. 84ff); chapter 9 indicates that today mostly **institutions or societies** are the promoters of international and comparative adult education.

Working only as “individuals in isolation” seems to have diminished. Networks, societies, and organizations now lead the way of the development. Researchers interested in international and comparative adult education are better

advised to get in contact with such entities. Working together, international teams of researchers have an excellent opportunity to offer a more differentiated perception when bringing together their diverse cultural backgrounds.

8. **Language** is often described as one of the handicaps in international work - as already noted in the preface of this book (p.11-12). This issue shows up in several of our “essential texts”. Not surprisingly, it is seldomly mentioned in the early publications of English-speaking authors (as an anecdote, see Mansbridge’s last chapter p. 95f). It seems this problem became more recognized with the increasing number of non-English researchers. The Exeter-conference (1966) claimed within a long list of needs “the need for an international terminology” (p. 57, p. 59) - not being aware that terminology is only a small part of language (and understanding) problems. Bron (p. 254) describes as a “crucial issue ... whether questions and answers can be meaningfully translated from one language, and one social reality, into another” - Reichart (p. 141) confirms this problem with the observation that “the simply translated questionnaire from the European manual caused confusion among the survey institutes, the interviewers and the respondent”. Moreover, Sun & Erichsen point out another language limitation (p. 231): “when we introduce the East to the West, there is dearth of available literature for reference.

It is easy but unrealistic to claim that everybody must be bi- or multilingual. Nevertheless, even minor measures would help foster language sensibility: For example, native English speakers should take into account that English is a foreign language for most of their audience in an international venture. As a consequence, they should speak loud, slow, clear, and avoid slang words and insider jokes, as well as acronyms - highly loved by Americans. In oral and written communication, it helps when one or two sentences explain what is meant - not just dropping names. Describing the context also improves understanding. Texts from all languages can roughly be translated with computer programs (i.e., Google translator); this opportunity at least provides a general impression of what a paper covers. Still, it cannot be changed that the literature in the field is English-language dominated, and non-English speakers will have the extra-load of translation. That seems to be the price for international exchange.

9. In the process of selecting the texts for this book we “discovered” two different types of publications, both called “international”. One type deals directly with topics in different countries, describing financing, training of adult educators, leadership, literacy, politics in different countries. A high number of studies of this type could be found, most of the type of juxtaposition. Much fewer studies could be found of another type: Here, in addition, the authors explicitly reflected the **specific** problems and possibilities of the **international approach**. The contributions 4.4, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6, 8.1, and 8.2 are examples.

Of course, the first type will be important and produced in the future. However, it could be desirable that more studies of type 2 are presented: This type

forces authors to reflect on the strengths and limits of international comparison, thus avoiding the danger of overgeneralizing, of falling into the “descriptiveness-pitfall” or “comparing incomparables” (Bron, p. 257f). In addition, these shared reflections enable the reader to better understand the complexity of a comparison.

10. Many observations in this book confirm how **travel** was essential on a personal as well as professional level for the protagonists. The Exeter conference in 1966 (p. 62) claimed: “As soon as possible, adult educators in various countries should meet together to develop cooperative programs of study and research” (- maybe the 26 participants hoped for their own travels in the future?). Marriott (p. 26) describes the many travel exchanges and their results between England and Germany in the difficult time after World War I. Chapter 3 (p. 91ff) gives several examples of travels and their value for adult education.

Here the perspective and suggestion to new researchers in international and comparative adult education are clear: Traveling and reliable attendance at international conferences are essential to growing into this field. Of course, this means a high investment in time and money. Besides having better access to information, it has an additional benefit: meeting and making friendship with stimulating persons.

11. A final observation that should be mentioned: Often the authors refer to the people in the “international arena” as people offering **friendship and inspiration**: Charters/Hilton (p. 163) describes as a benefit of international meetings “to celebrate the great good fortune of international collegiality”. Arthur (p. 105) appraises “... shared learning enhanced knowledge, and mutual understanding - perhaps particular strengths of comparative adult education.

This “byproduct” of meeting with “the Internationals” not only personally enriches but also builds informal networks that led to publications about foreign adult education as collected in the anthologies of Jarvis (4.3), Charters/Hilton (5.1), Pöggeler (p. 107), and Merriam (5.5). This enrichment may outweigh some of the inconveniences of international work.

There are many reasons to engage in international and comparative adult education. “Standing on the shoulders” of those, who offered essential knowledge about content, methods, and reflections can help strengthen the quality of comparison and make access into this field more enjoyable and easier. We trust that the reader of this book will find in the many multi-faceted contributions more individual insights and perspectives than could be mentioned in this short chapter. The central perspective is to facilitate entering and working in international and comparative adult education.