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Adult Learning Australia

AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF ADULT LEARNING

The *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* (AJAL) has been published on behalf of Adult Learning Australia for over 59 years, and is now recognised as the leading journal in Australia on adult education. The Journal is widely regarded internationally in the discipline of adult education.

AJAL is concerned with the theory, research and practice of adult learning and adult community education. Its purpose is to promote critical thinking, research and practice in this field.

While the prime focus is on Australia, the practice of adult education and learning is an international field and Australia is connected to all parts of the globe, and therefore papers relating to other countries and contexts are welcome. Papers in the refereed section have been blind reviewed by at least two members from a pool of specialist referees from Australia and overseas.

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AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF ADULT LEARNING

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Featured articles

Refereed articles

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From the Guest Editor's desk

Dr Cassie Earl

One of the biggest things putting together this special edition of the Journal has shown us is that there is a great need to extend this scholarship across the world. There is also a need, as pointed out by Kai Heidemann's paper, to ensure that there is more crossover between the thinking on social movements and the thinking in adult education – as this is part of the key to changing our world for the better.

The literature that crosses these disciplinary boundaries is small and takes courage to write. There is little crossover between these two bodies of literature because firstly, they are not always complementary, in that they are attempting to do different things, and secondly, there is no forum for discussing how useful these two literatures could be to one another. Hence this special edition. We wanted to promote adult learning within social movements and the benefit of social movements in the enhancement of adult learning. We are excited by this crossover and feel it sits well with the popular education literature that currently exists.

So, let's begin with a working definition of popular education and the reader unfamiliar with this term can decide for themselves where the cross pollination is between social movements and adult learning, where knowledge becomes the movement in terms of providing some structure to work in when crossing these boundaries.

This definition provided by Crowther *et al.* (2005, p. 2) is succinct and coincides with my own understanding of popular education. The definition is taken from the Popular Education Network (PEN), and was decided on by all members democratically:

Popular education is understood to be popular, as distinct from merely populist, in the sense that it is:

- rooted in the real interests and struggles of ordinary people
- overtly political and critical of the status quo
- committed to progressive and social change.

Popular education is based on a clear analysis of the nature of inequality, exploitation and oppression, and is informed by an equally clear political purpose. This has nothing to do with helping the 'disadvantaged' or the management of poverty; it has everything to do with the struggle for a more just and egalitarian social order.

The process of popular education has the following characteristics:

- The curriculum comes out of the concrete experience and material interests of people in communities of resistance and struggle.
- Its pedagogy is collective, focussed primarily on group as distinct from individual learning and development.
- It attempts, wherever possible, to forge a direct link between education and social action.

Cavanagh adds to this 'popular education is fundamentally anti-authoritarian and challenges dominant power relations. … The processes of popular education are extremely effective for increasing people's capacities to function democratically and with critical mindedness' (Cavanagh in Borg, & Mayo, 2007, p. 43).

When reading this definition, it becomes obvious that popular education has links with social movements and is perhaps the precursor to much movement mobilisation. It also provides us with a link between the literature and a way of thinking about social movements pedagogically, and of adult education politically.

There is a lot of literature coming out in what is commonly called 'critical higher education' studies around the idea of the university

as a political space, students as producers of knowledge, rather than consumers of it and other 'critical' ideas, and although some of this literature is only vaguely relevant to what is being discussed in this special edition, some of it is of great use. What is interesting about much of this literature, particularly around decolonisation, students as producers, and the university as a political space is that it is only just catching up, I believe, with the literature that has been around on popular education, transformative learning and social movement learning. Practices that have always been decolonial in critical pedagogy, for example, are now followed up with texts such as Decolonising the University (Bhambra, Gebrial, & Nişancioğlu, 2018), the notion in popular education that the 'curriculum' should emerge from the struggles of ordinary people is turned in higher education into Students as Producers (Neary, 2012) and when that becomes too much of a radical political project, it is watered down into Students as Partners (Healy, 2012), however well intentioned. However, there are some great higher education texts that we can draw upon that bring this area of work around popular education into the academy, for example, Amsler, Canaan, Cowden, Motta, and Singh (2010) on Why Critical Pedagogy Matters Today; Cowden and Singh (2013) and their book Acts of Knowing: Critical Pedagogy In, Against and Beyond the University.

Both the literature in adult education and the literature on social movements has traditionally, for the most part, been a call to action, a way of thinking about and enacting social change and popular education that traditionally sits in the intersection between these two bodies of literature. However, we are living in interesting times, as the saying goes, and maybe it is at this particular juncture that we need to begin to think about what these two bodies of literature can now do for education practitioners, activists and popular educators in these interesting times of political flux and increasing fragmentation of our communities and our societies. There are texts marrying these bodies of literature, for example, Amsler (2015); Dinerstein (2015); Earl (2018); and Ollis (2012), to name but a few. But these writers and thinkers fall between the disciplines very often and perhaps a new paradigm is needed to think through forms of educational activism and research and ask as Arditi (2008, p. 119) does, 'what is it that entices people to involve themselves in this revolutionizing, and, what does it mean to "get involved" here?'. We have to understand the world differently

in our current juncture and know that in the present climate of right wing politics emerging across the globe on the one hand and much prefigurative resistance to that on the other that 'in these moments borders that separate people burst open into renewed periods of social creativity and insurgencies' (Shukaitis, & Graeber, 2007, p. 37). Of course, on this note Arditi (2012) reminds us that 'Insurgencies Don't have a Plan – They are the Plan', and this is where adult education practitioners and scholars can rise to the challenge of thinking through this important and highly charged political era.

I think most people will agree that most scholars in adult education are not social movement theorists, and most social movement theorists would not profess to be scholars of adult education, but perhaps some of the articles in this special edition and the noted lack of crossover in these two cannons hint at something new, a thought, a provocation, an insurgence of a new idea, that sits in the breach between these two bodies of thought, an emerging outburst that takes us beyond popular education into something more immediate, more active, more rebellious. A social action theory, popular education is almost here on the one hand and new Social Movement theory on the other, but in this gap a new way of thinking, doing and relating rises from the ground up, observed by activist scholars and, a new way of acting and theorising, an emergent form of activist praxis (Freire, 1993, 2004). This was one of the points of putting together this special edition of the Journal, to see what emergent thinking was out there, to see if something new would emerge from a global community of scholars. There is what I have termed a pedagogical turn (Earl, 2018) in the new social movements, it was evident in Occupy as can be seen in the papers in this volume by Cassie Earl and Darren Webb, in the revolution in Egypt as explored by Helen Underhill, and of course in the Squares of Madrid and other Spanish cities as explored by Inés Gil-Jaurena and Héctor S. Melero. But alongside the big movements and revolutions there are pockets of popular education that contribute to a fairer and just world, taking into account the communications media, as in the article by Isaac Kofi Biney and glimpses into the necessity of popular education to bring other ways of knowing into the academy as explored by Amundsen.

It is important here that we acknowledge the pedagogical turn in social movements, that is the commitment to the power of knowledge and the understanding that social movements that learn, that educate, that are

pedagogical can be powerful tools of social change, after all if we are not learning from each other, and each other's contexts, how will we learn to change and change learning? How will we find each other and'light up our eyes with amazement' as Holloway (2010, p. 255) might say, 'how do we touch that half-awareness, that tension, that ecstatic distance, how do we bring it clearly into focus, how do we magnify it, how do we open it up, how do we strengthen and expand and multiply all those rebellions…?'.

This is the call now for popular education and social movements more generally, no longer is the making demands on the powerful an effective way forward, not since the battle of Seattle and certainly not since the Occupy movement and many climate actions. There is a need then for more scholarship to reflect this call, before it is too late and the field is gone, and we can no longer talk as if we are actually doing something without creating powerful forms of solidarity and praxis – to talk this way we must make the road by walking (Horton, & Freire, 1990). We must create lines of continuity (Holloway, 2010) between the projects that people are willing to write about, and create a praxis (Freire, 1993) of theory and action, reflecting on our diverse contexts in order to learn about our own particular one.

One of the hopes for this special edition was that it would allow a form of written solidarity and bring forth a commitment to understanding the learning that happens in social action, allow people who feel the same way – that things have to change – to have a platform to find each other, to commit to scholarship that matters and provide for others food for thought in this scholarly space. In our crowded out academic lives that are crushed by the university industrial complex, where creativity and imagination are squeezed into metrics and performance management (Bailey, 2011; Couldry, 2011; Fenton, 2011), how can we regain our time, our courage and our humanity? The answer, I think lies in our finding not just each other within the walls of academe, but others 'out there' who are doing the ground work and forming these movements of popular education and protest. The people who committed to creating time for this special edition, and others, are doing just that and I hope that the fruits of their labour can speak to an audience who is ready for action.

Kai Heidemann

Heidemann's featured article highlights the lack of crossover between the bodies of literature on social movements and adult education.

Making this special edition all the more apposite. He examines where the common themes are and how we might move forward with these two areas of study.

Inés Gil-Jaurena and Héctor S. Melero

This paper examines the actions in Madrid, Spain during the uprisings of the Indignados, or the 12M movement. Understanding education as a critical and communicative praxis built intersubjectively between diverse actors in continuous transformation, the authors explore learning in social movements through an ethnographic study of this period in Spanish social movement action, utilising four case studies from this movement, they examine the different processes that constitute social movement learning and how the pedagogical turn affected these particular activists and their actions.

Darren Webb

Webb's paper explores the Occupy Wall Street's attempts to create a social praxis from their actions. Taking a necessary critical approach to the study of this movement and their actions, Webb attempts to understand the political ideas and pedagogical lacunae in the movement and how we might learn from the movement's ideology. He warns, rightly, against a romanisation of Occupy and what it was realistically capable of but explores the notions that were created around alternative educational spaces and pedagogical possibilities.

Helen Underhill

Underhill takes an interesting angle on the theme by looking at the place of emotion and identity in the notion of the pedagogical turn in social movements. Utilising her work on Egyptian diaspora activists, she explores ideas around pedagogical discomfort as a tool in social movement learning. Engaging the reader with a theme of becoming 'logically and emotionally invested' in the continuing struggle in Egypt, Underhill examines how cognition and emotion are 'inextricably linked' creating embodied identities that shape the possibilities for learning in social movements.

Cassie Earl

This paper is a think piece about the idea of Occupation as an empty signifier after the global Occupy movements and what this could mean to

our thinking about education, social change and social action. It examines how relationships matter and that our relationships with ourselves and each other need to be rethought in order to break the chains of capitalist social relations. Occupy was more than a movement, it claims, it was an idea, a state of mind, an empty signifier to be filled with meaning.

Diana Amundsen

This paper is an exploration of the complexities faced by Indigenous Māori students transitioning into higher education. Emphasising the need to listen to student voice as a social movement and including diverse ways of knowing and learning. The paper constructs the notion of the importance of identity in learning. Although the paper concentrates on teaching and learning in the neoliberal university, it adds to the discussion in this edition as it allows a view into how things change in these settings, through forms of popular education in the form of student voice.

Isaac Kofi Biney

In this paper we see a fascinating exploration of the practice of Galamsey in Ghana and how the media can act as popular education providers to combat this practice. The paper advocates for lifelong learning to ensure that this destructive practice is both halted, but also understood as harmful to the environment through government and media education. The paper provides interesting insight into other forms of educating for social change.

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Australian Journal of Adult Learning

Call for papers for a special issue on: Adult learning: Transforming individuals and communities over the decades

Guest editors: Associate Professor Annette Foley and Dr Rob Townsend (Federation University)

To commemorate 60 years of publishing research, reflective and other pieces about adult learning, AJAL is calling for articles for a special edition to be published in 2020 on Adult learning: Transforming individuals and communities over the decades.

This edition will highlight adult learning in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia–Pacific region.

We invite a diversity of articles that research and/or reflect on adult learning in its many contexts including: neighbourhood houses, adult community education (ACE), community houses, family literacies, Indigenous contexts, TAFE, VET and work integrated learning (WIL).

Articles should explore both the historical and current pedagogies, perspectives and trends of adult learning and vocational education and training in Australian, NZ and Asia–Pacific Region.

To discuss potential manuscripts, please feel free to contact the editors

for this special edition: Annette Foley (a.foley@federation.edu.au) and Rob Townsend (r.townsend@federation.edu.au).

Manuscripts should be between 6,000–7,000 words and conform to the AJAL submission guidelines found in the AJAL portal.

All manuscripts should be submitted via the AJAL portal: https://www.ajal.net.au/peerreview/index.php/ajal/about/submissions on or before 31 March 2020 for publication in November 2020.

Late submissions cannot be accepted.

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Close, yet so far apart: Bridging social movement theory with popular education

Kai A. Heidemann

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This special issue of the Australian Journal of Adult Learning is a great opportunity to bridge two areas of scholarship that are in close proximity to one another, but have generally failed to establish systematic dialogues and exchanges. These domains, of course, are comprised of educational scholarship devoted to the study of 'adult' and 'popular' education on the one hand, and sociological scholarship on 'social movements' on the other. While the study of popular education[1] has thematic proximity to the social movement literature, it is not a terrain of systematic research and theorising by social movement scholars. A recent search of the terms 'popular education', 'community education' and 'adult education' in both the titles and keywords of two leading social movement journals over the past two decades, for example, yielded zero hits[2]. On the other side of the equation, while scholars of popular education may frequently invoke terms such as 'social movement' and 'activism', the tools of social movement theory are rarely put to use within this literature (cf. Kilgore, 1999). That these two literatures are so close, but so far apart is rather astonishing

given their overlapping concerns for issues of resistance, solidarity, democratisation and social transformation. In this essay, I briefly address the gap between social movement studies and popular education studies, and then proceed to engage in some initial bridge-building work by discussing the concept of 'free space' (Groch, 2001; Polletta, 1999; Polletta, & Kretschmer, 2013). In particular, I suggest that by theorising community-based sites of popular education as 'free spaces', scholars can better investigate the ways in which the participants within these sites engage in educational practices that actively promote the reproduction of movement-based strategies, tactics, meanings and identities. From such a conceptualisation, researchers can explore the question of how local-level sites of popular education bolster the broader-level influence of social movements in society, thus shedding important light on the socio-political outcomes of popular education programs.

Searching for popular education in social movement scholarship

The absence of systematic research on popular education in social movement scholarship is both unexpected and unfortunate. It is perhaps most surprising given the unambiguously strong historical role played by 'radical' forms of community-based adult education in progressive social movement campaigns across so many parts of the world (e.g. Edwards, & McCarthy 1992; Hall, Clover, Crowther and Scandrett 2011, Lovett, Clarity, & Kilmurray 2018, Ollis 2012). In Latin America, for instance, the links between progressive social movements and the 'emancipatory' forms of popular education inspired by the legendary Paolo Freire have been thoroughly documented by educational scholars, such as Liam Kane (2001, 2010) and Adriana Puiggros (1984). Such work has shown that community-based sites of 'radical' adult education from Argentina and Brazil to El Salvador and Mexico frequently serve as a hub of social movement activities for historically marginalized peoples in both urban and rural settings. Additionally, comparative research on the labour movement in Western Europe and the United Kingdom during the 19th and 20th centuries has persistently shown how sites of popular education played an important role in generating class consciousness amongst impoverished workers, thus fuelling labour protests and strengthening progressive strands of labour unionism (e.g. Antikainen, Harinen, &

Torres, 2006; Jansson, 2016). Historical scholarship on the struggle for civil rights among African Americans has also frequently pointed to the significance of adult education programs, most notably via the actions of the Highlander Folk School and its satellites across the American South (e.g. Edwards, & McCarthy, 1992; Evans, 2007; Ling, 1995).

In short, there is a range of scholarship showing how sites of popular education are intimately linked to broader-level social movement campaigns and activities. Yet, in spite of such historical evidence, social movement scholars have not generally approached the empirical terrain of popular education in any systematic fashion (cf. Saez, 2005). This is not to say, of course, that social movement scholars have avoided the topic of education all together. Rather, most of the scholarship on 'education' tends to focus on situational forms of non-formalized learning and knowledge formation that take place among activists as they interact with one another, and participate in social movement activities, such as protest and community organizing campaigns (e.g. Chesters 2012; Choudry 2015; Choudry, & Kapoor, 2010; de Smet 2014; Escobar 1998; Esteves 2008; Ganz 2000; Krinsky, & Barker 2013; Zibecchi 2005). Cumulatively, such work has done very well to show how processes of active learning and the purposeful production of knowledge 'about the world' are inextricable from realising influential forms of collective action 'within the world'. Two key insights yielded by this research show how 'situational' forms of learning and knowledge-making impact the formation of [i] the strategic choices and tactical schemas deployed by social movement constituents, as well as [ii] the intersubjective identities and ideologies that underlie people's commitments to social movement agendas over time.

While research on situational learning and knowledge production is extremely valuable and informative, there is a corresponding need to focus on how social movements operate and unfold within more formalised educational settings, such as schools and universities as well as established sites of adult education. Such a focus can allow social movement scholars to understand how, under certain conditions, formalized educational settings can act as vehicles of social movement activity. This perspective is significant because social movement scholarship has tended to dwell on 'extra-institutional' forms of collective action at the expense of understanding the relevance of 'infra-institutional' forms of action (Schneiberg, & Lounsbury, 2009). As Polletta (1999, p. 1) writes: 'counterhegemonic ideas and identities come

neither from outside the system nor from some free-floating oppositional consciousness, but from long-standing community institutions'. By looking more closely at the expressions of group-based learning and knowledge-making that take place within established sites of popular education, for example, important understandings will be gained on how grassroots actors work to purposefully convert such local spaces into empowering engines of movement-based solidarity, action and influence.

Searching for social movement theory in adult education scholarship

Scholars of popular education are no strangers to the study of social movements. The literature periodically points to the presence of social movements in popular education programs and is saturated with terms such as 'activism', 'mobilisation' and 'community organising'. Over the last decade, for example, the term 'activism' has appeared no less than 186 times in the titles and abstracts of articles published in *Adult Education Quarterly*, and 230 times in the *International Journal of Lifelong Learning*[3]. However, scholarship in this domain only rarely draws on the established analytical tools and concepts of social movement theory (cf. Finger 1989; Kilgore 1999; Walter 2007, 2012). Rather, the focus of such research is generally placed on understanding the pedagogical practices and didactic resources at work within sites of popular education. While very insightful, such work does not generally strive to address how the internal dynamics of learning and knowledge-making within sites of popular education have external bearing on the strategic capacities of social movements in the broader society. Moreover, within the more philosophical and normative strands of popular education scholarship (i.e. 'critical pedagogy studies') the link between popular education and social movements is often simply presumed from the get go. Of course, given the emancipatory aspirations that frequently underlie many adult education initiatives with a 'radical' orientation, this is probably a relatively uncontroversial assumption (Mayo 1999). However, good social science cannot operate solely through a priori assumptions, no matter how safe they feel.

All of this is simply to say that, from a sociological perspective, any link between social movements and popular education must be viewed as a product of social construction and purposeful interaction, rather than as inevitable truths or pre-determined realities. Consequentially, the linkages between social movements and popular education need to be empirically scrutinised in order to establish how they align, if at all. Such

careful investigations will allow for richer comparative understandings of how the (putatively) strategic links between sites of popular education and social movements are forged in the first place, as well as how such links are variously sustained, curtailed or transformed over time. One useful way of bridging scholarship on popular education with social movement theory is through the concept of 'free spaces'.

'Free spaces': Applying a social movement perspective to popular education

A key insight yielded by social movement scholarship through the years relates to the importance of 'free spaces' (Polletta 1999). Following Polletta and Kretschmer (2013), free spaces can be conceptualised as small-scale settings whereby groups of grassroots actors can [i] engage in autonomous forms of social interaction that are [ii] largely 'removed from the direct control of dominant groups', and thus [iii] capable of producing the kinds of socio-political challenges that are needed to drive enduring processes of mobilisation and protest (2013, p. 1). Within social movement studies, the study of free spaces stems from a recognition that the initial emergence and longer-term developmnent of social movements is profoundly shaped by spatial dynamics of place and locality. Reflecting on his study of nonviolent protest movements in India, for example, Routledge (1993) argued that 'the concept of place informs us about why social movements occur where they do and the context within which movement agency interpolates the social structure' (Routledge quoted in Nicholls, 2007, p. 609). Understanding where precisely social movement activities take shape is essential to analysing how movements arise and evolve. Consequentially, by exploring where social movements happen it is also possible to gain insight on how social movement actors and constituents are more or less capable of shaping the socio-structural environments within which they are embedded.

The concept of free spaces is rooted in the study of spatial and contextual dynamics. The concept relates to understanding the different kinds of sites whereby social movement activities are most likely to develop, let alone flourish. Not so surprisingly, scholars have shown that free spaces can develop from within a wide variety of settings. For example, free spaces have been shown to emerge *de novo* from within places that are not explicitly designed or intended to support sustained social interactions, such as abandoned buildings and houses or public

parks/squares that have been occupied by activist groups. Alternatively, and more commonly, free spaces emerge when activist groups engage in a conscious re-purposing of sites that are already intended to promote social interaction, such as student organisations, professional associations, cafes, bars, bookstores, churches/mosques, sport clubs, civic associations, or community centres. Interestingly, even highly repressive settings such as prisons have been shown to act as free spaces for some radical activist groups, as evidenced by the Black Panthers (Berger, 2014), and Irish Republican Army (O'Hearn, 2009). In short, free spaces are significant because they provide the kinds of social dynamics through which dominated and disempowered groups 'are able to penetrate the prevailing common sense that keeps most people passive in the face of injustice' (Polletta, & Kretschmer, 2013, p. 1).

A generalised lack of repressive surveillance and control is critical to the formation of effective free spaces. On the one hand, low levels of external control allow for the development of a social site whereby people can interact in ways that forge interpersonal ties based on communicative openness and trust as well as emotional reciprocity and mutual recognition of interests. Such interpersonal dynamics are integral to the formation of movement-based meanings, narratives and identities. On the other hand, relatively strong levels of autonomy are also very conducive to the creation of social sites that allow people to collectively cultivate counter-hegemonic agendas and projects. In this context, a relative freedom from oppressive external control is essential for devising the repertoire of strategies and tactics that social movements need in order to engage with opponents as well as to realise short and long-term aims. In sum, free spaces are crucial to promoting social movement activities because they engender processes of social reproduction linked to the development of affective and instrumental ties between individuals.

Under certain conditions, formalised popular education programs can act as free spaces that actively facilitate the reproduction of social movement activities. Important questions to ask in this regard include: Do the practitioners and participants of an adult education program wield high degrees of self-determination in the design and execution of pedagogical activities? Does the educational program demonstrate horizontal structures of interaction that allow for inclusive forms of collaboration and contribution by all participants? Are didactic activities largely free of restrictive forms of external surveillance and regulation? Does the

educational program have unambiguously critical and emancipatory orientations? Do practitioners and participants perceive themselves as persons collectively engaged in the work of social transformation?

The potential for a popular education organisation to function as a free space is strong when practitioners and participants are able to link the tangible concerns and realities of community-members to the building of counter-hegemonic educational projects that tie up with the emancipatory agendas of broader-level social movements. However, if and when the didactic resources and practices of a given adult education program are largely pre-packaged, standardised and persistently require the approval of external actors with close links to established authorities in society, then the potential for such a site to act as an effective vehicle for social movements is highly questionable. Such circumstances can translate into a loss of autonomy for participants in the educational process, thus constraining their agency and thwarting the potential to forge strategic links to social movements. Of course, autonomy is not a zero-sum situation. The dynamics of internal autonomy and external control must always be carefully investigated, rather than presumed up front. In many parts of Western and Northern Europe, for instance, it is possible to find adult education organisations that are funded entirely by state-based agencies, but which retain overtly 'radical' educational agendas rooted in emancipatory traditions of popular education. While such programs may certainly seek to bolster the power and influence of social movements in society, their 'true' capacity to function as empowering free spaces needs to be questioned and carefully analysed.

Conclusion

I started this essay by pointing out that the strategic link between social movements and adult education is well known by scholars, but surprisingly under-examined and under-theorised. As a way to bridge the divide between these areas of scholarship, I suggested that the concept of free space can be productively applied to the study of adult education in order to determine the extent to which a given site of adult education is actually capable of promoting the reproduction of social movement agendas in society. Within this context, an important task for the researcher lies in understanding how internal dynamics of self-determination and 'autonomy, as well as external dynamics of surveillance and social control variously promote or inhibit the creation of strategic

linkages to social movements. If a given site of popular education can be conceptualised as a free space, then the task of the researcher moves toward understanding how exactly the processes of learning and knowledge-making at play within a given site of adult education influence the capacities and influence of broader-level social movements in society.

Endnotes

[1]For the purposes of my discussion I will use the term 'popular education' rather than 'adult education'. By 'popular education', I mean forms of adult education that are grounded in 'radical' traditions of collaborative community-centered learning and emancipatory pedagogies oriented toward combatting inequality and injustice.

[2]Both title and key word searches were conducted by the author in August 2019. The two journals were 'Social Movement Studies' and 'Mobilization: An International Quarterly'.

[3]This figure is based on an on-line search of the journals conducted by the author in August 2019.

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Learning by participating in social movements: Ethnographic research in Madrid (Spain)

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We learn and teach democracy by making democracy (Freire, 1997, p. 99)

Individuals learn to participate by participating (Pateman, 2012, p. 10)

Learning in social movements has been studied using different approaches, such as critical pedagogy, public pedagogy and adult education (Ollis, & Hamel-Green, 2015). While in the field of formal education, the focus is usually on 'education for citizenship' or 'citizenship education' (Schugurensky, 2006, 2010; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, & Agrusti, 2016; Tawil, 2013), educational studies that focus on social movements can be classified into two large unrelated groups (Niesz, Korora, Walkuski, & Foot, 2018). One explores the influence of social movements in formal education, with diverse approaches and little connection among them. The other studies learning in social movements, mostly inserted in the field of adult education and that form a corpus of interrelated and expanding knowledge. However, there are still few works that arise from an idea of complementarity or that have a double focus on citizen education that leads to activism, and activism as an

educational process (Davies, Evans, & Peterson, 2014). Our previous studies[1] arose from the idea of complementarity and an understanding that in order to formulate proposals for citizenship education, the object of study must be how citizenship and participation learning happens. That is, trying to understand the learning experiences of activists and the learning that takes place in spaces of participation, such as social movements, to formulate educational proposals (Gil-Jaurena, Ballesteros, Mata & Sánchez-Melero, 2016; Melero, 2018).

Keywords: *social movements, learning, social transformation, consensus, participation, qualitative research, Spain.*

Introduction

Our theoretical approach to social movements, although eclectic, emanates from our educational approach. We understand education as a critical and communicative praxis built intersubjectively between diverse actors in continuous transformation (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2001; Aguado, 2009; Aguado, Mata, & Gil-Jaurena, 2017; Mata, 2013). Therefore, the study of social movements must also be made from relational and communicative positions, such as the framework proposed by Habermas (1984; 1987). According to the formulation of civil society that Cohen and Arato make from Habermas' theory (Arato, 1999; Arato & Cohen, 1999; Cohen & Arato, 1994)[2], we understand civil society as differentiated from the state and the economy, but with the ability to influence both systems. The social movements we study are groups of this civil society that pursue social justice and democratic deepening through actions aimed at exerting such influence on the other two systems. For that, they use different means and strategies, such as confrontation, autonomous action and / or dispute of meanings.

However, this study is not intended to contrast the theoretical frameworks on civil society and social movements, but focusses on understanding the mechanisms of learning, always varied and diverse (Niesz *et al.*, 2018), which happen in struggle, through struggle and for struggle (Foley, 1999). In this article, we focus on praxis and on the construction of meanings, as well as the method of decision-making and the construction of agreements in social movements, as part of a process of individual and collective learning and transformation. We

aim to make visible a change in the pedagogical element within social movements that turns educational aspects of movement actions into both a strategy and a result of social struggle.

Defining learning in social movements

To focus on learning in social movements implies a recognition of them as schools of participation and active citizenship (Melero *et al.*, 2018; Çakmaklı, 2015, 2017) but above all, to recognise them as educational and knowledge building spaces (Choudry, 2009, 2013, 2015; Cox, 2014; Delgado, 2011a, 2011b; Foley, 1999, 2001). Further, this recognition allows an expansion, and also a challenge, to the understanding of how, where and when knowledge, education and learning are produced (Choudry, 2009).

Social movements build new knowledge through the management of critical reflection skills and transformative action, always collectively (Cox, 2014). The first—critical reflection—generates controversies and challenges the limits of institutions and the values that sustain them (Delgado, 2011a, 2011b). The second—actions of resistance and rebellion—focus on the transformation of injustices and power relations (Hall, 2009). The new knowledge produced goes beyond the limits of social movements and extends to people and groups that do not participate directly in them (Hall, 2009; Hall & Turray, 2006). Luque (2003) calls a discursive function of social movements: the creation and dissemination of new knowledge and the capacity to transform social organisation in multiple ways: from creation of new frameworks for the analysis of social reality (Cox, 2014) to educational legislation (Levinson, 2011), through to the redefinition of concepts such as public pedagogy (Williams, 2015).

In addition to builders of new knowledge, social movements are educational spaces. Our own research (Melero, 2018) confirms the elements that have been highlighted by various authors who have worked on this issue. Learning in social movements is complex because it combines and interrelates multiple characteristics: it is incidental, informal, embedded in practice, tacit and not always recognised (Foley, 1999, 2001); it is also unforeseen, since despite being evolutionary and cumulative, it is not linear (Foley, 1999); for this reason, and in relation to learning, actions sustained in time are as important as immediate ones (Ollis, 2011).

Choudry (2013) pointed out that the study of learning in social movements should privilege the relational and collective elements. This does not imply the alienation of the individual, but the need to take learning into account from a collective rather than an individual point of view (Kilgore, 1999). Similarly, understanding the educational aspects of social movements requires understanding the values and approaches to social justice that activist groups hold (Kilgore, 1999). In addition, different forms and speeds of learning have been observed among the 'lifelong' and 'circumstantial' activists (Ollis, 2011); new activists learn from the model of the most experienced ones (Ollis, 2011; Vieta, 2014). All these elements, in addition to the space and the organisation itself (Choudry, 2015), are interrelated when referring to learning and knowledge in social movements.

Methodology

The empirical research was conducted through an ethnographic approach (Del Olmo, 2008; Goetz & LeCompte, 1988; Sabirón, 2006), which aims to understand educational processes from the social reality of the people who make and build them. This approach requires observation and direct participation by the researcher in the natural contexts of the case studies over long periods of time (Del Olmo, 2008). The ethnographic approach allows different positions or roles of the researcher, which fluctuate between observation and participation. In addition, the prolonged period of time makes this role evolve throughout the fieldwork. In our case, the researcher (first author of this paper) started from an observer position with very limited participation, and evolved to a much more participatory position including involvement and collaboration in different activities of the social movements studied, such as performing small organisational tasks, providing material for activities and collaborating in their organisation. Subsequently, he took a more activist role by positioning himself in defence of the citizens' interests in the institutional process of the market. The researcher developed his own learning process (Melero, 2018).

The fieldwork was carried out by the first author of this paper within the frame of his doctoral thesis, co-supervised by the second author, from September 2015 to April 2017, including access to and exit from the field phases (a graphic of the fieldwork stages is available at https://figshare.com/s/1250897f56253b17a0d3). In the study process, the researcher

played the role of both researcher and participant activist in the selected social movements. The main ethnographic research tools, *participant observation* and *directed interview*, were used as data collection and construction tools (Del Olmo, 2008).

Participant observation was developed in four participation spaces in the city of Madrid (capital of Spain, with more than 3 million inhabitants). The spaces were selected in two consecutive processes: (a) an intentional selection of significant cases, and (b) a process of access derived from previous cases. We explain each of these selection processes below, and Figure 1 presents a graphic summary. It shows how these spaces (particularly three of them) are not discreet, but interrelated.

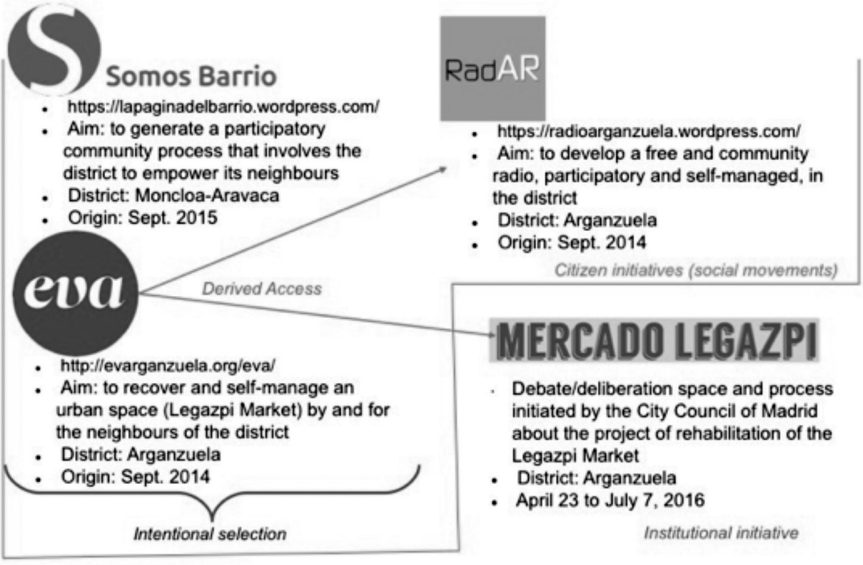

Figure 1: Case studies grouped in relation to the selection process

a) For the intentional selection of significant case studies, we searched for social movements and participation spaces promoted by the citizens themselves and with an activity focussed on the transformation of their community. The aim was to analyse diverse cases, so they were chosen from different geographical areas in the city, from different networks of activism and with different composition and trajectories. The selected cases in the intentional process were *Somos Barrio* ('We are Neighbourhood') and EVA-

Espacio Vecinal Arganzuela ('Arganzuela Neighbourhood Space'), which are described in the next section.

b) Case selection derived from previous ones was based on the criteria of opportunity and interest. The qualitative approaches, in which the research phases influence each other (Rodríguez, Gil, & García, 1996), facilitate the incorporation of new case studies. From EVA, we had the opportunity to access two new cases that complemented the research in two different directions. During the fieldwork, a project to create a participatory free community radio emerged, which complemented the two previously selected cases with a 'new' social movement in the field of free and community media. Also, the City Council of Madrid responded to the demands of EVA regarding the use of the Old Market building as a space for debate and joint deliberation, to negotiate with EVA on the remodelling and rehabilitation of the building. This space, promoted by the Administration, served as a contrast between two very different types of citizen participation: by *irruption* or by *invitation* (Ibarra, 2008). As opposed to the studied social movements that take the initiative to *irrupt* into the public space to face or solve a perceived problem or need; the institutional space is promoted by the institution, which invites participation in order to legitimise the decisions made on a situation or conflict. The cases of derived access were *Radio Arganzuela* and *Espacio Institucional Mercado de Legazpi* ('Institutional Space Legazpi Market'), which are described in the next section.

To complete the participant observation, 29 interviews with 30 key informants (one was a double interview) were conducted. It was an intentional selection of informants, with diversity as the criterion. From each of the case studies, we selected activists and participants with different ways of behaving, understanding and showing participation and activism. Thus, men and women with different ages, positions and influence in the group, etc. were selected. The distribution varies according to the characteristics of each case study. In total 15 men and 15 women between the ages of 25 and 78 were interviewed (the characteristics of the interviewees are available at https://figshare.com/s/7f5c396fb7a6ffab50de).

The cases and their context

> *Whether in Spain, in the United States, in Europe, in Brazil, in South Korea and in multiple countries, we have witnessed for some time broad popular mobilizations against the current system of political parties and parliamentary democracy under the slogan "They do not represent us!". It is not a rejection of democracy, but of liberal democracy as it exists in each country, in the name of "real democracy," as the 15-M movement proclaimed in Spain. An evocative term that invites us to dream, deliberate and act, but that goes beyond the established institutional limits*
>
> (Castells, 2017, p. 12)

The social mobilisations that took place in Spain in May 2011, the so-called '15 de Mayo [May]' or 15M movement[3], are part of the citizen mobilisations that happened in different parts of the world at the beginning of this century (Castells, 2012). As the Castells (2017) quote states, there were mobilisations that demanded more and better democracy, claiming to increase the capacity of action and decision of the population in the governments of their countries. 15M had effects throughout Spain and a change of mentality in the citizens, who seemed to realise that they could and should do things that they did not believe they could before (Taibo, 2011). 15M produced a democratic awareness that implied a transition from representation to appropriation, and led to a conception of an expanded democracy beyond its electoral and institutional conceptualisation (Subirats, 2015).

From May to September 2011, the 15M movement evolved from occupying the central squares of the main Spanish cities to creating circles of activists linked to the different neighbourhoods and municipalities. This shift is known as the decentralisation of the movement or the two waves of the movement (Alaminos-Chica & Penalva-Verdú, 2016). The whole process had different effects depending on the pre-existing neighbourhood organisations in each territory. In any case, after the decentralisation of 15M, activist spaces and social movements were created, reactivated and/or strengthened, whose struggles are centred around two related axes: a) social justice, understood as the struggle against exclusion and inequality; and b) new

forms of governance, understood as the development of methods of direct and participatory democracy (Pradel, & García, 2018). 15M also gave rise to the appearance of new partisan organisations of very diverse natures (Rodríguez López, 2016) that try to occupy the electoral and institutional space, recovering the feeling of a lack of representativeness that citizens have in regards to the old political parties.

In the context of the city of Madrid, as well as in other municipalities, these organisations reaped considerable success in the local elections in May 2015. This success did not transfer in the same way at the national level, perhaps because the municipal models were closer to the mobilisation of 15M in terms of horizontality, decentralisation and collaboration (Rodríguez López, 2016). These local successes brought about the emergence of the so-called 'governments of change', which in turn created access to municipal institutions of many activists from the social movements. In the city of Madrid, the 'government of change' broke the tradition of the previous right-wing governments that had maintained a relationship of ignorance, if not confrontation, with these types of movements for social justice (Díaz, & Lourés, 2018). This change of position filled many of the activists and social movements—both those that emerged from 15M and those that existed previously—with hope and dreams. However, the dreams were gradually lost in the transformative capacity of the 'governments of change'[4].

In this context of the Madrid social movements after 15M, and in this moment of hope that was gradually lost due to an institutional conquest that was not having the expected effects, is when we developed the fieldwork for our research in the social movements and spaces we describe below (see also figure 1):

—*Somos Barrio* (https://lapaginadelbarrio.wordpress.com): social movement linked to the northern district of Madrid—Moncloa-Casa de Campo—and specifically to three neighbourhoods in this district: Argüelles, Casa de Campo and Ciudad Universitaria. *Somos Barrio* aimed to improve the quality of life in these neighbourhoods by promoting the empowerment and participation of their neighbours. At the time of the first contact with them, *Somos Barrio* had been working as a group for a few months, although most of the participants came from previous groups originated after the neighbourhood decentralisation of the 15M movement in Madrid. During the

observation, they were an active group of 10–12 people, mostly women aged 40 and older.

—*EVA-Espacio Vecinal Arganzuela* (https://www.evarganzuela.org): neighbourhood platform integrated by different social movements, neighbourhood associations and individual activists, organised around getting the Madrid City Council to yield the Old Fruit and Vegetables Market[5], also called Mercado de Legazpi, for local use and self-management. Through this community self-management, EVA pursues social and cultural development of the Arganzuela district, southern district of Madrid, through citizen participation. When they were contacted for this study, they had been active for one year. They are a very broad and diverse group, as well as fluid and with a large presence in networks, so it is difficult to specify the groups limits since the number and composition change from meeting to meeting (we were in meetings with more than 30 people and others with only 6 or 7). Also, EVA combines face-to-face participation with participation through digital media. The groups' diversity is one of its most interesting features: it has veteran activists together with others for whom EVA is their first experience in social movements; it is mixed in terms of gender and, although the average age is around 35 years, it ranges from 25 to 78 years old participants.

—*Radio Arganzuela (RadAr)* (https://radioarganzuela.wordpress.com): arising from a presentation in an assembly of EVA and an appeal by e-mail, this project aims to create a free radio in the district of Arganzuela. It is therefore an incipient project during the research, with different people who are incorporated or leaving as the project progresses. Its composition was not consolidated during the study.

—*Espacio Institucional Mercado Legazpi* (web currently closed): developed by the City Council of Madrid through a group of architects who served as facilitators. Six sessions were held during the months of April to July 2016 with the declared objective of 'co-creation and co-management' on the future of the Legazpi Market. Actually, it was a process of consultation and non-binding deliberation on the rehabilitation project of the building that the City Council planned to carry out. The number of participants decreased during the sessions.

Interpretation of results

The qualitative analysis of the field notes and interviews has led to

interesting findings with regards to learning, knowledge construction and transformation in social movements and participation spaces. We present the results in three sections and illustrate the interpretation with quotations from the informants and from the observation diary.

Learning in social movements: praxis and construction of meaning

Learning is an element that is present in the observed social movements. On the one hand, the citizens involved in these spaces change and learn; that is, they get transformed. They also try to change the world they live in; that is, they try to transform it. Many of the interviewees made direct reference to learning when asked about the social movements in which they participate:

> *It is learning, that's what I see; I see EVA as an apprenticeship of something big. (62♀)*

These two aspects of learning—self-transformation and transformation of the world—are related to two tools that social movements use in a pedagogical way: 1) praxis and 2) the creation and dispute of meanings.

1) We use the term *praxis* in its Freirean sense, which refers to the union of reflection and action on the world to transform it (Freire, 1980 [1970]). That learning is produced by praxis is evident in the observation of new activists. When people begin their participation in social movements, they learn through a combination of observation, action and reflection:

> *At the beginning, despite all that I talk (laughs), (I) was to listen, listen and see a bit, to learn from the people who had been in the neighbourhood for a long time [...] at the beginning I was also confused because I did not know if I would be able to contribute to something. But I come here and see, and if there is something to do, I do not know, if there is anything or any activity to be prepared, then I prepare it; then for that part the action for me was easier, easier to participate. (42♀)*

It is therefore learning embedded in practice (Foley, 1999) as much as it is the result of observation and reflection. Learning is produced by experimentation that involves putting actions into practice and reflecting on the successes and mistakes:

> *For me there have been many mistakes that we have made, but that is what I tell you, we have to fail many times in order to get experience and to be able to know. "Hey look, the other time this happened to us, so now we have to do this because we do not want it to happen again", we learn from everything. (38♀)*

This means placing importance on direct experimentation, that in social movements also has a clear collective component that facilitates learning. Along with the observation of the actions of other more experienced activists who serve as models (Ollis, 2011), we must also add the confidence that comes from knowing that we have the support of others. Mutual support allows new roles and tasks to be put into practice and therefore develops and improves useful skills for activists:

> *I try to make the activities open and make the people participate because I think it's a huge learning opportunity for everyone, you know? To be leaders, not to be, to support [...] you have to change roles too, so if now you have done it, now I do this, but do not tell me how I have to do it, but help me and guide me. You can give me some advice, but let me handle it because I think the beauty of EVA is that many people are losing their fear of even facing to organise things; that's what's good, that's empowerment, that's where I see the empowerment and the power of EVA: learning. (44♀)*

2) Therefore, learning in these observed social movements occurs in *praxis*, that produces transformations of both the participants themselves and the world around them. And this is where the second tool orientated to the transformation of reality comes into play: *the creation* and *dispute of meanings*. During the fieldwork, we observed how social movements are aware of the importance of transmitting ideas and questioning existing meanings. There is an awareness that the struggle for social change is played on both the material and discursive levels:

> *What do we intend in Somos Barrio? Man, exactly the same that we intended with the assembly of the 15M: to mobilize people and for people to have knowledge of where they live, and for citizens to know what is happening and the problems that exist in society [...] to seed your concerns and what you want to do*

> *and what you think about citizenship and life, transmit it a little to others. (78♀)*

The social awareness processes carried out by social movements collectively constitute the attempt to transmit knowledge and their own point of view in the struggle for what they consider beneficial for the common good. During the fieldwork, we observed these processes of awareness on several occasions. An illustrative example occurred in the confrontation around the Institutional Space of the Legazpi Market. On the one hand, the Madrid City Council wanted to legitimise its project of remodelling the Legazpi Market building to use it as administrative offices, whilst EVA wanted to transform the Market building for community use (and self-management), and also were trying to avoid what they considered an attack on the industrial heritage of the city. EVA put different strategies into play which combined training and dissemination actions about the Legazpi Market as industrial heritage, together with the active resistance in the sessions of the Institutional Space. This way, EVA managed to position the meaning of industrial heritage at the centre of the debate and thereby eliminate one of the most aggressive interventions the institutional project had planned for the building: the elevation of the central square, that was essential to be able to turn the Market building into offices. In other words, by positioning the architectural importance of the building as a heritage site of the city on the discursive level, EVA delegitimised the possibility of making certain structural modifications to the building. This made it impossible to carry out the remodelling project as planned by the City Council.

However, praxis and construction of meaning, as well as self-transformation and transformation of the world, are not independent elements, but are intimately related. This is clearly evidenced by observing the learning of experienced activists. Although the new activists learn through a collective praxis that facilitates observing and copying activist models; develop direct actions with the support of others and reflect on the successes and mistakes— we have argued—the experienced activists add to this the construction of meanings and knowledge around their own collective praxis. Continuous learning in social movements goes through a knowledge that is built on the critical reflection of their own transformative practice. This allows them to question, modify and create behaviours, attitudes and values consistent with the search for social justice, and all of this is done collectively through the creation of consensus.

> *Well, it's all based on consensus, you know it, based on consensus and agreements [...] we agree on everything, put it through consensus, everything is planned, everything is discussed and that's it, and we reach a consensus and an agreement is reached on all the things that have to be done. (77♂)*

Consensus as a process

The observation of how agreements are built in social movements in contrast to the agreements built in the Institutional Space of the Legazpi Market has allowed us to discover two divergent ways of reaching consensus. And this, in turn, has allowed us to associate consensus in social movements with the construction of knowledge and learning. The differences between one type of consensus and the other are related to its purpose; the type of communication established; the place given to different ideas and the result of it. We use 'consensus' from an *emic* perspective; in the four spaces this term was used when referring to 'agreement', despite the fact that they describe different views. We have called them *consensus as an objective* vs. *consensus as a process*.

Consensus as Objective, prevalent in the Institutional Space, equates consensus and agreement. It is understood that the consensus is produced by the agreement between the parties; however, the way in which this agreement is reached remains in the background. Since the important thing is the achievement of an agreement, the way to accomplish it can be very varied and can include situations of total or partial exclusion of the different opinions in conflict. This implies that the communication established has a high vertical and strategic component (Habermas, 1984, 1987); it seeks to convince, to impose ideas, to minimise the modifications of a point of view and to increase modification of others, so that the agreement resembles, as much as possible, the initial position. The consequence of this type of consensus is what an interviewee called the *'desert of consensus, that moment where an agreement has been reached but nobody is satisfied' (38♂)*. And nobody is happy because nobody identifies with the decision, which generates frustration, disaffection and resistance to the decision. This is expressed by these activists after their experience in the Institutional Space:

> *Sometimes a pretty good discussion took place, such as a discussion about the methodology as a reflection on the process;*

> *there was this discussion in some sessions and they [the facilitators of the institutional process] said: "we stop, we stop and we continue with the activity" [...] they cut the discussion, there were really some dissatisfactions. (25♂)*

> *I came out super frustrated [...]. I have not felt heard at all. (36♀)*

However, in the observed social movements, Consensus as Process dominated. The focus in this case is on the way in which agreement is reached. Thus, deliberation is more important than agreement itself (Jezierska, 2019). Communication in this case has a clear dialogical component, as it searches for reasoned dialogue and horizontality (Habermas, 1984, 1987). Active listening and creativity are used, trying to include different points of view to enrich one another and transform them into new and shared ideas. The diversity of points of view is not a problem but a value, since it increases the possibility of enrichment of the generated consensus. In the Consensus as a Process, the important thing is that during the debate collective meanings are constructed among all the people involved in the dialogue. Some in the form of agreements, others as ideas, but also as doubts and questions to be answered in the future; hence the importance and enrichment of the debate itself. All the participants identify with the agreements that emerge during a Consensus as a Process, because they have participated in its creation. This, in turn, generates acceptance and commitment. And of course, during this process, individual and collective learning takes place.

This differentiation between the types of consensus coincides with Jezierska's proposal (2019). Consensus is no longer understood as the *thelos* of deliberation. However, social movements do not carry out this differentiation by leaving consensus out, but rather by integrating consensus into deliberation as another step towards understanding different points of view. Consensus is simultaneously the support of deliberation and the utopian horizon that directs it.

From an educational perspective for democracy, the skills and competencies that are developed in the exercise of each type of consensus are divergent. In the Consensus as an Objective, participants learn skills for strategic action orientated to success; while with

consensus as a process, they learn skills for communicative action oriented to understanding.

From learning as transformation to transformation as learning

The previous examples respond to an idea of learning as a transformation, both individually and as a group. In social movements learning is complex, diverse, inserted in action and in the relationships, and often unforeseen, both in methods and forms and results (Choudry, 2015; Foley, 1999, 2001; Hall & Turray, 2006; Kilgore, 1999; Ollis, 2011; Ollis & Hamel-Green, 2015). The analysis of the previous elements tries to bring some light to the fact that social movements generate learning through processes of collective transformation that affect people and society as a whole.

> *For example, I do not come from an assembly environment, and it has helped me learn a lot, because you learn another way of relating to others, another way of arguing, discussing, respecting, etc, etc., right? And that is very important (46♂)*

But social movements are also realising about this educational component of their praxis, which makes them understand and value their 'pedagogical power'. In other words, social movements are becoming aware of their potential as 'schools of democracy and social justice'. They are realising that, in addition to awareness processes to transform reality, they can become places to practice other types of relationships and other forms of social organisation and, therefore, places to learn and generate knowledge about their own democratic practices, places of experimentation of new and better ways of practicing democracy.

Social movements are becoming aware of the strength of learning for social transformation. They add the idea of transformation as a learning tool to the idea of learning as a transformation tool, which they already handled. The method and the objective can be exchanged, increasing their possibilities of action. As one activist told us in a conversation during the fieldwork: he tells me that the topic of education and learning is a great subject and that for him it means *"to change the paradigm, the city council can not deny you the help to learn, to get organised to learn together"* (Diary, January 28, 2016, EVA).

Conclusion

The study we have undertaken in four sites—social movements and participation spaces—in the city of Madrid has allowed us to highlight some relevant ideas with regards to the role of engagement in social movements in the empowerment of citizens and the potential for learning and transformation—either individual, collective and/or social, beyond the limits of the social movement itself.

From a Freirean approach, the analysed spaces show popular education in action, and reflect what Freire (1980, 1997) expected from popular education: a liberating pedagogy that builds upon the knowledge, experience and diversity of the people, who learn from one another. Although these spaces were not pre-defined as educational, they have shown to be so, and the agents involved have considered learning at the core of their activist experiences.

The context of the study, a post-15M Madrid, where this movement was initiated in 2011, explains the increased awareness of the citizens' power and the demand of a 'more democratic democracy', that made different citizen initiatives flourish and increased the presence of citizen participation also in institutional initiatives. These are the cases we have analysed in the study. The confrontation of social and institutional processes shows the differences in the ways communication, learning and transformation occur. Through exploration of the different experiences of decision making, we have shown how some processes lead to empowerment while others lead to disempowerment.

From an educational perspective, we have justified the importance of praxis in the learning process. The action–reflection cycle, along with the collective construction of meaning, can be highlighted as pedagogical tools to be promoted in social spaces if they aim to exploit their potential for learning and transformation. Another powerful idea explored here refers to the role given to consensus: if presented as a goal (as in the institutional space in our study), the deliberative element gets diluted. On the contrary, when consensus is valued as a process, the potential of popular education reaches its maximum. Diversity, respect and support within the group contribute to the enrichment of the agreement and decision-making processes, thus these are contextual features that social movements should care about when aiming to empower citizens for democracy and social justice.

The study opens some stimulating future directions for research, we highlight the following:

- The analysis of how social movements use deliberation and consensus and how they manage the tension between inclusion and pluralism in decision-making can provide clues in the theoretical debates on deliberative and participatory democracy.
- On the other hand, it is necessary to continue consolidating a field of study on social movements and education: based on the accumulated knowledge from adult education about learning in struggle, and in relation to other fields such as citizenship education, further research can shed light on better ways to produce learning for a 'democratization of democracy'.
- Likewise, breaking the separation between formal learning and learning in social movements can produce synergies that improve the quality of democratic education on the one hand, and the pedagogical capacity of social movements on the other.

Endnotes

[1]The INTER Group of Research in Intercultural Education (https://www2.uned.es/grupointer/index_en.html) has addressed learning of citizenship in two consecutive research projects: Learning active citizenship. Discourses, experiences and educational strategies 2009-2012 (https://www2.uned.es/grupointer/aprendiz_ciudadania_activa_en.html) and Citizen participation scenarios: analysis and proposals from an educational perspective 2012-2014 (https://www2.uned.es/grupointer/espacios_participacion_en.html).

[2]A deepening of different theoretical approaches to civil society and the state as a way of studying the action of social movements is far from the purpose of this work. Our position is eclectic, as can be deduced from the terminology used, although we suggest consulting Kritsch (2014) for an evolution of theoretical approaches that we consider interesting.

[3]In addition to 'May 15 movement' and '15M', it is also known as the 'movement of the outraged'. However, the most commonly used name is '15M', so we preferred to keep this designation. See Aguado and Abril (2015), Manguijón and Pac (2012), Rodríguez López (2016) and Taibo (2011).

[4]This disillusionment has been reflected in the last Spanish elections in 2019, both national (April) and local elections (May), where the results have been worse for these new political organisations emerged after the 15M, than in previous elections. At the national level, there has been a mobilisation of left voters to stop the emergence of a new right-wing party that has increased the progressive vote, but this has gone to the traditional social democratic party and not to the one formed after the 15M. But, at the municipal level, the results have shown the disillusionment with these new formations much more clearly. The Mayor of Madrid in the last four years, from the 'government of change', has lost votes, especially in the working class districts where abstention has increased in relation to the previous elections in 2015. The new Mayor belongs to a right-wing party.

[5]The Legazpi Market building, considered as industrial heritage of the twentieth century, has gone through different moments of partial use and abandonment, according to the interests of the different governments, until generating a process of defence of it by the citizens (see the web http://mercadolegazpi.org/). Located in the district of Arganzuela (Southern area of the city of Madrid), it is a large building with wide spaces, which makes it an unusual building in this type of claims, which tend to focus on smaller spaces.

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Here we stand: The pedagogy of Occupy Wall Street

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Social movement learning is now an established field of educational research. This paper contributes to the field by offering a critical case study of Occupy Wall Street (OWS). The paper surveys the claims made by the movement's supporters that transformed utopian subjectivities emerged in and through the process of participation, the prefigurative politics of the movement becoming an educative process of dialogic interaction and a moment of self-education through struggle. Drawing on the extensive range of first-hand accounts, and analysing the anarchist and autonomist ideas animating the movement's core activists, the paper highlights the pedagogical lacunae in OWS and reflects on what we as educators, working in and with social movements, might learn from these. What the experience of OWS points to, the paper argues, is the need to avoid romanticising the creation of alternative spaces of learning and overstating the pedagogical possibilities opened up when people gather together and occupy a space.

Keywords: *Occupy Wall Street; social movement learning; critical pedagogy; prefigurative practice; utopian pedagogy*

Increased attention is being paid to spaces, places, languages and processes of learning that exist outside the walls of formal educational institutions. A host of terms have been used by researchers to describe these spaces and processes: informal education, passive education, collective learning, social learning, anomalous spaces of learning, public pedagogy and pedagogy otherwise, to name but a few. While these alternative languages and spaces of learning and not always presented as being 'better' than conventional understandings and institutions, more often than not this is the position being advanced. The notion of pedagogy otherwise, for example, is explicitly counterposed to formal systems of education characterised as colonial, patriarchal, Eurocentric and oppressive. Pedagogy otherwise, by contrast, is concerned with creating 'autonomous zones of learning' and 'self-organised networks … where sharing knowledge differently is a way to create a different world' (Pomarico, 2018).

Burdick and Sandlin argue that 'critical public pedagogies offer us glimpses of the *pedagogical Other* — forms and practices of pedagogy that exist independently of, even in opposition to, the commonsense imaginary of education' (2010, p. 117). Describing the notion of social movement learning, Sarah Amsler argues that:

> *participating in any movement for radical social change requires unlearning hegemonic definitions of authoritative knowledge, un-becoming the kinds of people that perpetuate or desire these parameters and learning new ways of thinking, being and doing things in the world that open up possibilities for transgressing present limits of possibility … What matters most in these spaces is not the learning of particular knowledge, but the cultivation of alternative political subjectivities (2015, p. 143).*

This is a paper concerned with pedagogy otherwise. Following Burdick and Sandlin, it seeks to catch a glimpse of the pedagogical Other as it plays out in spaces, sites and languages of learning that exist independently of formal educational institutions. In Amsler's terms, it offers a case study of a particular example of social movement learning (Occupy Wall Street), exploring the pedagogical processes at play in the cultivation of alternative political subjectivities.

Social movement learning (SML) is now an established field of educational research (Niesz, Korora, Walkuski, and Foot, 2018).

SML scholarship focusses on the kind of informal learning that takes place through movement participation, and in particular the counter-hegemonic understandings that emerge as actors learn in and through struggle (Choudry, 2015; Foley, 1999). One of the notable features of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) as a social movement was the emphasis placed by participants and commentators alike on its educative, pedagogical dimensions. Time and again one finds Occupy referred to as a site or space of learning (Chomsky, 2012; Gitlin, 2012; Jaffe, 2012; Nader, 2011; Rowe, & Carroll, 2015; Stronzake, 2012; Yassin, 2012). As Neary and Amsler stressed at the time, 'the Occupy movement is explicitly pedagogical … it is certain that the movement educates' (2012, pp. 111–12).

In what sense, however, was the movement pedagogical? In what ways did it educate? How did Occupy Wall Street operate as a space of learning? Drawing on the vast array of first-hand accounts and materials available, these are the questions explored, and problemetised, in this paper. In contrast to much of the celebratory rhetoric accompanying the movement, the paper suggests that in pedagogical terms Occupy Wall Street was largely a moribund space. The experience of the movement points to the need to avoid exaggerating the pedagogical possibilities opened up when people gather together and occupy a space. While an event such as Occupy might create the *possibility* for the emergence of new forms of life, cultivating these requires concerted pedagogical intervention and direction.

The paper begins by surveying claims made by the movement's supporters regarding the pedagogical operation of prefigurative politics, focussing in particular on the claim that Zuccotti Park became a site for the forging of revolutionary social relations. Attention then turns to the anarchist and autonomist ideas animating the movement's core activists, and here the paper explores the ways in which movement actors came to regard themselves as being already 'free'. The paper then notes the disjuncture between the rhetoric and reality of Occupy Wall Street and highlights the reproduction and reinscription of *existing* social relations that took place during the occupation. The central argument of the paper is that there was in Occupy Wall Street a significant *pedagogical lacuna*, a *lack* of movement learning, stemming at least in part from the understanding of rupture, autonomy and refusal held by the movement's core. The paper concludes with a discussion of the role of utopian pedagogy within movements for social change.

The pedagogy of prefiguration

Prefiguration was key to the pedagogy of Occupy Wall Street (OWS). Prefigurative politics, we are told, operated as 'a moment of self-education' through struggle (Campagna & Campiglio, 2012, p. 5) and grounded 'a generative, iterative and educative process' of dialogic interaction (Amsler, 2015, p. 81). The movement is said to have opened the radical imagination, unleashed political desire and extended the horizons of possibility (Graeber, 2013; Haiven, 2014). The pedagogy of OWS was also grounded in a concrete physical space. Occupy explicitly positioned itself as a pedagogical project of commoning public space and transforming it into a site of utopian experimentation. For many participants and commentators, the occupation of physical space was crucial (Butler, 2011; Klein, 2011; Solnit, 2011). Marazzi refers to the occupied squares and plazas as 'physical spaces of mental liberation', sites in which the commons were recreated as new social relations took shape (2012, p. xi).

The literature abounds with claims regarding the forging of 'new', transformed, reconfigured, social relations (Graeber, 2012a; Kinna, 2016; Risager, 2017; Sitrin, & Azzelini, 2014; Szolucha, 2015). Happe argues that Occupy offered 'the experience of *egalitarian* social relations' (2015, p. 221). Hammond suggests that 'by modelling the desired social relations', OWS 'attempted to create *extraordinary* social relations' (2015, p. 298, p. 309). Bray adds that Occupy sought 'the elimination of all *hierarchical* social relations' and the enacting of '*revolutionary*' social relations (2013, p. 39, p. 45). A process of *resubjectification* is said to have taken place at Zuccotti Park as new, radical subjectivities emerged in and through movement participation (Harrison, 2016, p. 496; Neary, & Amsler, 2012; Schram, 2015, p. 74; Sitrin, 2012).

Prefigurative politics seeks to create, within a movement itself, social relations and forms of life that embody the kind of society movement actors wish to create (Hammond, 2015; Yates, 2015). For Occupy activists and participants, these forms of life included solidarity, mutual aid, free association, cooperation, community, autonomy, horizontalism, empathy, empowerment, dignity, love, respect and care (Bray, 2013; Flank, 2011; Hayduk, 2013; Suzahn, 2011). There is a clear pedagogical operation to the practice of prefigurative politics. As the South London Solidarity Federation put it:

> *a prefigurative approach … mirrors the new world we want to build through our actions in the here and now. This acts as a school of struggle, with participants learning as they go and becoming aware of their own power (2012, p. 194).*

A pedagogical feedback loop is in operation here: by coming together and acting here and now, participants gain confidence in the scope for collective human action and the capacity of human beings to enact new forms of life, this growing confidence in turn deepening the yearning for a different way of being, feeding the radical imagination, extending the bounds of what is considered possible and extending in turn the range of new forms of life that can be lived and experienced in the here and now (Graeber, 2013; Sitrin, 2011b; Solnit, 2016; van Gelder, 2011).

The occupation of physical space was, of course, crucial. Within OWS, occupation became both the terrain and the objective of struggle as the building of institutions of care, mutual aid, solidarity and horizontalism were heralded as 'a genuine attempt to create the institutions of a new society in the shell of the old' (Graeber, 2011a). The space of occupation was where the pedagogical operation of prefigurative politics was situated. The process of 'radical conjoining' (Lawler, 2011), of 'bodies in alliance' (Butler, 2011), of staying put and growing roots (Klein, 2011), is precisely what enabled putatively new 'extraordinary' and 'revolutionary' social relations to emerge, develop, and deepen (Fithian, 2012; Marazzi, 2012; Risager, 2017). Underpinning all of this, however, and *creating the very conditions* for 'radical' or 'revolutionary' pedagogy, was a conviction amongst its core activists that OWS had created a rupture in capitalist space–time.

A rupture in capitalist space–time?

It is well documented that the activist core of Occupy was dominated by anarchists and autonomists. The 'small-a' anarchism of David Graeber was hugely influential, as were the ideas of Antonio Negri and John Holloway (Bray, 2013; Hammond, 2015; Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2014; Rowe, & Carroll, 2015). The insurrectionary anarchism of *The Coming Insurrection* informed the ideas of some (Brown, & Halberstam, 2011; Livingston, 2012) and the tactical sensibilities of OWS resonated with Research and Destroy's *Communique from an Absent Future*, the seminal text emerging from the student occupations of 2009–10 (Clover, 2012). As Matt Presto put it:

> *anarchist and autonomist ways of doing things were part of the zeitgeist, and people had to just accept it (Sitrin, & Azzelini, 2014, p. 164).*

The anarchist and autonomist positions referred to above share three conceptual claims of relevance to an understanding of OWS and prefigurative politics in general: rupture, autonomy and refusal. Regarding the first of these, it is standard practice to refer to OWS as a 'crack' in the domination of capital or a 'rupture' in the symbolic structures of neoliberal hegemony (Christie, 2011; Dean, 2012; Gitlin, 2012; Happe, 2015; Ruggiero, 2012, Sitrin, 2011b; Szolucha, 2015; van Gelder, 2011). Whether one calls it a crack (Holloway), a moment of rupture (Graeber), refusal (Negri), exodus (Hardt, & Negri), communization (Research and Destroy) or insurrection (The Invisible Committee), common to anarchist and autonomist theory is the notion of a revolutionary No! As Holloway puts it:

> *We scream 'NO' so loud that the ice begins to crack … The break begins with refusal, with No (2010, p. 17).*

The NO screamed loudly creates 'cracks in the texture of capitalist domination, cracks in the rule of money' (Holloway, 2012, p. 203), 'momentary openings in capitalist time and space' (Research and Destroy, 2010, p. 11), 'spaces entirely outside the system's control' (Graeber, 2013, p. 237), spaces for 'the autonomous human production of subjectivity' (Hardt, 2010, p. 243). This is certainly the sense shared by many of the key activists within OWS, who were convinced that through having said NO to wage labour and money an opening in capitalist space–time had been created. As Yotam Marom remarked:

> *Something has been opened up, a kind of space nobody knew existed. Something's just got kind of unclogged (Gitlin, 2012, p. 4).*

These spaces nobody knew existed are 'spaces of negation–and–creation', spaces in which 'out of our negation grows a creation' (Holloway, 2010, p. 20, p. 4). Central here is the notion of an 'excess' or 'surplus' that is carried forward and begins to inhabit the spaces of autonomy as soon as the No is screamed. The nature of this excess is subject to various interpretations. Italian autonomists tend to locate it in the changing composition of labour, suggesting that the cooperative, networked, creative, self-organising, entrepreneurial,

affective dimensions of immaterial labour produce a new social being, new subjectivities, a 'subjective excess' and 'revolutionary surplus' that exceeds the capacity of capital to control and subsume it (Negri, 2010, p. 161). Anarchists tend to locate the revolutionary excess in the social rather than the productive sphere, in the relations of love found in everyday life (Solnit, 2016) or the subjectivities formed through collaborative participation in infrastructures of resistance such as housing cooperatives and radical bookshops (Fithian, 2012; Shantz, 2010). For Holloway, the excess resides in nothing more and nothing less than human dignity. There will always be a 'residue' of subjectivity that cannot be subsumed completely, he suggests, and thus the scream of 'the No is backed by another–doing. This is the dignity that can fill the cracks created by the refusal' (2010, p. 19).

The notion of a revolutionary surplus underpins some powerful claims. Hardt argues that 'the positive content of communism' is already present in the composition of immaterial labour, in 'the human production of humanity—a new seeing, a new hearing, a new thinking, a new loving' (2010, p. 141). Negri tells us that 'Communist being is realized' in these transformed subjectivities (Negri, 2010, p. 160). Indeed, 'Communism is possible because it already exists' (ibid.). All we need is 'a political project to bring it into being' (Hardt, & Negri, 2004, p. 221). What one finds here is a shift in the temporality of rebellion as the future is collapsed into the present (Holloway, 2010, p. 26). Communism becomes an immediate reality, not a future stage of development:

> *The validity of a rupture does not depend on the future … We ask no permission of anyone and we do not wait for the future, but simply break time and assert now another type of doing, another form of social relations (Holloway, 2010, p. 73, p. 141).*

The notion that a rupture makes possible, *immediately and in the very process of the rupture itself*, the assertion of another form of social relations, is common to all the anarchist and autonomist positions held by the OWS core.

This makes it possible to live out, in earnest, one of the defining characteristics of prefiguration, namely, *prolepsis*. This is usually defined as enacting the alternative society created in the present 'as though it had already been achieved' (Yates, 2015, p. 4). In Graeber's words, it is 'the defiant insistence on acting as if one is free' (2013, p. 233). And the OWS

core certainly thought they were. Shawn Carrie proudly declared that OWS was an 'autonomous zone … free from the domination of capitalist power and state power' (Hammond, 2015, p. 303) while Arun Gupta celebrated the creation of 'a non-commodified space in the heart of global capital' (Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2013, p. 26). Core activists repeatedly refer to OWS as an opening, a puncture hole through which new subjectivities had been liberated and untapped human becomings had been released (Grusin, 2011; Marom, 2012a, 2012b; Premo, 2012; Suzahn, 2011). On this basis Charlie Gonzalez could proclaim that:

> *we are already free and we do not need to demand anything from anyone to realize our own liberation (Writers for the 99%, 2011, p. 89).*

Nor were they joking. Many participants record the profound self-righteousness that characterised the OWS core and the sheer will to believe that they were the living solution to the crisis of capitalism (Bates, Ogilvie, & Pole, 2016; Ciccariella-Maher, 2012; Smucker, 2012). This wilfulness had profoundly damaging consequences. For the conviction that Zuccotti Park had already, immediately, here-and-now, been transformed into a free autonomous space meant that activists and participants were relieved of the responsibility of exploring their own privilege and the ways in which they had benefited from patriarchy, white supremacy, class domination, heterosexism and ableism. This in turn meant that the park was not, for all the assertions that it was, a site of learning, self-education, revolutionary self-cultivation and collective self-actualisation. For the activist core, there was simply no need for it to be.

The reproduction of existing social relations

Accounts of OWS tend to be heavy on rhetoric. The realities, however, were quite at odds with the claims made by the movement's leaders and its champions. Rather than 'transformed' social relations, many of the first-hand accounts highlight the stubborn persistence and reproduction of *existing* ones. The daily realities of full-blown racism, misogyny, classism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia are widely noted and it is commonly argued that OWS was dominated by the voices and interests of heterosexual white men (Appel, 2012; Hammond, 2015; Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2013; Singh, 2012; Welty, Bolton, & Zukowski, 2013; Writers for the 99%, 2011, 111–118; Yassin, 2012).

One of the key claims regarding the pedagogy of OWS relates to institutions of mutual aid. It was through these (the kitchen, library, medical tent and so on) that the occupiers were embodying, here and now, newly transformed social relations of care, equality and solidarity (Crabapple, 2012). OWS was building the infrastructure of 'a new commons', and the forging of radical subjectivities occurred in and through the process of experimenting with new ways of being (Jaffe, 2012). The OWS Kitchen is often singled out for praise and heralded as a genuine example of mutual aid in action (Balkind, 2013). Its success, however, lay in the fact that it fed up to 5000 people a day, not in the 'extraordinary' or 'revolutionary' social relations that underpinned it. One participant interviewed by Yen Liu (2012, p. 79) recounted a common tale:

> *He remembered being in the OWS kitchen one day, where a young woman of color asked a white man to clean the dishes he left in the sink, 'The young white man said to her, "You do it, I'm doing important work." But who's going to do the important work of washing dishes?'*

The gendered division of labour within institutions of care was commonplace. The Jail Support Group attracted virtually no interest and consisted entirely of women (Hammond, 2015) and the same was true of waste disposal, a role so under resourced that the women who did volunteer were reduced to tears of exhaustion and frustration (Halvorsen, 2015). While it is often suggested that the hope offered by OWS lay in 'the lived practice of mutual aid and care' (Clover, 2012, p. 98), the reality is that institutions of care were afforded low priority, were neglected, and the social relations they embodied were predictably traditional.

Another key claim regarding the pedagogy of OWS relates to horizontalism and consensus decision-making. These were linked to a pedagogy of collective self-actualisation, the suggestion being that the experience of participating in a leaderless and non-hierarchical process of decision-making would help cultivate an awareness of human beings as self-organising and self-determining historical agents. Egalitarian relations of association, cooperation and empowerment would supplement the revolutionary relations of love, care and dignity embodied in the institutions of mutual aid, and together these would nurture a confidence in the capacity of human beings to construct new

ways of organising life. In reality, however, a small group of de facto leaders emerged from within the movement, mainly white, male and highly educated, and often referred to as a 'vanguard' (Kang, 2013, p. 68; Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2013, pp. 31–2; Schneider, 2012, p. 255). Meetings of the General Assembly, far from modelling radical democracy, were variously described as exclusionary, alienating, cultish, elitist, and profoundly undemocratic (Appel, 2012; Disalvo, 2015; Gessen, 2011; Kang, 2013; Kaufmann, 2011; Rowe, & Carroll, 2015; Szolucha, 2015; Taylor, 2011; Yen Liu, 2012). A common complaint was that 'in practice, horizontalism often marginalized people of color, women, and sexual minorities' (Milkman, Luce, & Lewis, 2013, p. 31).

The myriad interviews, ethnographic studies and first-hand accounts of OWS point to the ways in which power, exclusion, hierarchy, silencing, and marginalisation operated within the movement, and to the ways in which patriarchy, white supremacy, heterosexism, and ableism become inscribed within the very processes that were supposed to be enacting a new way of being. There was a profound disjuncture between the claims made on behalf of OWS as a radical pedagogy of human being-and-becoming and the more insidious realities of the situation on the ground. This is, of course, a criticism levelled at many social movements. In The Progressive Plantation, for example, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin notes that 'white racism works inside all social movements' and that 'Leftists make the worst kind of racists, because they posture as anti-racists' (2011, pp.16, 9). Even within this incendiary damning of all anarchistic social movements, however, OWS receives particularly vitriolic treatment for its sheer refusal to even acknowledge the nature and degree of internal racism operating within the movement (Ervin, 2011, p. 38). This can be traced at least in part to the ways in which the inner core embodied and enacted a conviction that the movement represented a revolutionary rupture in capitalist space–time. Driven by such a conviction—a conviction that Gitlin tells us they 'felt in their bones' (2012, p. 238)—core activists adopted a pedagogy of Here We Stand.

The pedagogy of Here We Stand

> *This is a form of political response that does not announce itself as politics, instead it enters quietly into the public sphere, sits down and refuses to leave (Brown, & Halberstam, 2011).*

Because the occupiers were already free—by virtue of having opened a crack through which transformed subjectivities had been released—the simple facticity of the occupation was regarded by many as enough. For Marina Sitrin, the occupiers' only demand was to be left alone so they can meet (2011a; 2011b). If left alone, free bodies gathered together in the space opened by the Scream would live and enact transformed social relations and real democracy (Sitrin, 2012). This sense that simply being together is enough was reiterated by some of the superstar speakers who visited the park: Naomi Klein's 'We found each other' (2011), Judith Butler's 'Bodies in Alliance' (2011), and Rebecca Solnit's 'Here We Stand' (2011). A feeling permeated the park that the bodies in alliance formed 'a chorus', a 'universal movement' transcending divisions of class, race, gender and sexual identity (Christie, 2011).

Serious pedagogical significance was attached to the facticity of Here We Stand. Standing together as a We, in the midst of a rupture, an opening through which new subjectivities had been liberated and untapped human becomings had been released, was all that was required in order to forge transformed revolutionary social relations. The genuine belief that the occupiers were already free—had been liberated in and through the act of refusal—meant that all they need do, to use Holloway's phrase, was *assert now* another way of doing. As Noys notes, 'there is no transition to communism, no stage of socialism required before we can achieve the stage of communism, and so no need to "build" communism' (Noys, 2011, p. 9). This is because communism already exists and has simply to be set free. Rather than *build* communism, all one need do is assert it.

This created what I shall term 'pedagogical lacunae' in Occupy Wall Street. A clear example of this can be seen in the debates surrounding the Declaration of the Occupation, a hugely significant document discussed and finally agreed by the General Assembly on September 29th 2011 (NYCGA, 2011). The original text of the Declaration had been drawn up by a group of white male activists and the text was put before the General Assembly (GA) for approval. What happened next entered movement folklore as a small group of people of colour fought to have the opening sentence removed. The sentence read:

> *As one people, formerly divided by the color of our skin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or lack thereof, political party and*

> *cultural background, we acknowledge the reality: that there is only one race, the human race, and our survival requires the cooperation of its members (cited in Ashraf, 2011, p. 33).*

Facing considerable resistance, Hena Ashraf and Manissa Maharawal repeatedly took issue with the phrase 'formerly divided by', which made it sound as if racism, classism, religious oppression, patriarchy, homophobia and trans-phobia no longer existed; that these had been overcome within the movement and in Zuccotti Park (Maharawal, 2011). In a critical intervention, Ashraf and Maharawal battled against the intransigence of the white facilitators who argued that the movement was *living now the change it wanted to see* and that the phrase 'formerly divided by' should stay (Ashraf, 2011, p. 34).

The GA eventually agreed to remove the sentence but the discussions and disagreements continued long after the GA had dissolved. Meeting with the white male facilitators, Ashraf and Maharawal gave 'a crash course on white privilege, structural racism, and oppression … colonialism and slavery' (Maharawal, 2011, p. 39). Marahawal (2012a) recalls how much this hurt, how exhausting it was to explain how women of colour experienced the world, and how angry she felt that it was women of colour who had to do this work. The movement lacked 'self-understanding' and seemed to refuse to acknowledge how racism, oppression, homophobia, sexism and ableism worked within it (Maharawal, 2012b, p. 178).

Looking back on his time in the movement, Vijay Prashad notes that: 'It is of course true that some silly people at the heart of OWS made the claim that racism is now over' (2012, p. 17). There were, in fact, a lot of silly people making this claim, and they were making this claim because they genuinely believed that they had opened a crack in capitalist space–time through which liberated subjectivities had emerged, that they had created an autonomous zone for the self-valorisation of the Multitude and had established the conditions for non-alienated life. They felt it in their bones. They were acting *now* as if they were already free. For the duration of the movement, people of colour were confronted with the wilful assertion that divisions within the liberated space of OWS had been overcome and that power, privilege and oppression no longer existed (Appel, 2012; Singh, 2012). The core activists' earnest belief that they were occupying, here and now, the space–time of utopia, gave rise

to a persistent white left colour blindness (Bray, 2013; Khatib, 2012; Olson, 2012; Spence, & McGuire, 2012; Writers for the 99%, 2011; Yen Liu, 2012). There was in OWS a *significant pedagogical lacuna*, a profound *lack* of movement learning, a stubborn refusal to learn from itself, an unwavering adherence to the grandiose belief that in Liberty Square 'we are already free'.

A second example draws attention to the shallow focus within OWS on the political and the fact that concrete instantiations of 'the new society within the old' were largely confined to consensus decision-making, the GA, the People's Mic and other paraphernalia of horizontalism. This applies both to activists on the ground and to the theoreticians of the movement. David Graeber, for example, talks of Occupy almost exclusively in political terms, as 'a new conception of politics', a space for 'self-organized political activity' and 'the unleashing of political desire' (2013, p. xviii, p. 237, p. 297). His discussion of prefiguration focusses narrowly on the decision-making process, on presenting the General Assembly as a model of genuine direct democracy (2011b; 2012b, 2013). Marina Sitrin, too, conceptualises the 'new ways of relating' supposedly unleashed by the rupture of Occupy in terms of political organisation (2012, p. 86). The new 'social relations' enacted by the occupiers are discussed almost solely in relation to horizontalism as a new form of politics (Sitrin, 2012).

The key to freedom does not reside in the political sphere, however, but in everyday social relations. Just as anti-discrimination legislation does not prevent discrimination in the processes and practices of everyday life, so too a General Assembly using consensus decision-making does not eradicate social inequalities, hierarchies and oppressions within the movement. For all the thousands of words written by Graeber and Sitrin, little is said about how the movement reproduced itself on a daily basis. And as we saw earlier, the activist core gave this precious little thought. The institutions of care and mutual aid were largely abandoned and ended up reproducing a very traditional gendered and racialised division of labour. I would point again here to a *pedagogical lacuna* rooted in a certain understanding of revolutionary space–time and the way this encouraged a focus on the political at the expense of the social. The conviction that Zuccotti Park had already, immediately, here-and-now, been transformed into an autonomous zone populated by liberated subjectivities, meant not only that white supremacy was reproduced

through left colour blindness but also that the reproduction of everyday life within the park was taken for granted and became marginalised. While Graeber and Sitrin were waxing lyrical about the utopian possibilities being opened up by consensus decision-making, the everyday practices onsite were merely reproducing existing social relations.

New, transformed, revolutionary social relations did not emerge during the occupation of Zuccotti Park. No positive revolutionary surplus was released or brought into being by the act of refusal. The No! did not bring forth, in and of itself, a wealth of Yeses. Halvorsen points to the tension in social movements 'between *moments of rupture*, lived space–times of intensity' and *'everyday life*, the routines and rhythms through which social life is reproduced' (2015, p. 402). Within OWS, the activist core became fixated on the excitement of the rupture and neglected the sphere of everyday life. It is in the sphere of everyday life, however—in the sphere of social reproduction—that the pedagogy of the occupation operates. It is through the mundane reproduction of everyday life that radical subjectivities are formed, not through attending meetings of the GA. As Prashad remarks: 'Social life does not automatically emerge. It has to be worked for' (2012, p. 8). A rupture might create the *possibility* of new forms of life, but cultivating them requires pedagogical work in the sphere of everyday reproduction. This is what was missing in OWS. There were profound pedagogical lacunae.

The utopian impulse and the need for pedagogical direction

In and through the process of social life (the process of creating and sustaining families, friendships, communities, commitments and forms of co-operation), imaginary landscapes take shape. These landscapes comprise complex, fluid and often contradictory patterns of desires, needs, fears, hostilities, dreams, ethical norms, symbolic meanings, etc., and the landscapes emerge through a collective process of engagement, struggle, contestation and shared learning. The utopian impulse—we might also call it the utopian *moment*, the utopian *shift*, the change in momentum implied by the word 'impulse'—arises when utopian desire and a utopian horizon are located and *felt* within these imaginary landscapes. I emphasise the affective dimension because we might describe the utopian impulse as 'the discovery of a new structure of feeling' (Williams, 1991, p. 266); a structure of feeling that emerges when the imaginary landscapes born of the processes

and struggles of social life point to the reconstitution of the *totality* of material conditions giving rise to experiences of alienation, exploitation, degradation, minoritisation and oppression.

Occupy Wall Street signalled such a shift and such a moment. OWS was a significant revolutionary event, an expression of the *utopian impulse*. As Karl Mannheim argued long ago, however, 'it is a very essential feature of modern history that in the gradual organization for collective action social classes become effective in transforming historical reality only when their aspirations are embodied in utopias appropriate to the changing situation' (Mannheim, 1940, p. 187). For Mannheim there is a crucial role for the pedagogue here in giving clear utopian form to popular aspirations. The utopian conceptions of the pedagogue seize on currents present within the imaginary landscapes of group members, give expression to them, flow back into the outlook of a social group and are translated by this group into action. Rather than corresponding directly to a concrete body of articulated needs, the active utopia 'transmits' and 'articulates' the amorphous 'collective impulse' of a group (1940, pp. 185–6). Kelley refers to this as 'poetic knowledge', collective efforts to see and map the future that circulate at the level of poetic evocation (2002, pp. 9–10). Within the imaginaries of social groups and movements, one may talk of utopian desire and a utopian horizon, 'even if movement actors can't fully or completely articulate what it might look like' (Haiven, & Khasnabish, 2014, p. 126).

Within OWS, the utopian impulse was never fully articulated and mobilised. Instead, it circulated at the level of poetic evocation, as an inchoate amorphous collective desire. There were pedagogical lacunae in Occupy stemming, as I have argued, from a focus on the political at the expense of the everyday—an obsession with consensus decision-making and a neglect of those very institutions of care within which utopian desire and a utopian horizon were to be found—and the stubborn insistence that the occupiers were 'already free' and that no pedagogical work was required to tease out and give shape to the inchoate needs and desires of participants. The overriding sense was that 'we are already free and we do not need to demand anything from anyone to realize our own liberation'.

In her study of Occupy London, Cassie Earl makes the interesting claim that the pedagogical operation of the movement 'defied theory'

(2018, p. 102). Earl notes 'a duality at play, that people wanted to believe the movement was one thing even though they knew it was not' (p. 106). Core activists stuck rigidly to the 'theory' that Occupy represented a crack through which a community of saints was emerging while the reality on the ground 'defied' such a notion as existing relations of oppression were reproduced (pp. 79–80). Theory peddled 'political fictions' which acted as a 'façade' behind which the privileges, hierarchies, discriminations and oppressions of the old world went unchecked in the new (pp. 101, 99). Earl concludes from all this that Occupy singularly *failed* to learn from itself and that the movement needed 'some kind of organised pedagogical direction' (p. 161). For Earl, the pedagogue would act as a 'critical friend' engaged in monitoring the movement, calling out oppressions and using these as 'teaching points' to help nurture critical self-awareness among participants (pp. 102, 99).

I want to argue here for a more expansive form of pedagogical direction that seeks to engage the radical imagination in the project of utopia-building. Understood in this way, the role of the pedagogue in social movements is to 'convoke' the radical imagination, animating, enlivening, drawing together, and building on the amorphous utopian imaginings of community or movement members. To 'convoke' is 'to call something which is not yet fully present into being' (Haiven, & Khasnabish, 2014, p. 61). For Mavis Biss this requires the radical moral imagination, or 'the specifically imaginative excellence required to bring inchoate experience to conceptual consciousness' (2013, pp. 937, 948). The radical imagination is required to articulate movement actors' strong if inchoate emotions, crystallise them and present them back in the form of a vision.

Within Occupy the inchoate yearnings and desires that were expressive of a utopian shift lacked an organised pedagogical response. Some noted a profound anti-intellectualism in OWS, a refusal to take advantage of the knowledge, skills and resources offered to them by academic participants (Bolton, Welty, Nayak, & Malone, 2013). For Campagna and Campiglio, what the pedagogue can offer is 'the ability to travel through, and simultaneously to construct, possible alternative landscapes for social composition', something 'they used to call utopian thinking' (2012, pp. 5–6). Crucially, as McKenzie Wark (2011) stresses, the pedagogue's role is 'an adjunct one', providing 'a language for what the movement already knows'. The movement was bursting with inchoate, unarticulated, amorphous desires but lacked the language

and imagery to fully articulate them. In contexts such as these the role of utopian pedagogy is to piece together a vision from the fragmented, disparate and inchoate yearnings of community members, and to put historical, theoretical and social understandings to work in developing an articulated alternative.

Conclusion

Anarchist and autonomist ideas hold sway within many movements of the Left and provide the dominant frame within which anti-capitalist struggles are currently being fought. A number of figures and texts have attained particular prominence, and some of these—Graeber, Sitrin, The Invisible Committee, Holloway, Hardt and Negri—were key influences animating the core activists in Occupy Wall Street. What I have tried to do in this paper is explore OWS as site of radical pedagogy and evaluate the claims regarding the learning that took place there. The analysis is relevant, however, to broader claims about the radical learning that takes place when bodies come together in occupied space and engage in transformative critical pedagogy by virtue of the organic dialogic interactions arising from their very being there.

The paper has argued that the *pedagogical lacunae* within OWS warn against romanticising the possibilities opened up by alternative spaces of learning and demonstrate the need within social movements for *organised pedagogical direction*. Without concerted pedagogical intervention, 'autonomous' spaces run the risk of merely reproducing existing relations of power, privilege and oppression. Movements heralding themselves as cracks in capitalist space-time through which transformed social relations are emerging here-and-now might just end up becoming dead spaces in which the inchoate utopian desires that originally gave them life wither away through neglect.

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Learning in social movements: Emotion, identity and Egyptian diaspora becoming 'logically and emotionally invested' in the continuing struggle

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This article explores the implications of learning in social movements on diaspora activists' engagement with struggle. Focussing on emotions within social movement learning and the connection to activists' multiple identities, the paper examines the complex terrain of learning as embodied and rooted in emotionally situated beliefs and values. The theoretical framework that informs this enquiry brings diaspora and identity into conversation with emotions in social movement learning and Boler's 'Pedagogy of discomfort'. Developing these connections contributes a new approach to understanding the emotional dynamics of activism and the implications of learning in this context on social movement participation. Based on qualitative research with diasporic accounts of participating in activism related to the continuing Egyptian revolution, the analysis contributes a deeper understanding of how learning in struggle shapes multiple forms of connectedness and the implications learning in this context can have for activists' engagement with struggle. The findings add to existing knowledge of learning in social movements through a framework where cognition and emotion are 'inextricably linked' (Boler, 1999,

p. xix) and to diaspora studies by highlighting that engagement is underpinned by situated and embodied identities that shape possibilities for learning.

Keywords: *social movement learning, activism, emotion, diaspora, identity*

Introduction

The study of learning in various spaces and forms of resistance (see Hall, & Turay, 2006) has been critical to addressing the acknowledged limited recognition within dominant studies of social movements of how the people within a movement are impacted through their participation (Giugni, 2008; Bosi & Uba, 2009; Van Dyke, & Dixon, 2013). Social movement learning, a field within adult education that garnered increased interest after the mid-1990s (Harley, 2012), established that spaces and practices of resistance involve valuable knowledge creation and development of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970; Eyerman, & Jamison, 1991; Welton, 1993; Holford, 1995; Foley, 1999; Hall, & Turay, 2006). While events such as the 'Arab Spring' in 2011 garnered significant global attention and have been analysed as national expressions of revolution, significant gaps remain in understanding the range of actors who participated in and how they were impacted by the movements.

The aim of this paper is to further conceptualise activism in the contemporary global political context and build on the current understanding of learning in social movements. It does this by exploring a specific case of social movement learning—diaspora activism in the continuing Egyptian revolution—and examining the implications of learning in a social movement through theoretical intersections of emotion, identity and social movement learning. The empirical data contributes an original perspective on the Egyptian revolution and the contribution of UK-based Egyptians to the broader political struggle in Egypt. The paper contributes a theoretical framework for understanding the implications of participating in social movements in a global context by drawing deeper connections between diaspora and the emotional dynamics of learning in social movements. This framework is followed by the methodology and a brief overview of the Egyptian case is then

outlined before the qualitative data is presented with specific reference to activists' words and reflections. It concludes with a brief discussion and recommendations for further study.

Diaspora: transnational connections and action

Global politics has been transformed by globalisation and its concomitant relationship to increased human migration and emerging transnational networks (Lyons, & Mandaville, 2012). Within this global context, diaspora and migrant populations have been established as agents of change economically, culturally and politically both in their 'home' and 'host' lands. Indeed, diasporic communities are shaped by people's multiple identities, experiences and connections that vary significantly for different people and groups (Kaldor-Robinson, 2002; Sökefeld, 2006; Cohen, 2009). Reading diaspora experiences and connections in political terms rather than economically or ancestrally establishes 'the formation of diaspora as an issue of social mobilization' (Sökefeld, 2006, p. 126) and brings them into the global polity as transnational political actors (Adamson, 2005). This is essential to understanding social movements within an increasingly globalised context and, importantly, to recognise the diversity of actors who mobilise in struggles for social change.

Studies of transnational activism and diaspora politics have established national identity as a significant factor that prompts and sustains movement participation (see Anderson, 2006; Adamson, 2005; Sökefeld, 2006; Lyons, & Mandaville, 2010), whilst also revealing that subgroup identities such as religion, class or race reflect a person's various identities (Klandermans, 2014) and that they have different strengths (Huddy, 2001). Although the last two decades have seen a shift away from a homogenising theorisation of identity as 'shared perception of belonging to a specific social group' (Pries, 2013, p. 22), Benedict Anderson's (2006) conceptualisation of nationalism through a collective national identity —the 'imagined community'—remains pertinent because of the ways in which national identity is 'imagined as real' (Sökefeld, 2006, p. 266) by activists. Despite people having many other identities that inform the shape and scope of their activism, diaspora participation in the politics of the homeland is related to the 'deep-rooted' connection (Sheffer, 2003, p. 245) to the notion of national identity precisely because it is located in relation to the idea

of a specific nation. To illustrate, when a British–Egyptian mobilises in support of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt rather than elsewhere, they act through the sense of connection to both superordinate (national) and subgroup (Muslim Brotherhood) identities, highlighting that these are, as Klandermans (2014, p. 14) argues, 'far from mutually exclusive'. Although notions of connection can explain why diaspora mobilise, the next section explores how theories of emotions within social movements can deepen our understanding of how diaspora identities might impact activists' learning and engagement.

Emotions and learning in social movements

Theories of learning in social movements, popular education, community and social action have established that, through their participation, activists learn movement strategies (see King and Cornwall, 2005; Nyamu-Musembi, 2005; Wang, & Soule, 2012) and, by engaging with ideas of the world, develop critical consciousness necessary for personal and societal transformation (Freire 1970; Finger 1989; Welton 1993; Foley 1999). However, humans have emotional connections to values and beliefs (Zembylas, & McGlynn, 2012) so the meanings that they create through movement participation are not fixed. Vygotsky's (1978) theorisation of concept formation established meaning is created through experience and social relations, including through communication with a more knowledgeable other, and can change. It is important to recognise, therefore, that activists' beliefs and values will continue to develop through the social interactions associated with movement participation.

Melucci (1995, p. 45) argues 'there is no cognition without feeling' reminding us that, because knowledge is shaped by discourse and context (Foucault, 1980), notions of truth are contested and cannot be separated from how we feel about particular ideas. To understand activism in the contemporary moment where the notions of fact and truth are being contested, it is necessary to continue challenging the historical depiction of 'division between "truth" and reason on the one side, and "subjective bias" and emotion on the other' (Boler, 1999, p. xii). Given social movements are spaces where ideas are lived, created, challenged and resisted, there is an imperative to examine the 'deep mind' of the social movement (Melucci, 1985, p.793) and its emotional dynamics.

Depending on a scholar's disciplinary home, the understanding of emotion varies considerably: emotions can be depicted as physiological characteristics that reflect an inherent response to stimulus or as evidence of cognitive processing that connects stimulus to response and conclusion (Dirkx, 2008). With a more complex reading, a social-constructivist framing views emotion as 'embodied and situated' and, while also experienced physiologically, 'shaped by our beliefs and perceptions' (Boler, 1999, p.xix). Emotions, from this socially oriented perspective, are critical dimensions of how we feel about ourselves and our relationships with others and the wider world. This perspective is critical to analyses of social movements because it enables an interrogation of movement participation that engages with activism as a lived and embodied experience to consider how emotion shapes activists' ideas and practices.

Despite being difficult to define (Boler, 1999), emotions have been recognised by adult educators and social movement scholars as pertinent to understanding the shape and dynamic of activism. Feelings such as fear, anger, sadness, passion and joy underpin activists' motivation and why participation is sustained (see Jasper, 1998; Goodwin, Jasper & Poletta, 2000, 2007; Eyerman, 2007; Ollis, 2008; Castells, 2012), but can also be used tactically. For example, activists in the Egyptian revolution targeted people to support the protests by disseminating information online 'which made them angry' (Aouragh, & Alexander, 2011, p. 1348). The conscious use of knowledge to elicit an emotional response establishes 'moral shocks' (Jasper, 1998, p. 16) as a dynamic of learning in struggle that reinforces the indivisibility of cognition and emotion. Analysing social movements through a 'false dichotomy' (Hercus, 1999, p. 44) of cognition as rational and emotion as irrational depicts activists as 'calculating automatons not passionate human beings' (Goodwin, & Jasper, 2006, p. 616). By way of challenge, social-constructivist perspectives open up analyses of learning in social movements to explorations of the interactions between activists and the relationships that are formed within a movement, an approach that raises the importance of how our identities and emotions shape behaviours and relationships, the focus of the following section.

Identity, emotion and learning in social movements

The previous section established that emotions and feelings of

belonging stimulate, motivate and shape movement participation. It is also evident that activists' behaviours are informed by feeling rules that can determine how emotions should or should not be expressed in a given situation (Hochschild, 1979, cited in Moon, 2005; Kovan, & Dirkx, 2003), suggesting our identities might impact possibilities for learning with others in collective contexts. In addition, migration and globalisation necessitate deeper understanding of how activists' ideas are shaped, but this requires engaging with the complexity of their lived experience and the emotional dynamics of learning in struggle that are rooted in notions of multiple identities. The pedagogical nature of social connection and collective identity need to be interrogated within the context of migration and transnational activism, particularly to understand how the sense of self that resides in diasporic activist's conscious and unconscious (Kovan, & Dirkx, 2003) might shape learning. This requires specific engagement with diaspora experiences of struggle to consider the opportunities for or barriers to learning with others and the implications for future activism.

Similar to collective identities within social movements, and despite comprising people with multiple identities, diaspora are established through feelings of connection and sustained through senses of belonging and community (Kaldor-Robinson, 2002; Sökefeld, 2006; Cohen, 2009), all notions that suggest sameness. However, superordinate identities, including dominant groupings such as nationhood, and subgroup identities such as ethnic background are rooted in ideas of difference (Sorenson, 1996). In other words, where we have feelings of belonging there is an implied aspect of our identity that we share with some and not others, a reality that places notions of belonging alongside difference and contestation. There is an imperative to deepen understandings of learning within contexts where people's multiple identities are shaped by feelings of challenge or contestation, particularly in the current global context of rising populisms and social tensions. To reimagine challenge and contestation as productive rather than prohibitive requires interrogating the connection to emotion and identity to understand how social movements might involve learning through a 'pedagogy of discomfort' (Boler, 1999).

Boler (1999, p. 196) challenges the suggestion that some emotions are 'good' or 'bad' as she argues a 'pedagogy of discomfort' requires us to acknowledge 'our beliefs and strong feelings' to 'evaluate how

the actions that follow … might affect others'. Becoming conscious of how historically and culturally situated identities that are present in all our perspectives (Boler, 1999) determine our actions can be challenging, particularly as the strong emotions associated with some perspectives can constrain openness to critical thinking or questioning about previously held beliefs (Underhill, 2019), or close-down scope for learning (Walker, & Palacios, 2016). Establishing difference and belonging as intersecting emotions within diasporic identity raises questions about the possibilities for creating learning relationships where activists might learn through feelings of belonging and connection and the notion of difference. Here, the indivisibility of 'feeling and intellect' (Boler, 1999, p. 109) are evident, and the pedagogy of discomfort reframes learning through questioning, risk-taking and 'openness and non-attachment' (Walker, & Palacios, 2016, p. 177). Discomfort becomes a critical dimension of learning in struggle which is necessary to 'uncover and question the deeply embedded emotional dimensions that frame and shape daily habits, routines and unconscious complicity with hegemony' (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012, p. 44).

Emotion concerns experiential and embodied dimensions of activism and follows the temporal distinction between affect as long-term and emotion in the immediate (Jasper, 1998; Boler, 1999). Activists' accounts of feelings during struggle presents new possibilities for exploring the dynamics of becoming critically conscious where feelings are expressed and named within an articulation of the embodied activist experience. This process of naming reclaims the experiential within analyses of collective action, activism and social movements by prioritising the activist and their different experiences, knowledges, identities, values and emotions. Within the framework developed here, emotion and identity intersect to offer a more complex understanding of learning in social movements in a globalised world. The following section provides an overview of the methodology and an introduction to the case study.

Methodology

This paper draws on doctoral research into learning and unlearning among UK-based Egyptian diaspora activists associated with the Egyptian Revolution (Underhill, 2017) and offers a rare account of their contribution to Egypt's struggle. The definitional boundaries

between activism, social movements and social action have been drawn to include those who may regard themselves as participating in social action (Foley, 1999; Ollis, 2011) rather than belonging to a social movement. It therefore follows Bayat's (2002) definition of activism by stressing the specific contrast to passivity and without implying membership of a specific organised group. It also recognises the lack of a single established definition of social movement (Crossley, 2002) and that, as the contemporary context opens up new spaces and practices of social action (see Byrd, 2005; Castells, 2012), an expansive conception of social movements is necessary to allow for, and respond to, the innovation and creativity with which people seek to create social change.

The paper presents rare empirical evidence of diaspora mobilisation in the UK and Egypt during the revolution in 2011 and in the four years that followed, which I refer to as the continuing struggle. The terms '18 days' and 25 January revolution denote the initial revolutionary moment in 2011, while the 'continuing struggle' refers to the period since. Extended interviews with 28 activists (either dual nationality or Egyptians living in the UK) were conducted in the UK and further informal interviews at demonstrations. I also draw on partially participant observations (Bryman, 2012) at protests and elections during 2014 and 2015 and in online spaces such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Participants were identified through snowballing and chain-sampling (see Atkinson, & Flint, 2001) and were evenly spread in terms of gender and age. More interviews were conducted with activists who identified as secular/leftist and anti-coup because they were the two groups participating in social and political action related to Egypt during the research period, though two in-depth semi-structured interviews with Sisi supporters and lengthy discussions with many more outside the Egyptian embassy during the presidential elections in May 2014 provided valuable insights into the nationalist position. Observing activists' engagement during 2014 enabled a specific focus on the connection between learning in social movements and its implications. The qualitative data was analysed thematically across 45 nodes with superordinate, parallel and subordinate relationships.

Throughout the paper, I refer to activists, struggle and revolution acknowledging the contention associated with these terms but preferring to use the words that reflect the participants themselves. In the interest of safety in a period where political opponents are routinely targeted,

all participant names have been anonymised and identifying features removed. As outlined above, I draw on Adamson (2005), Kaldor-Robinson (2002), Sökefeld (2006) and Lyons and Mandaville (2010) to emphasise diaspora as an expression of political consciousness rooted in a sense of transnational belonging rather than generalising to all with an ancestral connection to Egypt (for a discussion, see Underhill, 2016). As such, the accounts do not represent all Egyptians or diaspora and cannot be generalised to the wider population. Before considering the activists' reflections, I provide a brief (and, I acknowledge, simplified) overview of the Egyptian struggle to contextualise issues and terms raised in the remainder of the paper.

The Egyptian revolution and continuing struggle

Since the end of British colonial rule in 1952, Egyptian social and political life has been dominated by military leaders from the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and discourses that emphasise nationalism and security alongside the dangers of terrorism and 'foreigners' (see Achcar, 2016; Marfleet, 2016). Building on the foundation of workers, pro-democracy and human rights movements, discontent with the status quo intensified following the release of photos of the body of Khaled Said who had been brutally beaten by police in 2010 (Ghonim, 2012). Following the uprisings in Tunisia that toppled Ben Ali, 18 days of demonstrations began on 25 January 2011. Across Egypt and the world but centring on the mass sit-in in Tahrir Square, Cairo, protests forced Mubarak's resignation after 30 years as ruler.

Although global interest in Egypt's struggle waned after Mubarak's downfall, activists continued to demonstrate and organise sit-ins calling for democratic elections in the months that followed, often resulting in extreme violence perpetrated by the state. Elections in June 2012 saw Muslim Brotherhood candidate, Mohammed Morsi, narrowly defeat SCAF leader, Ahmed Shafiq. Dissatisfied with Morsi's Presidency, widespread protests between 30 June and 4 July saw Morsi detained by the army after refusing to resign triggered the bloodiest incident in the Egyptian struggle: the Rab'a massacre in August 2013 of over 1000 Morsi supporters. Headed by Morsi's own appointment as defence minister, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, the wave of protests was responded to by widespread arrests followed by mass trials, executions and accounts of torture against both Morsi supporters and secular and human rights activists.

Following Rab'a, and in the continuing struggle, Egyptians were starkly divided between three core positions: first, anti-coup / pro-Morsi / Islamists; second, nationalists / pro-Sisi; finally, revolutionary / secular / pro-democracy / leftists. This triangular contest (Marfleet, 2016) saw nationalists arguing against Islamists by making associations to terrorism and invoking Egypt's colonial memory to portray the secular left as peddling foreign influence. Amid the 'cult of Sisi' (el-Nawawy, & Elmasry, 2016), nationalist arguments for 'stability and security' secured President el-Sisi's formal election into office in May 2014 and enabled a brand of authoritarianism particularly dangerous for political opponents, journalists, NGOs and activists (see Dunne, & Hamzawy, 2019). It is in this context that many activists have reinterpreted their understandings of democracy and continue to navigate perceptions of how they might contribute to Egypt's struggle, even from abroad (Underhill, 2016).

Social movement learning as connectedness: emotion and identity

The examination of social movement learning outlined in this paper was initially inspired by Nour (revolutionary), a British-Egyptian activist who remarked that his experiences made him more 'logically and emotionally invested' in future action. Having spoken about a tense generational divide in his family and the difficulties of navigating their confused rational and emotional arguments, Nour revealed logic and emotion to be inseparable to learning in struggle and suggested the intersection strengthened his beliefs and determination to continue participating. To draw on the entwined nature of logic and emotion within social movement learning, and recognising that diaspora activism often takes place at distance from the 'homeland', this section examines how movement participation creates feelings of connectedness and begins to consider the implications for activists' developing perspectives and practices. This is then developed further in the following section through an exploration of embodied activism.

Participating in protest generates 'oppositional consciousness, solidarity and collective identity' (Taylor, Kimport, Van Dyke, & Andersen, 2009, p.878). Attending protests with prominent human rights activists and developing a friendship group was foundational to Sana's continued learning and the development of a revolutionary perspective. She reflected that learning with a group of more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978) helped her to think critically and theorise her

participation (Foley, 1999), gaining knowledge that deepened her revolutionary praxis and commitment to the relationships she had developed with those in the movement: 'We're not just people who are connected in the same ideas but also comrades fighting in the same field, like you. There is a personal connection that they are like you and this connection is what keeps us strong' (Sana, revolutionary). Emotional connections within social movements and spaces of resistance are an important dimension of solidarity (Featherstone, 2008) that, Sana suggests, can make activists feel more resilient. Feeling that someone is 'like you', to use Sana's words, strengthens the trust and belief in the knowledge that is created with that person and subsequently trust and belief in the actions that derives from that knowledge. Sana was clear that her participation was sustained because the values and beliefs were co-created with others in a shared process of learning rooted in emotional connection and deepening social bonds.

The Egyptian diaspora in the UK is disparate (Karmi, 1997) and many activists reported that, prior to the revolution, they did not know or socialise with other Egyptians in the UK. For many, the struggle triggered and sustained activists' connection to Egypt's 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006), revealing bonds and a sense of self that are rooted in multiple, intersecting identities of belonging. For example, Mona revealed different identities (national, diaspora, Muslim, anti-coup) were part of a process of learning about herself and becoming more committed to taking action:

> *I learnt so much about myself in this time. Especially during the Rab'a time … We were watching what was going on and there were few of us of my generation who Egypt had never been home, never lived there, but they have a connection and a tie to Egypt. We came together—as Muslims living as a minority in the West we know what it means to fight for rights … we have to do something. To feel part of it. (Mona)*

As with Mona, Omar's (anti-coup) commitment to sustaining resistance against Egypt's military state and gaining justice for those killed in the Rab'a massacre derived from the emotional tie ('personal attachment') to Egypt as a nation state and from feeling part of a group that shares his values. He shows that rationality and logic cannot be devoid of emotion because we have 'emotional investments' that are rooted in histories

(Boler, 1999, p. 198) and empowering social relationships based on the belief that we are contributing something useful (Gamson, 1992; Van Dyke, & Dixon, 2013):

> *[I continue] out of my appreciation of the work of the MB [Muslim Brotherhood] from the beginning of the 20th Century. People say it's about legitimacy but … it's about their struggle … about personal attachment … I would get calls from people in Egypt during the coup who would say 'please continue' and 'you don't know how much it helps us knowing you're with us'. (Omar)*

Activism involves shared experiences that form collective identities (see Poletta, & Jasper, 2001) and learning about the self (Kovan, & Dirx, 2003), and can lead to learning about how we relate to others. For example, Youssef (anti-coup) learned 'how to have a healthy conversation' with people who held similar and different ideas about politics, democracy and the Egyptian struggle. Similarly, Zakaria (revolutionary) commented that the most important issue for the continuing struggle was 'how we learn about each other'. However, because friendships based on collective understandings reinforce and support these identities (Van Dyke, & Dixon, 2013), examining how activists learn to navigate relationships must include a reflection on relationships beyond shared collective identity to consider how strength of feeling towards a particular idea or identification can render learning in struggle challenging. To do this, we must engage with social movements as spaces where feelings of solidarity, connection and empowerment can be interrogated alongside notions of conflict, contestation and challenge to consider learning within and beyond the social movement as a process of struggle in itself. Engaging with the embodied nature of diaspora activism as a dimension of learning in struggle that has implications for activists' continued participation is one element of this analysis, to which the next section turns.

Embodied learning in struggle

This section highlights the embodied and performative nature of learning in social movements and the significance of place for diaspora activists to develop and enact a sense of connection to struggle. Activists' accounts confirm that Tahrir Square, the focal point of the Egyptian revolution, 'was not all fun and festivity … emotional reactions were

accompanied by cognitive processes' where people were politicised through interactions and experiences of 'serious politics' and 'intense emotions' (della Porta, 2014, p. 57). The accounts of activism during the 18 days and continuing struggle support Ollis' (2008, p. 323) position that learning in struggle involves 'intelligence, the physical body as well as emotions'. Activists gained new knowledge and skills, drew on emotions for motivation and inspiration and, as this section details, experienced embodied processes of learning.

The diaspora activists used historical and cultural symbols such as places and spaces that elicit emotions (Brown, & Pickerill, 2009) in performative displays of belonging to a particular side of the Egyptian struggle and as embodied practices within the UK and Egypt. For example, revolutionary and anti-coup activists displayed defiance by protesting outside the Egyptian embassy in London despite the dangers of being photographed or videoed by staff inside to show resistance and 'no more … sitting on the fence' (Sami, anti-coup), while nationalists occupied the same space (particularly during presidential elections) in performative displays of national solidarity.

Diaspora activists like Ayesha (revolutionary) who travelled to Egypt to participate in demonstrations and sit-ins throughout 2011 and 2012 reflected that physically being present in Egypt was critical for self-learning and was instrumental in strengthening her Egyptian identity:

> *There is no theoretical, intellectual knowledge without tasting … you really have to be embedded in life at the existential level so that you are part of the world … The revolution was a way of tasting all of these things from 25 January up to this day … You have to do something moral, of course, but also something material. By going there, I transferred my body there in sight of danger. I did not give the gift. I got the gift by feeling like for the first time I belonged to Egypt in a way I have not felt before. (Ayesha)*

The physicality of 'performativity and embodiment of protest' in a specific place (Brown, & Pickerill, 2009, p. 28)—what Ayesha referred to as 'tasting' and 'material' —is an embodied process of learning that entwines fear and anger with feelings of belonging and commitment. Similarly, Ashraf (nationalist) reflected on his involvement in organising fundraising events in the UK to the support doctors in Egypt in the aftermath of the 18 days, commenting that he 'reconnected with Egypt in

a more [sic] stronger way'. A deep sense of belonging was also evident in Mohammed's (anti-coup) account of how embodied learning stimulated determination within the pro-Muslim Brotherhood movement:

> *Now you see kids, children, young girls, they are not afraid of the bullets. They are not afraid of grabbing. They are not afraid of torture in the police station. Every day they go to the streets and demonstrate, and they know at the end of the day maybe she or he or all of you will after [sic] be arrested, be tortured, be killed. Right? And they still go. 13 months now and they still insist. Forget their freedom. Why? Because they tasted the taste of freedom. The international community has to understand this. The Egyptian people have changed. The Libyan people have changed. They are not coming back to the situation which we were under the umbrella of the dictatorial regimes anymore. I think the majority, not all of the people, I'm talking about the majority of people when they taste freedom, you don't want to let that go away. (Mohammed)*

The recurring notion of 'tasting freedom' from activists within the revolutionary and anti-coup movements demonstrate how embodied learning in struggle draws on and recreates feelings of hope and the 'idea of agency' (Ayesha, revolutionary) that can persist even when activists are 'not sure if [they] are going to be successful' (Faoud, revolutionary). The activists who 'learned not to give up because there is every reason to give up' (Salma, revolutionary) also showed that strength of emotion associated with embodied practices draws on moral shocks (Jasper, 1998) that challenges previously held truths through emotional processes of sense-making. To illustrate, Farida (anti-coup) explained that 'Mohammed Mahmoud was the main [learning moment]. The dead people. The police just dragging the dead bodies to the rubbish. For me to see the police and army treat civilians [that way] was a shock'. When feelings of shock, anger and fear subside, the emotions associated with witnessing violence deepened a sense commitment to the struggle (Underhill, 2016) because they 'help us define our goals and motivate action toward them' (Jasper, 1998, p. 421).

Justifications for continued participation cannot be explained as rational choices; hope and agency are embodied within knowledge that is generated through experience, as one activist I spoke to at a

demonstration in London remarked: 'we've done it once, we can do it again'. Similarly, Faoud (revolutionary) argued that 'everybody fully realises that [the army] is the problem now. But it takes quite a while to understand that. It wasn't something that was very obvious in the beginning of the revolution'. When reflecting on shifting understandings, revolutionary activists in particular, demonstrate the emotional character of witnessing and gaining knowledge that have an enduring impact:

> *We know where to put the pressure, we know what the red lines are … You know, you just know. Before it was like fog but now you know what is going on and you can work on that. It will take way longer, obviously revolution doesn't take a day, it will take way longer but now you just know and you are a lot more aware. (Ali, revolutionary)*

Although street-level activism and protests in the UK related to Egypt diminished as el-Sisi tightened his grip on power, participation in the struggle, whether in the UK or Egypt, enabled rich and powerful embodied learning that deepened activists' sense of self and materialised in commitment to 'keeping the issue alive' (Rana, anti-coup) and 'to resist[ing] injustice' (Ayesha, revolutionary). A sense of optimism is key to sustaining movement participation (Van Dyke, & Dixon, 2013) and emerges in the intersections of logic and emotion that generate ideas of what might be possible. However, diaspora activists engaged in Egypt's struggle, acknowledged that they 'need to learn to be a lot more patient' (Salma, anti-coup), recognising that learning in social movements can be emotionally and intellectually challenging. In conversation with a prominent revolutionary activist in Cairo in March 2015, he admitted that 'we have to search for the conversations and thoughts, but I don't know how to.' The final section of this analysis explores the provocative space of uncertainty within social movement learning to illustrate the necessity of a 'pedagogy of discomfort (Boler, 1999) that can expose the limitations and implications of emotionally laden identities that constrain new imaginations.

Discomfort and the implications of learning in struggle

Moving beyond gaining skills and knowledge to application and mastery involves a 'predicament' where a person needs 'to develop the means to

overcome its condition' (De Smet, 2015, p. 51). Conceptualising learning as a predicament and a continuous process of development that occurs through tension, struggle and feeling uncomfortable (Bateson, 1994; Hobson, & Welbourne, 1998) recognises that although emotions associated with movement participation are not always positive, when read within a pedagogy of discomfort (Boler, 1999), they can be productive. Questioning assumptions and the values we have learned over time involves openness and risk taking (Boler, 1999) but, as this case shows, cannot be taken for granted as a feature of social movement learning.

As established earlier in this paper, people have emotional investments in particular beliefs and values that are rooted in histories. To build on this, this section establishes that identification with an idea or group is tied to a sense of emotional commitment to the idea or group, which can be problematic. Boler (1999, p. 195) argues that we need to recognise that our identities are present in our perspectives when we witness something and that because 'we all see things differently … how we see or choose not to see has ethical implications and may even cause others to suffer'. Because activists in Egypt's struggle identified with one of three central narratives, revolutionary, anti-coup or nationalist, the case provides a useful example of how emotion and identity manifest in constraints to learning (Underhill, 2019) and the subsequent necessity of Boler's (1999, p. 179) recognition that 'any rigid belief is potentially "miseducative"'. For instance, when activists acknowledged checking another person's allegiance before engaging in conversation or only engaging in discussions with someone who held a different position for fun (Underhill, 2019) they revealed how emotionally and historically rooted identities can strengthen assumptions about the other and subsequently prevent listening and limiting possibilities for learning.

In a further illustration of how beliefs entwined with history impact the possibilities for learning, one nationalist, a Sisi supporter, revealed that his continued support for the military was based on his belief that 'all the third world countries need a dictator' because they did not and would not be able to understand what democracy really meant (Underhill, 2016). For nationalists with similar views, the risk of self-reflection as outlined by Boler (1999) would be to focus inwardly and fail to interrogate the wider context in which their ideas and assumptions are created and reinforced. Instead, a pedagogy of discomfort would ask activists to consider how their perspectives have been shaped by

their experiences, identities and emotions, recognising 'how their ways of seeing have been shaped specifically by the dominant culture of the historical moment' (Boler, 1999, p. 179), potentially opening up questions of power and their relationship to hegemony.

Although activists have experienced some extreme highs, for example with the 18 days being described as 'utopian' (Amira, revolutionary), and a belief from many that 'the younger generation has the imagination now to make the change we need but in a long time, not now' (Zakaria, revolutionary) and are committed to future action, learning in social movements does not ensure participation will be sustained. One revolutionary activist was critical of the movement's lack of strategy for beyond the 18 days and the inability of other revolutionary activists to cooperate, remarking that 'if anything, they are competing' (Dina). This activist left the revolutionary movements to become involved in community action and went on to vote for el-Sisi in the 2014 election, arguing she needed to be 'pragmatic' about how to create change. Similarly, political decisions taken during elections caused Amira, an active member of the revolutionary socialists for many years, to withdraw from the party and from formal political processes. Amira admitted distance from organised action was key to her 'trying to make sense of what happened', revealing the possibilities of a conscious pedagogy of discomfort.

The intersections of emotion, identity and learning in the context of the Egyptian struggle has implications for activists' sense of connection to subordinate identities associated with a collective group or social movement. This shift in connection can also impact how activists feel towards national identity. To illustrate, some anti-coup activists revealed how the reactions from other Egyptians towards the Rab'a massacre ('they wanted Rab'a'. Salma, anti-coup) challenged their relationship with Egypt: 'I feel less connected to Egypt which is not what I intended … I feel it's the people and the people have let me down and that's left me feeling less connected and let down.' (Omar, anti-coup)

Omar's disconnection reveals his belief in an imagination of Egypt that had been created from a distance over many years of holidays to visit family. Having emotionally invested his identity to Egypt's imagined community (Anderson, 2006) over the years and again through his participation in the anti-coup movement, it was challenging for Omar

to accept that the new realities might require him to reconsider other 'truths' about Egypt that he had established over many years. To engage with this state of discomfort pedagogically, Omar would need to question where his beliefs about Egypt had come from and how his position in relation to those beliefs might impact others. The shift from feeling let down to regaining a sense of agency would require exploring complex ideas and developing political imaginations (Beaumont, 2010) that are, when we have multiple, situated and embodied identities, pedagogically challenging.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to examine how diaspora activists' emotions and identities shape learning in and engagement with struggle. It builds on existing knowledge of learning in social movements to explore the relationship between activists' identities and emotions to consider the implications on engagement with the struggle. The integration of identity within the theoretical framing and analysis contributes a new approach to understanding learning in social movements and the implications for activists that is increasingly relevant to the contemporary global context of increased globalisation and transnational activism. By exposing the pedagogical dynamics of emotion and identity within diaspora activists' learning, the paper reiterates the 'inextricabl[e] link' between cognition and emotion (Boler, 1999, p. xix) to argue that the emotional dynamic within our multiple identities not only shape what and how we learn but also its possibilities.

Drawing on diaspora activists' reflections on participating in the Egyptian revolution and continuing struggle, the paper establishes that experiences of learning in struggle involves emotional connections to ideas and knowledge, and that engaging in processes of learning that can strengthen or challenge these understandings. Commitment to a position —and to subsequent action related to that position—draws on our identities and is strengthened through collective experiences that develop relationships of shared learning. Although learning in struggle is made possible through 'intimate and emotional connections' between activists (Featherstone, 2008, p. 38), it is important to recognise that the strength of emotion can constrain opportunities to experience the discomforting pedagogy necessary to challenge hegemonic ideas and values. Greater understanding is needed of how activists experience

and learn through Boler's (1999) 'pedagogy of discomfort' and the possibilities of an activist pedagogy that centres on the lived experience as a process of learning that is underpinned by feelings of connection and belonging to ideas, collectivity and understandings of the self. Without fully engaging with emotional experiences of movement participation and the possibilities for creating new and different knowledge, the picture of activist engagement is incomplete.

An embodied reading of social movement learning offers language to explore how and why activism intensifies or diminishes, and why the shape and strength of activism changes. In the Egyptian case, for example, a more intentional account of emotion recognises feelings of hope can spur commitment and determination, but also acknowledges the emotional weight of struggling in authoritarian contexts. While many of the activists in this study referred specifically to the need for patience and to reimagine the revolution as an intergenerational struggle that requires '20–30 years' (Amira), it cannot be assumed that all who participated will have continued to struggle with the intensity and that there are other, negative emotions such as despondency and disillusionment that are part of the activist experience.

More broadly, this paper contributes evidence of the significance of deepening the connections between diaspora and emotion in theories of learning in social movements. As Clover (2012, p. 90), argues, 'it is emotive and affective learning, and not simply the cognitive, that can best challenge today's technically rationalised industrial culture'. Emotive accounts of learning from those who draw on multiple identities as they engage in struggle, therefore, are critical for conceptualising alternatives to a purely rational existence, for reimagining the lived experience and 'revisioning ourselves' (Boler, 1999, p. 200) as empowered transnational agents within a continued process of change.

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Reconceptualising activism for a pedagogy of struggle: Occupying education, the power of the empty signifier for the future of education

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The global Occupy! actions gave some pause for thought. At first, some thought that this was a global movement that could change the way politics was conducted and maybe see the end of capitalism as we knew it. The hopes for Occupy! were high, but the highest hopes for the movement were short lived. This paper examines Occupy!'s legacy; what potential remains and where educators might go with it. An argument is presented that Occupy! became an empty signifier: a 'bucket' of discontent into which thousands of disjointed, dissenting voices and discontents were poured, ranging from the original Wall Street encampment to the Umbrella revolution in Occupy Central. The paper looks at the power of the 'empty signifier' as a galvanising mechanism and explores what this could mean for education. The notion of occupying the curriculum in HE will be explored as a unifying mechanism for multidisciplinary teaching and learning.

Keywords: *Popular Education; Occupy Movement; Dissent; collectivism*

In his chapter in a book on popular education, Bud Hall (2012) called the global *Occupy*! movement of 2011/12 a 'giant human hashtag'. It is from this notion that I would like to start, although this particular global movement was incredibly complex, what *Occupy*! actually was at that time and for a while afterwards, was a unifying symbol, a signifier of the possibility of change to come, a stream of consciousness to which anyone could, hypothetically, add their voice: a giant human hashtag. The questions that this paper seeks to theoretically address concern the notion that if this was so, what does that mean? What possibilities does that unleash? And where could it take us? What power does a 'giant human hashtag' have in shaping our current and future thinking about how we 'do' forms of education in a changing world? What could be the future for adult education and what sorts of (re)organisation would it take to make that desired future happen? These, and other socio-political questions are needed now, in a time when politics and truth are at a strange juncture (Havt-Rabin, & Media Matters, 2016; Wilson, & Swyngedouw, 2015) and critical thinking and high levels of political education are needed to combat a potentially dystopian future for many. Therefore, this paper asks what might be needed to change, not just in our classrooms in adult education and other spaces, but perhaps in our hearts and minds too, in order to fill the empty spaces left by the street eruptions, the movements of the Squares and the global occupations of politics and lives, that left such an impression on so many. What can we capture, still, now a number of years on, of that energy so that its legacy lives on in some guise of resistance? What can we take into our spaces of adult and popular education, our universities and our colleges, that will turn our education into an occupation of ourselves and our communities?

I have written more extensively elsewhere about the *Occupy*! movement, specifically in the UK (Earl, 2013; Earl, 2015; Earl, 2015), about its fulfilled and unfulfilled potential, its prefigurative practices and its promises of the creation of a world, as John Holloway (2010) might say, that exists not yet. The discussion in this paper on the actual *Occupy*! movement, constituted as a global political movement with the specific actions of the physical occupations, with tents and bodies, of squares and parks around the world, will be brief as it is only included as a specific moment, event, protest, process, as a reference point for the potential it did and, I argue, still could contain. But these discussions are still important, whatever your own opinion on *Occupy*!, it did something

to the collective imagination, it was written about extensively and it gave many people a reason to pause and reconsider, so a description is essential before moving on.

The global *Occupy*! actions of 2011–2012; the encampments, the protests, the solidarity displays, the spring uprisings, etc., created a massive amount of excitement, a huge amount of hope, and a glimpse of collective action on a global scale, unprecedented in its use of space and public pedagogy (Sandlin, Shultz, & Burdick, 2010), it was what Chomsky (2012) termed the greatest public response to class war in thirty years. At first, many activists and academics (Chomsky, 2012; Gitlin, 2013; Graeber, 2011) thought that this was a global movement that could change the way politics was conducted, bring the hidden countervailing discourses out into the public consciousness and maybe even see the end of capitalism as we knew it. A huge expectation for a leaderless movement and grand ambition indeed. However, as grand as it seems in the cold light of day, there was something about *Occupy*! that was undeniably different, undeniably exciting and undeniably grand. My research was conducted at Occupy London Stock exchange (Occupy LSX) and I have to admit, the idea, the camp, the rhetoric was seductive.

As I have said, the hopes for *Occupy*! were high, but the highest hopes for the movement were reasonably short lived, *Occupy*!, as a new social movement was plagued with problems, distrust, internal disagreements, even some abuse of its members (Anonymous, 2012; Campbell, 2011; Earl, 2018; Mann, 2013). Much research deemed that in *Occupy*! London, the repression of internal dissent against the consensus democracy model was an influential factor that contributed to the London movements' downfall. These issues, coupled with the sometimes violent repression seen in various sites around the world, meant that, certainly in the UK, what was solid about *Occupy*! has melted into air as a new social movement.

However, as interesting as the stories from *Occupy*! are, what this paper seeks to examine is *Occupy*!'s potential legacy for thinking into the future of a specific pedagogical form; what can we as popular, adult, and higher education teachers and researchers gain from the events that unfolded, what potential remains from those thoughts, happenings and produced spaces, and where might we go with it? The argument that I present here is that what has happened cannot merely disappear. What

occurred in those spaces produced, stirred up by the activists' tents and physical presence, which disrupted the flow of business as usual in the City of London and other spaces across the world, gave valuable new meaning in the most commercialised space in the UK, and disquieted the familiar discourses on the right to the city and the assertion of the right to public assembly, currently being eroded in most countries around the world. Those happenings cannot merely go away, despite violent evictions, disillusionment and the often spreading distrust. There is left an energy, which has the potential to be translated into imaginative hope for other spaces and other imaginaries. MacKenzie (2011) said in an article that what *Occupy*! was good at, and had sincerely and effectively begun, was 'hacking the public imagination' or what Haiven and Khasnabish (2014) might call awakening the Radical Imagination, and it is this that was begun during the uprisings constituted by the various occupations around the globe in 2011–2012, and I will argue, continued after the camps had gone – rethought and reconstituted. I wish then, to explore whether this energy and these ideas produced in those spaces could still be useful notions for thinking about radical social change through forms of education, and how we move forward as peoples and educators into the next stage of—if left unchecked—inevitable and vicious attacks on the poor and subjugated from a currently still (re)formulating kind of neoliberalism that is more oppressive and repressive than possibly ever before, and with the US marching toward fascism (if it isn't already there) (Hawley, 2019). I will look particularly at the UK context as this is what I know best and because the adult and higher education sector here are currently and have been for some time now under economic and ideological attack (Bailey, & Freedman, 2011; Couldry, 2011; Earl, in press), facing a fast and furious move toward the commodification of knowledge (Williams, 2013) and academic capitalism (Leslie, & Slaughter, 1997; Molesworth, Scullion, & Nixon, 2011; Neary, & Amsler, 2012; Williams, 2016). Student fees are being raised alongside the marketisation of not just universities themselves, but individual courses and academic disciplines (McGettigan, 2013; Williams, 2013). The adult education that used to be fully funded, such as Access Courses that help 'non-traditional' (mature and those with no formal qualifications) students access higher education, now has an expensive individual 'investment' of around £2400. The community education that I spent my first career working in is almost now non-existent, and that's where the radical work was being

done, through a Freirean popular pedagogy, with a focus on community organising (Alinsky, 1969).

What I want to argue here however, is that *Occupy*! became an empty signifier: a 'bucket', if you like, of discontent into which thousands of disjointed, dissenting voices were poured. This empty signifier contained discourse ranging from the original Wall Street encampment in New York's Zuccotti Square, USA, to the so called 'Umbrella Revolution' at Occupy Central, in Hong Kong. Most of the demonstrations that happened under the name of *Occupy*!, including some of the 'Movements of the Squares', looked at democratic practice in some way, some wanting more democracy, some wanting different democracy, but all stating[1] one thing in common—anyone was welcome, anyone, whatever their individual and specific political leaning, as long as their unhappiness was aimed at corruption, greed, was essentially anti-capitalist and cried out against the alienation of themselves from their human senses (Anonymous, 2012; Brown, 2012; Byrne, 2012; Chomsky, 2012; Earl, 2018; Federici, & Halven, 2011; Giroux, 2012). Whatever these issues meant for individuals personally, in a specific way, they were welcome in this emergent global community of dissent. The movement gave no blue print for the future, other than a prefigurative bent on how to move forward, there was no specific ideology that needed to be subscribed to, no dogma to divide, apparently. Whether it was entirely successful in upholding its post-ideological stance or not is hotly debated by many, and won't be looked into here as mentioned earlier, but what this ethos did was create an inclusivity that allowed and encouraged the radical imaginings of off shoots from the movement. One of the slogans posted on the wall of the 'Bank of Ideas', a learning space in London was that 'you can't evict an idea' and, I would argue, it seems they were onto something much larger than they had intended with this one notion.

It is this idea of *Occupy*!, not the camps, not the protests, or the corporeal occupations that I want to concentrate on, but the idea that hacked the public imagination, the empty signifier of occupation that resides in the minds and hearts of so many. It is this idea that cannot be evicted, an idea whose time has come, that I wish to take up and run with into the thought experiment that follows. It is this idea, this ethos and this collective memory that creates the powerful 'empty signifier' that this paper wishes to utilise for further thinking about the future.

So, what do I mean by *Occupy*! as an empty signifier? Moreover, what definition of empty signifier am I using to argue the case? The way I see it, there are two routes to take here. One of those routes takes us down a road with Laclau, the empty signifier of governance. He states that in this context 'emptiness … is entirely different from the relative poverty of contents resulting from an operation of abstraction' (Laclau, 2004, p. 280) so what he is referring to as the empty signifier is an emptiness which results from 'irrepresentability and not from abstraction. He goes on to say that this irrepresentability or what he calls 'holes in the symbolic order', a term borrowed from Lacan, acquire a certain form of 'discursive presence through the production of empty signifiers', which he says 'name an absent fullness—in socio-political analysis, the fullness of the community'. Here he gives an example:

> *'[I]n a situation where people experience a feeling of being wronged, 'justice' has no content of its own; it is just the positive reverse of a constitutive lack and, as such, it gives discursive presence [or] it names something which is at the same time absolutely empty and absolutely full.'*
>
> (Laclau, 2004, p. 280).

I like this notion of the absent fullness, it fits with some descriptions of the politics of *Occupy*!, and it fits with the word 'education'. In addition, I argue that this can allow the production of what Haiven and Khasnabish (2014), Shukaitis and Graeber (2007) and others call insurgent knowledge production due to the 'occupation', in terms of the ideas expressed here, being at the same time completely empty as a signifier and absolutely full as a discursive presence, a political moment and a way of thinking about social change.

The other route is a semiotic one, where the linguistics of the signifier are privileged. Semiology concerns itself with the different meanings and 'truths' conveyed by signifiers, signifieds and referents (Rose, 2001). The referent here is the actual encampments, it could be argued, although I think that even that is a spurious argument as many of the global movements did not have encampments, but then the referent is the actions, the meetings and teach outs that happened under the name of *Occupy*!. A signified is the concept which is conjured up by the signifier *Occupy*!—for those who remember the movements around the world, images, sounds, smells and atmospheres from the encampments might be brought to

mind. But here I want to assert that it is not the referent when we talk of the *Occupy*! movement that is important but the signified, or what Laclau might call the discursive space—the signified is particularly important not as an iconic signified—the images seen throughout the world of encampments, the infamous pepper spraying and other recollected scenes, but the symbolic signified, the notion again that you cannot evict an idea.

I have written elsewhere about the notion of Occupation as escape, escape from the enclosure of neoliberalism and the fatalism that it promotes. Occupation as something we can do in all parts of our lives, the occupation of ourselves, of our work as educators, our communities as activists, and our lives as human subjects. I argue here, as I have elsewhere, that this is the power of the *Occupy*! empty signifier. So, I want to look now at the power of this 'empty signifier' of occupation as a galvanising mechanism and explore what this could mean for education.

Therefore, in terms of education, how might we connect the notion of the empty signifier that *Occupy*! remains as in our collective imaginations and in the notion of education? This job has already begun.

Brown (2012, p. 56) argues that 'the target of occupation is no longer just physical spaces or objects, but everything, everywhere—including ourselves to begin with'. Of course, of particular interest here is the burgeoning movement to 'occupy the curriculum' in more formal educational spaces and learning, however, the walls of those spaces under this conception are melted away as Bigelow (2011) reiterates, 'we don't need to take tents and sleeping bags to our town squares to participate … we can also "occupy" our classrooms, "occupy" the curriculum, and then collect the stories about what we have done', thus expressing the power of that empty signifier, the meaning becomes symbolic from the original movement. Neary and Amsler (2012, p. 114) agree, 'we are particularly interested in the possibility … of appropriating the social space and time of education in ways to enable us to articulate what, how and why people learn'. This is the basis of occupation in terms of the emptiness left by the spaces, the encampments, once occupied, the empty signifier that is left can be filled this way: with people continuing the occupation of the space and time of the original events. Otherwise, as Shantz (2013, p. 14) says, 'the thrill of immediacy of the street eruptions quickly subsides, leaving little of real gain in its wake'. *Occupy*! may feel like Shantz's description to

many, but therein lies the power of the empty signifier, from a popular, critical pedagogical point of view, the energy that was spent there could be recouped and learnt from. Holloway (2010, p. 30–31) explains the notion of capturing these 'happenings', these street explosions like this:

> *'Often such explosions are seen as failures because they do not lead to permanent change, but this is wrong: they have a validity of their own, independent of the long-term consequences. Like a flash of lightening, they illuminate a different world, … the impression that remains on our brain and in our senses is that of an image of the world we can (and did) create. The world that does not yet exist displays itself as a world that exists not-yet.*

This world that exists not-yet in the case of *Occupy*!'s emptied space of meaning making, is one of relations attended to otherwise, experimental democracy and, of particular interest here, open education (Neary, & Winn, 2012), politically charged education in a place where the agora is reclaimed; reclaimed through filling the empty place of power (Lefort, 1988), using the notion of the empty signifier, with discussion, creativity and liberated desires to commune. These practices, thus far limited, need to be extended if the social world is to escape from enclosure.

This world that exists not-yet, encompassed by the empty signifier *Occupy*! could possibly become the new space of occupation. If this is so then, Merrifield (2011, p. 133) has a point when he asserts that:

> *[W]e need another zone of indistinguishability, another space of slippage, a space in which there's a lot of spontaneous energy as well as a few signs indicating where to go and what time the action begins. We need a new space of slippage in which we can organise and strategize, act without self-consciously performing, encounter others without walls, and hatch en masse a daring Great Escape from capitalism.*

Sounds like a classroom to me[2] … and of course, conferences, reading and discussion groups, journal special issues, and revolutionary conversations between friends.

Under this powerful notion of the empty signifier, it is argued that occupation can be viewed as a less public or explicit transgressive act, as well as an overt, physical act. The sites imagined and invented would

have to transgress to varying degrees, the normative rules in education and instead attempt to occupy the creative imaginations of those who wander/wonder in. Popular education already has this built in to its genetic code. However, as Foust (2010, p. 3) states, 'transgressive actions incite reactions due to their relationship to norms: Transgressions violate unspoken or explicit rules that maintain a particular social order. Yet, as scholars and practitioners have figured it, transgression's threat to social order runs deeper than violating the rules and expectations that govern what is normal'. The occupation of our newly emancipated selves also transgresses those unspoken and explicit rules and indeed, the threat to the normative order of educational practice runs deeper than violating the rules and expectations that govern what is normal. The transgression of individuals reclaiming their occupied selves can have a 'catalytic validity', which can have a 'reality-altering impact of the inquiry process and a gaining of self-understanding and self-direction' (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011, p. 171).

It can be argued that when individuals occupy, their task is then to reclaim. Reclaiming the determination of subjectivity from those constraints takes an alternative way of thinking about social structures, and the organisation of different forms of education itself (Shantz, 2016).

Peters and Freeman-Moir (2006, p. 2) insist that the individual 'political will to imagine much beyond the present seems hardly to exist', and that in the halls of academe 'the idea of utopia or the value of utopian thinking is easily dismissed as idle and silly. … Nothing like an alternative to global capitalism seems remotely possible'. However, in *Occupy*! individuals attempted to begin the collective task of finding the solidarity required to find the will to escape from their ordinary lives and to find others to work with; and it is argued here that all forms of education should attempt to create a greater awareness of how to dream, how to use utopian thought, to find an alternative; and to create organisational structures that can support the theorising and the building of such alternatives. As Kincheloe *et al.* (2011, p. 169) insist 'a basic dimension of an evolving criticality involves a comfort with the existence of alternative ways of analysing and producing knowledge'. Therefore, it is argued that as yet unseen potential is never any less important than empirical evidence and that this may be the sight of our new occupation, the as yet unseen potential or to borrow a term from Freire, 'untested feasibility' (Freire, 2007; Freire, Escobar, Fernandez, & Guevara-Niebla, 1994).

If the mass schooling, and therefore enclosure and dulling of our creative imaginations, is to be challenged, then the assertion of the right to freely associate, to assemble, to imagine and to produce our own knowledge, seen here as popular education, should be reclaimed and can be done so under the seeming galvanising mechanism of the empty signifier of *Occupy*!. Foust (2010, p. 3) states that 'transgressions that are permitted or escape the notice and discipline of boundary-policing authorities, push the boundaries further', therefore, what is acceptable tomorrow will be *different* to what is acceptable today. I would argue that if newly organised and constituted forms of the occupation of education were able to escape the 'notice of the boundary policing authorities' they could become accepted and normative practices, but only if they are celebrated for their occupation and reclamation of thought, imagination and a popular curriculum.

However, due to the attempted full enclosure of all spheres of social life (Shantz, 2013) and the notion that 'the political will to imagine much beyond the present seems hardly to exist', the first urgent occupation and reclamation can be argued to be that of ourselves. I argue that it is true, as von Kotze (2012, p. 109) says, that 'creative collective experiences can help break through from seeing others as barriers rather than essential allies and make conscious the potential of solidarity in action'. This entails reclaiming sociality: reclaiming what is common to us all, creating, in other words, commons. According to Dyer-Witheford (2010, p. 106), 'the notion of the commons presupposes collectivities—associations and assemblies—within which sharing is organised'. Shantz (2013, p. 19) adds to this 'in commonism we re-appropriate our own productive power, taking it back as our own'. Therefore, an educational philosophy that enhances the occupation and reclamation of sociality seems essential for initiating the process.

Neary and Amsler (2012, p. 132) say that: 'the essential aspect of critical practical reflexivity is that it questions the validity of its own concepts, which it does by recognising itself as inhering in the practical social world emerging out of, and inseparable from, the society it is attempting to understand'. This type of reflexivity should be emergent from the authenticity of the human experience, Freire (1998, p. 31–2) understood that 'when we live our lives with the authenticity demanded by the practice of teaching that is also learning, we are participating in a total experience that is simultaneously directive, political, ideological, gnostic, pedagogical,

aesthetic and ethical'. I argue here that it is this collective experience, through both communing and questioning the validity of our own concepts, which brings us into a state of conscientisation, this is the connection between a prefigurative politics, practiced in the new social movements, and popular education. The prefigurative, and therefore intensely pedagogical, nature of *Occupy*! made this questioning inevitable. According to von Kotze, 'Popular educators and activists in social movements would say radical interventions happen through the concerted, purposive building of critical consciousness, through analysing power relations, through fashioning a constantly vigilant attitude' (2012, p. 104), this is perhaps what we should all concentrate on doing, on occupying the moment where the space for this is opened up. Neary and Amsler (2012, p. 113) report that *Occupy*! 'asserted that because it was primarily an idea or collectivised sense of agency, it could never be "evicted" from social relations', as I have argued earlier, and this is how the notion, the empty signifier of *Occupy*! becomes part of newly emergent and flourishing social relations. This form of fluidic, spatially and temporally contextualised voice of *Occupy*! has the possible potential of creating and organising spaces that are both creative and politically progressive. This is because they do not silence dissent, but relish its ability to add to the constitution of new identities and new forms of relations and organisations that may eventually replace the corrupt and greed ridden institutions that the multitude of heterogeneous voices argue against (Hardt, & Negri, 2004; 2012).

This is where popular education and social movements collide in an explosion of radical imaginings and emergent revolutionary knowledge. A collision of protest and pedagogy, popular education has always been a prefigurative form of communal learning for political purposes and social movements, post-Seattle, have become places to reimagine the future and the social relations that accompany that. But to ensure that these ideas can be mainstreamed without co-option, that the 'empty space of power' in the way Lefort (1988) describes it, is filled with the discursive space, rather than the populist or the despot, we need the occupation of our hearts, our minds and our communities to begin, prefiguratively, gently (maybe), and en masse. Those 'spaces of indistinguishability' Merrifield introduced earlier need to be highly charged political and empty as Laclau (2004) had it.

To conclude, then, we can take up the call to occupy, still, even though the tents have gone, we can occupy our own work as radical and critical

educators, occupying the energy and the space and time left by those street eruptions—and not just *Occupy*!, but also the movement of the squares, the protests in Spain, Greece, Turkey, Hong Kong, and around the world. The new social movements that spread in their various ways such as Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, the School Strikes for the Climate, and others that deal with issues but start, always, to inevitably become more and more anti-capitalist. The notion of occupation now covers everything from occupying the curriculum, the food chain, the imagination, the heart, to the physical occupations of the university buildings, the foreclosed houses, the streets and the squares. It seems, as the ongoing project of occupation moves around the globe, questions will remain for pedagogical initiatives and educators regarding where do we interject, where are our efforts best realised? The conversation will continue in future research as the event is not over, it happened, and it is still ever necessary. The significantly 'empty bucket' of *Occupy*! moves across continents and peoples, linking them together in a plethora of struggles, and more initiatives may be needed to link the learning from one to the other to keep the cycle going. Therefore, from a pedagogical point of view more research is needed throughout the journey we now have to take and are committed to as to how to maintain the explicitly pedagogical aspects of this vessel for discontent in order to understand how people learn to act otherwise in these situations. It was the pedagogical and prefigurative nature of the *Occupy*! London movement and encampment that was so interesting and potentially important, if this nature is lost, one wonders what the 'occupy' vessel might become. I argue that we should indeed be present in our lives, our communities, our classrooms—we should, in fact, be in constant occupation of everything that matters.

Endnotes

[1]This was the stated intension, although often on the ground it didn't feel quite as welcoming as this, but here, the intension is what is important.

[2]Classroom here is used in its loosest sense to mean any space of learning, whether that be a formal classroom, or under a tree on a sunny day, a conversation with intent in a coffee shop, or an internet discussion group, the 'room' doesn't matter as long as the revolutionary intent is present.

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Student voice and agency for Indigenous Māori students in higher education transitions

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This article reveals the complexities of Indigenous students navigating the neoliberal model of education through an examination of Māori transitions into higher education contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand. In a recently completed doctoral study, the lived transition experiences of Indigenous Māori higher education students were critically investigated from a student voice perspective. Data were collected and analysed through repeated semi-structured interviews, focus groups and visual stories in a semi-longitudinal study with 20 Māori students enrolled in a wānanga, a polytechnic and a university. Using a Bourdieuan theoretical framework for analysis, findings revealed that participants experienced their transition as a journey. Students perpetually evolved their identities and agency in relation to the tertiary education environments and social structures they encountered which supported or constrained transition experiences. Within wānanga, participants felt their Māori cultural identity was highly valued; within polytechnics, there was a sense that Māori culture is included but more could be done; within universities, a need for more inclusive practices to support Māori learner requirements was identified. This empirical research outlines learning for Māori

students in higher education, and is a timely addition to knowledge revealing the complexities of teaching in the neoliberal model of higher education with Indigenous people.

Keywords: *Indigenous, higher education, transitions, agency, student voice, social movement*

Introduction

This article reports on recently completed doctoral research that explored Indigenous Māori student voices around transitions to higher education contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand (Amundsen, 2019). Much research about student transition experiences into higher education discusses complexities of contemporary student experiences (see Baker, & Sirling, 2016; Coertjens, Taiga, Trautwein, Londblom-Ylanne, 2017; Frawley, Larkin, & Smith, 2017; Jackson, 2003; Leese, 2010; Scott, Hughes, Evans, Burke, Walter, & Watson, 2014). Most contemporary students are combining work and study; say that they need more support from academic staff, and report gaps between expectations and initial experiences. However, less is known about Indigenous Māori transitions into higher education environments. This research holds up to view the complexities of Indigenous students navigating the neoliberal (Gamble, 2019; Glenn, 2019) model of education.

Aotearoa New Zealand's insistence on progressing with neoliberal policies since 1984 (Ballard, 2012) has resulted in high levels of income inequality and poverty, and a reduction in fairness and social cohesion (Krugman, 2009). For instance, Aotearoa New Zealand has exceptionally high rates of child poverty, with significant and persistent inequity between Māori and Pacific child poverty compared to non-Māori (Duncanson, Oben, Wicken, Morris, McGee, & Simpson, 2017). Education inequities are another source of concern (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2018). Many commentaries in Aotearoa New Zealand since the 2000s discuss connections of higher education with neoliberal discourses in less than positive terms (Ballard, 2012; Findsen, 2016; Rowe-Williams, 2018; Zepke, 2009). Neoliberal approaches reflect governmental values of closely linking higher education efforts to outcomes of employment. In turn, this shapes a society that is driven

by economics, at the expense of addressing the social and cultural deficit (Amundsen, 2019; Kelsey, 1997) it leaves in its wake, notably for Indigenous Māori citizens.

Many Aotearoa New Zealand educators assume positive differences are made for Māori through initiating equity and diversity strategies to meet compliance requirements and introducing culturally responsive pedagogies in education arenas (Kidman, 2014). However, these may be comforting myths that problems such as racism and discrimination are being minimised (MacDonald, 2017; Troyna, 1994). If higher education strategies and policies are to be effective, they must consider the diverse social, political, economic and cultural realities within which contemporary Māori live.

Research points to strong silences around how Māori tertiary learners desire participation and involvement in the higher education contexts (Amundsen, 2019; Law, & Stalker, 2005; Wiseley, 2009). Failure to take into account Māori learners as key stakeholders results in denial of their voice. This research emphasised the inter-relatedness of interpersonal and sociocultural effects on Māori students' transition experiences. Interactions between individuals involved, the higher education environment characteristics and the wider socio-political context were relevant.

Both the capacity of an individual student (agency) and the social arrangements influencing or limiting choices and opportunities available for Indigenous Māori students (structure) are significant. Māori students require agency to articulate their own identity positions, values and beliefs through having a voice. However, the relationship between higher education and social class structure does not easily allow for voices of marginalised populations such as Indigenous Māori to be heard. For understanding barriers and enablers for Māori students who transition into higher education environments, the importance of agency and structure was key.

The agency and structure debate

There has long been sociological debate over the primacy of agency and structure for determining human behaviour (Arab, 2016). Inherently, this article engages in the debate concerning the capacity and potential for people to act as agents within and against environments of cultural and structural pressures. This research considered how agency and

structure influenced Indigenous Māori students' identity and transitions into higher education contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori students did not create their self (identity) independently from society; rather, individuals were continuously shaped throughout their lifespan through a dynamic interactive process with societal structure.

Concepts of agency involve an individual's capacity to act independently of their own free will to make autonomous choices (Barker, 2005). Some theorists (Blumer, 1969; Hurrelmann, 2009) emphasise the capacity of an individual to construct their worlds. Seen from this perspective, when a Māori student enrols in a higher education programme, their individual capacity and interactions with others to construct (or reconstruct) their world could be more influential on their transition experience than influences of the wider social structure. If taking the agency view of this debate, social structure is a consequence of the actions and dynamics of interacting individuals; agency is significant.

However, a tension exists here in that agency is not applied in isolation of historical and social contexts and inter-relations (Tomlinson, Baird, Berg, & Cooper, 2018). In sharp contrast to the views of humans acting independently on one's own free will, Bourdieu (1979; 1984; 1986) offers another perspective of this debate of humans as constrained actors negotiating social fields. Bourdieu's theory of agency—an unsteady property of actors that emerges through shifting interactions of field, capital and habitus—was observed in this research as concrete actions or behaviours that Māori students used to navigate and negotiate their space of legitimacy within higher education. Bourdieu's theory offers insights for consideration of an active role for individuals as agents in reducing inequalities within existing structures.

In the context of this research, structure referred to recurrent patterned arrangements which influenced or limited available choices and opportunities (Barker, 2005) in relation to aspects of material (economic) and cultural (norms, customs, ideologies) systems. Debates of agency versus structure centre on issues of autonomy versus socialisation in influencing whether individuals behave as a free agent or in manners dictated by social structures. Karl Marx believed that social structure acts for the disadvantage of the majority of individuals in society (Alessandro, 2008). Seen from this perspective, when a Māori student enrols in a higher education programme, the wider

socio-political and educational policy context could have a far greater influence on their transition experience than their individual capacity to make an effective transition.

Influential theorists in this debate are Anthony Giddens (1976; 1979; 1984) and Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1984; 1986). Giddens was interested in reconciling both agency and structure and became known for his structuration theory (1984) where social practices are a result of overlapping intersections of structures and agents. Giddens defined reflexivity as the ability of an agent to consciously recognise and change their place in the social structure (Giddens, 1984). Therefore social knowledge as self-knowledge is potentially emancipatory. (A similar perspective is found in popular education (Crowther, Galloway, & Martin, 2005; GATT-Fly, 1983) although popular educators regard empowerment and 'transformation' as a collective process that leads to collective action for emancipatory social change).

Bourdieu's influence

Pierre Bourdieu widely discussed the dichotomy and relationship between agency and structure; his concepts formed the theoretical framework of this study. Bourdieu (1977; 1984) depicted society as comprising a number of multi-dimensional spaces and sub-spaces (fields). Bourdieu's (1988) description of the university field was relevant for this study: 'the university field, is like any other field; the locus of struggle is to determine the conditions and the criteria of legitimate membership and legitimate hierarchy, that is, to determine which properties are pertinent, effective, and liable to function as capital' (p. 14). Examples of fields in this study included social institutions such as the education system itself, each of the university, polytechnic and wānanga within the education system, and even social groups such as class Facebook pages. Each field has its own set of doxa, or dominant beliefs and 'rules'. When a Māori student transitions into a higher education context, codes, rules and dominant beliefs (doxa) must be understood about how that institution or system of education operates in order to have a more effective transition experience. For instance, in each of the three higher education institutions in this research, there were specific enrolment application processes, relevance of prior education credentials, course assessment criteria, (in)appropriate ways to relate to staff and other students, and how to 'be' a university student to name some.

Bourdieu believed that when an individual enters a field, they always have with them, their habitus, a combination of the amount and type of economic, social or cultural capital that an individual has (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986). Cultural capital as a non-economic social asset (such as education, which promotes social mobility beyond economic means) was central to Bourdieu's argument that education is the transference of culture from one generation to the next: 'cultural capital is added to cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 79). If an individual's cultural capital volume is low in a given field, it is likely they will occupy a lower social status. In other words, when a Māori student enters into a higher education context, their cultural capital is highly relevant having to do with knowing the right codes of what works in various higher education contexts (fields). Yet it is not just the volume of capital that is important. Bourdieu emphasised how different forms of capital are valued differently in different fields. For instance, though an Indigenous Māori student may have a lot of capital that is valued within Māori cultural contexts (fields) that same capital may not be valued highly at all within westernised university contexts (different fields). In sum, the volume of an individual student's capital has not changed, but its valuation has within a different field (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986). Built out of an individual's history and experience, everyone's habitus provides capital, but different stocks of capital are assigned different values by powerful institutions such as higher education organisations.

Bourdieu (1984; 1986) proposed that social strata are distinguished based on possession of resources; not just economic resources, but significantly, cultural and social resources. When all these resources are combined, they determine social status. Division of society in social strata has relevance for Māori in education because typically Māori occupy a lower social class in Aotearoa resulting in an over-representation in crime, poverty and low-paying jobs and an under-representation in higher qualification holders (Durie, 2011; MacDonald, 2017; Marriott & Sim, 2014; MoE, 2014). Bourdieu (1984) argued that social positions are passed on from parents to children, and in a largely hidden process are linked to transmission of cultural capital, thus the socially stratified nature of society is reproduced (Bourdieu, 1973). That is, cultural reproduction.

Cultural reproduction

Key to the process of cultural reproduction are family and education (Cincinnato, De Wever, Van Keer, & Valcke, 2016). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) explicitly examined the impact of a student's cultural capital on their educational success surmising that embodied cultural capital determines education practices and is determined by social background (parent's educational level). A benefit of Bourdieu's theory was that it reinterpreted inequalities in educational achievement as the outcome of socially determined differences in cultural capital (Cincinnato *et al.*, 2016).

DiMaggio (1982) challenged Bourdieu's theories with a cultural mobility hypothesis. DiMaggio (1982) did not discount the relevance of cultural capital influencing opportunities, however, he disagreed with the proposition that cultural capital is solely imposed by social background. Rather, he said, cultural capital is partially determined by social background, however, investments in cultural capital result from individual agency. That said, alignment exists between DiMaggio and Bourdieu's perspective when considering a Māori students' decision to participate in TE for educational attainment, reflecting that cultural capital is a malleable resource. DiMaggio's (1982) argument reflects that a person's volume of cultural capital (e.g. educational qualifications) can be increased in order to achieve upward mobility of social class. Bourdieu (1977) believed that people can move within the field if they gain or acquire the necessary capital to enable them to do this, illustrating that agency can be viewed as an emergent phenomenon of agent–situation transaction.

Bourdieu (1973) suggested that education perpetuates the dominant culture in society, advantaging students from the dominant class and disadvantaging students from lower classes because of the acquired (insufficient) cultural capital from their family. Students from the dominant class acquire educational qualifications more often leading to higher earning jobs in a disguised, supposedly neutral, process. The present research analysed both structure and agency with equal emphasis to understand the creation and reproduction of social and education systems. Both micro and macro-focussed analyses were carried out through looking at the characteristics of Māori students, as well as the characteristics of the higher education environment in order to understand barriers and enablers for effective transition experiences.

Social movements and popular education

Intersecting the agency–structure debate can be found social movements—groupings of individuals or organisations acting on specific social, political or cultural issues to bring about social change. (Trans) nationally, social movements provide ways for change to occur 'from the ground up', empowering oppressed populations to resist or overthrow more powerful structures which advantage the privileged (Pearce, 2013). Within the last century, some social movements have grown up in resistance to western colonisation, one of which is the Kaupapa Māori movement (Pihama, 2016; Smith, 2000). This research drew upon the principles of the Kaupapa Māori movement from its inception and throughout the research process.

It could be said that the Kaupapa Māori movement, as for other social movements, has been enabled through education of the people (Smith, 2000), and is part of a popular and global expression of Indigenous opposition to colonisation. Graham Smith (1997) draws from Freire's (1970; 1985) use of the term 'praxis' to describe the juncture between action and analysis, intentionally co-opting Freire's words into the movement. Kaupapa Māori theories offered perspectives on the possibilities for conscious transformation of society, i.e., the hope for a future better than the past, which has a mobilising-action effect from the ground up.

The Kaupapa Māori social movement has links to popular education. According to Linda Smith (1999; 2005; 2012) and Graham Smith (1997; 2000; 2012), notions of critique, power and knowledge provides these links. Popular education itself is a concept grounded in 'the people' or the popular classes, which, by definition, excludes upper and upper middle classes in the social fabric. Through ideas of class, political struggle and social transformation, popular education has become its own unique form in a context of social injustice based on the premise that education itself is never politically neutral and must side with either the oppressors (who maintain existing power structures in society) or the oppressed (the poorer, marginalised population groups).

As part of the Kaupapa Māori movement, Te Kōhanga Reo (language nests or Māori medium early childhood learning centres) saved the impending death of Te Reo Māori (Māori language), and in conjunction

with government policy, developed across all education sectors (Bishop, 1998; Irwin, 1990; Pihama *et al.*, 2004; Rameka, 2017). Growth inspired, or perhaps was inspired by, a wider undertaking by Māori to influence Māori destiny, question westernised philosophies of knowledge, culture and research, and rights to determine education for Māori, by Māori. The Māori political and cultural movement gained momentum in mainstream society and was backed with academic clout through respected Māori academics (for instance, Sir Ranginui Walker, Sir Hirini Moko Mead, Graham and Linda Smith, Sir Mason Durie). Significantly, momentum grew within the higher education arena. Three contemporary wānanga were established as publicly owned higher education institutions resembling universities to provide education in a Māori cultural context. Contemporary wānanga, although reflecting Māori knowledge and traditions, are framed in a Western traditions of delivery, qualification structures, funding measures and so on. Like other social movements, the characteristics of the Kaupapa Māori movement has a collective social goal to change societal structures and values.

Research methodology and methods

This qualitative research was a cross-cultural study. I was a white-skinned, female New Zealand Pākehā (Amundsen, 2018; Newton, 2009) researcher invited to research with communities of Indigenous Maori students because of my professional situation. Participants were enrolled as first year students in higher education programmes across three different institutions. These institutions were a university, a polytechnic and a wānanga (a Māori teaching and research institution like a university) located in the Bay of Plenty region of Aotearoa New Zealand. Each of the three participating institutions has responsibility for delivering various and differing types of higher education to students across the region, and together form the Bay of Plenty Tertiary Education Partnership (BOPTEP) comprising: The University of Waikato, Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology and, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi. In three groups, one for each organisation, 20 students' transition experiences were tracked through repeated interviews, focus groups and visual stories for a period of five semesters (approximately three years).

A longitudinal approach was selected because it related to the notion of transition as a process and spoke to the importance of developing

trusting and reciprocal relationships. I was a non-Māori researching across Māori spaces; insider–outsider and cross-cultural dynamics and ethics were fully considered and addressed in the research process (Amundsen, 2019). I openly established my subjective researcher position, declaring the critical and emancipatory aims of the research. Broadly, the research centred on Māori adult learners and their transition experiences into higher education contexts capturing a student voice (Cook-Sathers, 2014; Kidman, 2014) perspective.

Research aim

This study was intentionally framed positively rather than in a deficit research design. In order to focus on educational success for Māori students, and consistent with the theoretical framework, one overarching research question drove the research:

How do Māori students deploy capital in different ways to navigate transitions into higher education contexts?

With that purpose in mind, the investigations sought to find out what were the transition experiences, barriers and enablers for Māori students as they encountered higher education organisations. Furthermore, the research questioned what were the differences, if any, in their transition experiences into a university, or a polytechnic or a wānanga. During the data collection and analysis phase, participants were grouped according to which type of institution they were enrolled in – a university, or a polytechnic or a wānanga. Lastly, two of the six subsidiary research questions asked how Māori students themselves would define an effective transition into tertiary study; and, what does educational success in higher education contexts mean to Māori students themselves?

Culturally responsive methodology

In order to ensure that the research outcomes represented students' voices and reflected Indigenous Māori ways of knowing, doing and understanding in valid and relevant ways, it was vital to draw upon Kaupapa Māori principles to guide the research process. However, the research was not considered as 'Kaupapa Māori' research as I (the researcher) do not whakapapa (have a bloodline connection) to any Māori ancestry. Cram (2001) believes it is essential for Kaupapa Māori researchers to write about

their communities from the perspective of an insider; it was therefore inappropriate for me to use a Kaupapa Māori methodology.

Instead, a Culturally Responsive Methodology (CRM) provided a methodological framework that, 'challenges all forms of traditional research paradigms that devalue or dehumanise research participants' (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013). CRM was an appropriate methodology that also enabled the incorporation of key principles of Kaupapa Māori theory in the application of the research process. There are three key dimensions of CRM. The first is establishing respectful relationships with participants within dialogic encounters (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009). CRM's main objective is maintaining the integrity of both the participants and the researcher(s) and their respective cultures to co-construct something new (Berryman *et al.*, 2013). The second dimension of CRM draws from the work of Césaire (2000) and Freire (1970) and involves the deconstruction of Western colonial traditions of research (Berryman *et al.*, 2013). The third dimension is cultural and epistemological pluralism, drawing from the work of Biermann (2011). Each of these three dimensions (respectful relationships, deconstruction of colonial research traditions and cultural and epistemological pluralism) provided useful and valid ways to collect and analyse the data.

Participants

The doctoral research received ethics approval from the University of Waikato, Faculty of Education. Participant selection was carried out using a purposeful snowball strategy or what Grootveld (2013) has dubbed 'kumara-vine sampling'. Although practical for this specific research context, inability to make inferences about 'all' Māori higher education students based on these participants is a limitation of this participant selection method. Bias due to oversampling of participants from a certain programme could exist. No participants enrolled in fully online programmes were included; all students were enrolled in face-to-face or blended courses.

Criteria for participation was that each student identify as Māori and be currently enrolled in any of the participating BOPTEP education institutions. Within these three participating institutions, 20 students were recruited from a range of programmes. There were eight males

and 12 females; ages ranged from 16 to 54, though only two were under 20 years old. Not all participants remained in the study. Permission was given by the five exiting participants to include information already shared. Students participated in repeated interviews and focus groups and were repeatedly given their interview transcriptions to review, adapt and change, if necessary. All participants were offered the opportunity to select their own pseudonym in order to maintain their confidentiality, although 12 participants elected to use their own names as they wanted to 'stand behind' the research.

Data collection and analysis

Data collection and analysis were intertwined as a simultaneous undertaking during 2016 to 2018 (Merriam, 1998). In this research, a combination of literal, interpretive and reflexive aspects in thematic analysis was used. The researcher embarked on a collaborative journey with participants individually and collectively to co-construct meaning of their transition experiences. In all, data were collected and analysed a process of conducting repeated semi-structured interviews, focus groups, e-mail conversations, research notes, school tracking forms and visual stories. All added to the pool of data for analysis.

A thematic analysis approach showed the closest alignment to the research question and was used to explore participants' world of beliefs, constructs and emotional transition to tertiary education experiences. Participant approval was fundamental to the validity of the content of the data; a collaborative process helped decide what data should be included and what could be left out. This extended to gaining participant approval of the transition experience accounts exactly as written in the doctoral thesis (Amundsen, 2019) though snippets are provided in this article for the sake of brevity.

Indigenous Māori transitions experiences

Māori cultural identity

In this study, Māori cultural identity was key; all participants self-identified as Māori. As the research unfolded, it became apparent that their Māori cultural identity was a central part of the overall theme of identity. In the literature, research on cultural identity has tended to

be separated from personal identity. However, Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch and Wang (2010) propose that defining oneself culturally contributes to consolidating a personal identity. In turn, this leads to a positive sense of well-being. From this perspective, cultural identity comes about as a result of how individuals define themselves in relation to culture(s) to which they belong—an interaction between self and society.

In coming to understand notions of Māori identity from my perspective as a Pākehā (Amundsen, 2018), I needed to gain an understanding of relevant interpretive systems. While it was not possible for me to know what it feels like to 'be Māori', by understanding relevant interpretive systems such as Culturally Responsive Methodologies (Berryman *et al.*, 2013), Kaupapa Māori theory (Pihama, 2016; Smith, 2000), IK mātauranga (Smith, Maxwell, Puke, & Temara, 2016), and whakapapa (Durie, 2001; Mead, 2003), I developed an understanding about Māori ways of knowing and being.

The subject of Māori identity is complex and diverse, encompassing both historical and contemporary elements. Rameka (2012) explains that historically, Māori identity clearly involved whakapapa, spirituality, family, tribal and land affiliations and Māori language. However, contemporary Māori identities are impacted upon by complex factors including colonisation, urbanisation, Māori renaissance, dealing with the primordial/situational dichotomy of ethnicity (May, 2003), being bicultural and developing an inclusive supra-Māori identity (Maaka, & Fleras, 2005). Furthermore, emphasis on reclaiming and reframing Māori identities within contemporary education contexts can be linked to reconciliation of spiritual connections of 'being Māori' (Rameka, 2012).

Historical and contemporary definitions of Māori identity are not exclusive of each other; together they weave a web of influences concerning Māori identity. Complexity of historical, contemporary and reclamation of Māori identity could be seen in 36-year old Watene Moon's case. Watene's transition experiences helped him explore his personal identity in relation to others, and to understand his identity as being Māori. Throughout the course of this research, he perpetually re-constructed his sense of Māori identity, first discussing his father's description of it 'not being cool' to have Māori blood in him, then moving towards seeing himself as 'bi-cultural' rather than 'half-caste'. A later interview illustrated his emerging pride in identifying as Māori.

Interview 1, Early 2016: Interviewer: 'So, are both your parents Māori?' Watene: 'My Mum is, but my Dad wasn't brought up as a Māori, but he has Māori blood in him. It's interesting, his generation. He's said once or twice about when he was growing up, it wasn't cool to have Māori blood in you.'

(Later in the interview) Watene: 'Yeah, I found it really interesting how I came across to the South Islanders, especially when it came to, well most of the girls I dated down there were blonde haired, blue-eyed girls from Southland. [Laughs.] They don't have many Māori down that way. I found that really interesting. You get more of a perception of yourself through other people, right?'

Interview 2, Mid 2016: Watene: 'Like I said, I come from both worlds. Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā.'

Interview 3, Late 2016: Watene: 'Because it all relates back to identity and my sense of self. University is very much a Pākehā institution. I'm not saying it's a bad thing, it's not, but it's a culture as well, right? So if you go there … well you'd know this as a teacher, Māori students feel like they leave their identity, leave their culture, at the door. So, I think if you have that stronger sense of yourself and why you are doing it, you won't think about that kind of thing when you come into university, right?'

Interview 6, Late 2017: Watene: 'When I was growing up, the term was 'half-caste', but now, since I have been at university, and this is what I mean about being strong in myself, you know, my new thing is, "I identify as …" [pauses] … you know, half-caste can be kind of derogatory in a sense.'

Interviewer: 'It has a stigma to it, mmmm, so what do you identify as?'

Watene: 'Well, that's it, I'm Māori! Else I wouldn't be here doing this research!' [Laughs]

For Watene, identifying as bicultural and as Māori gradually became an identity of which he was proud. Watene's experience reflected the complexity of historical, contemporary and reclamation of Māori identity and was an example of the interaction between self and society, as social times changed. Other participants experienced personal growth and identity discovery; their experiences illustrated that their 'self' was being constantly re-constructed. Although participants spoke of summer holidays, or semester breaks as a 'pause' or a chance to 'rest' or 'take a breath and reflect', change and re-working of the self, did not stop during these periods. Constructing and re-constructing their identity was a perpetual process of permanent flux.

Watene's comment about Māori students leaving their identity, their culture, 'at the door' linked to another key theme which emerged in this study. Bourdieu (1986) proposed that within a university context, members of minority groups must take on a secondary habitus, that of the university, which closely aligns with the habitus of the dominant group. This group must adapt to the practices, habits and dispositions of 'distinction' in the university context. In Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice, it is the practices of élitism that build a certain kind of capital.

According to all participants, developing a sense of belonging and 'a right to be in this place' was paramount to enabling more effective transitions. Equally, racial discrimination was a burdensome part of their transition to institutional education experiences and shaping their Māori identity—a factor that seemingly heightened their need for a sense of belonging and being 'allowed' to be there. Participants discussed racism issues relating directly to the failure of the education system to be fully inclusive of their culture which affected their Māori identity. Other researchers have found similar stories of cultural dislocation (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Macfarlane, 2004). Māori identity was a key aspect of an overall theme of dynamic identity found in this research.

Emere's story

One participant (Emere) stood out from the rest—an outlier. Her transition involved moving from a total immersion Māori high school into English-speaking mainstream education environments. She attended 12 years of schooling from early childhood to primary to

secondary in Māori immersion environments. In this system, she was a high achieving student and had a high level of self-esteem about her identity as a student. During her last year of secondary school, Year 13, she attended a mainstream English-speaking school. This was a complete shock to her whole world. Although she managed to complete the year, she 'dropped out' of English.

Emere had experienced almost all of her early childhood, primary and secondary schooling in an immersion Māori setting, yet she chose to undertake her teacher education qualification at the University of Waikato, in an English medium. She intended to teach in an immersion Māori primary schooling setting. Her reasons were wanting the experience studying in a 'western' system, wanting to improve her English and, believing qualifications from a university (versus from the wānanga) were the 'proper' teaching qualification.

During her studies, options to submit assessments in the Māori language medium were made known to her, but again, she decided to submit them in English, despite her skills in English being less than in Māori. Emere's first semester was 'soooo tough'; she failed two papers. She described her year as a sense of 'drowning' as depicted in her visual story of her transition experience (see Figure 1). Her visual story shows her hand above the water and also depicts Tangaroa (the god of the sea in Māori mythology) referring to the traditional Māori thought of the ocean and the land as opposing realms. When humans travel or fish in the sea, they are effectively entering into the realm of Tāne's (god of the forest and bird) enemy. Emere struggled with her transition into university, resulting in being unable to pass all of her first year requirements. This outcome necessitated her to re-sit certain papers and travel 1.5 hours to another city twice weekly, with significant impacts on herself and her relationship with her family.

Figure 1: Emere's transition experience (visual story)

Overall, participants perceived the university as most different to the other institutions because of its academic, and very western environment. Emere (as with other participants) believed that qualifications from a university gave credibility in the workplace. However, a disadvantage of studying at a university for Māori students was the lack of inclusive Māori content, lack of Māori role models, lack of engagement with wider Māori family and community and the rigidity of the system and staff. Why would Emere not have chosen to undertake her Bachelor of Teaching degree at a wānanga instead?

Part of the answer may lie in Bourdieu's (1977) key concepts introduced earlier related to cultural reproduction: habitus, field, practice and cultural capital. Emere's behaviour may be explained by Bourdieu's theory that power is culturally and symbolically created, continuously re-validated through the interplay of agency and structure. This happens through socialised norms, tendencies which guide an individual's behaviour and thinking, or what Bourdieu calls 'habitus'. Bourdieu (1984) showed how, 'the social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds" (p. 471) through everyday systems and activities such as education, 'cultural products', language, judgements and so on. In

part, there was also an objective reality to Emere's decision as wānanga qualifications may not be as readily accepted in the teaching profession. Emere's story illustrates how 'social order is progressively inscribed', because, in her belief, a teaching credential from a wānanga would not be as valuable for her as one from a university. Her story also illustrates Bourdieu's theory of different forms of capital being valued differently in different fields. Despite Emere's Māori language and cultural knowledge having high value within the field of Māori immersion education, it was less valued in the field of a westernised university system.

Agency

In this research, participants viewed their transition experience as a journey of personal and identity growth—transition as a process. The process allowing people to change their self is at the heart of agency. Part of agency is to make changes, and in the process of doing so, make changes to or be changed by, the environment (Sharar, 2016). A goal within this research was to recognise the phenomenon of agency as it arose in the findings and how it was achieved in the individual lives and identities of the participants.

Agency had an influence on which goals participants considered desirable or reasonable. Glaesser and Cooper (2014) suggest that a course of action is not merely chosen by how likely it is to lead to some outcome, but also by the subjective estimation of the likelihood of success. Students who participated in Māori content-focussed programmes (e.g. Te Toi Tangata and Te Ara Reo Māori Certificates offered at the wānanga) had clear expectations that they wanted to access and improve their understanding of Māori language and practices. They sought to study alongside other Māori students; they wanted validation of their habitus and cultural capital. In this context, educational success meant to succeed academically, and to succeed as Māori—a notion at the heart of educational success for Māori (Durie, 2003).

Cultural values influenced student motivation for participation (Phinney, Dennis, & Orsorio, 2006). Indigenous Māori culture is a collectivist culture; traditional Māori values align education with communal rather than individual good (Durie, 2003; Pihama, 2016). Educational success was education that benefitted the collective unit (e.g. family, sub-tribe and tribe). Ten participants spoke about

undertaking their education to support their whānau or wider Māori community. Linked to these aspirations was an insistence that support from within their family and teaching staff were two very critical enablers to achieving successful transitions.

Participants who chose to transition into a polytechnic or a university spoke about ability to succeed because of sometimes disconnecting themselves from Te Ao Māori (the Māori world and a Māori worldview), making short term sacrifices for long-term goals of completing their studies. Whereas the wānanga and polytechnic contexts were found to be family and child friendly contexts, the university context was less so. Similarly, the university environment seemed less flexible around students being absent for tangihanga (3-day funeral ceremony) and other marae-centred customs. Power structures were constantly re-legitimised through an interplay of agency and structure through socialised norms and dispositions shaped over time that guided behaviour and thoughts (Bourdieu, 1984).

Agency is part of an overall key theme in connection with Māori identity that emerged in this research. Barker (2005) suggests that by connecting agency to an agent–situation interaction (agency as something people 'do' together, rather than agency as something that a person 'has') the locus of agency is shifted. Instead of agency existing within individuals, agency is shifted to the capacity of the context for action as shaped by the interaction of those individuals in that context. By viewing the notion of agency as connected to an agent–situation interaction rather than something that an individual 'has', it is possible to recognise potential for increased agency for Māori students for effective transition experiences.

Student voice and racism

This study was carried out in the expectation that, informed by a 'student voice' perspective, institutions and staff may be better equipped to support Māori students in their transition to tertiary education. At the level of policy making in higher education contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand, Indigenous voice has often been marginalised, or grouped in with other minorities as one voice. This research, although primarily conducted by a non-Indigenous researcher, actively recognised the struggle by Māori to gain access to representation at policy-making level and was grounded in Māori student voice.

Perspectives from Māori tertiary students themselves continue to be under-represented in research (Cook-Sathers, 2014; Kidman, 2014). In education policy and research, Māori have almost exclusively been framed in ways that suggest their 'ethnicised representations of selfhood are somehow disconnected from the wider economic and social forces that surround them and their communities' (Kidman, 2014, p. 208). If we fail to engage with students about their transition experiences, we are left in the dark as to how their interaction with the tertiary organisation led to their positively or negatively experienced outcomes.

Accounts given below in the participants' own words are particularly pertinent as they speak to the discrimination and 'everyday racism' (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010) encountered by almost all participants in this study. Racism was experienced in the form of attitudes expressed verbally or in writing and/or actions that resulted in the participant feeling emotional anxiety, fear or weariness.

[Int 2, 2016].	Participant: '… there's been a bit of a, ummm, [pause], I'm not sure how to explain it. A little bit of a divide in the group, based around some racist comments that were said and posted online in a private Facebook page that was formed, a very exclusive group.'
Interviewer:	'Was this racism from Pākehā towards Māori?'
Participant:	'Yes …. and it didn't subside over the semester break …'
[Int 4, 2016].	Participant: 'I sort of felt offended personally on behalf of all Māori students here on campus … and then I began to question whether this was a place that I should be. And that wasn't good. I went up to Auckland this weekend just passed … and spoke to my Dad … so, he said don't allow those prejudices to dictate your future. I've just come back here a little bit … um, still believing this is what I want to do, but yeah, just a bit broken last week …'
[Int 6, 2017]	Participant: [Weary tone] '… [experiencing racism] has been normalised for so long and

> we walk amongst it every day. We experience it every day. I don't know how we stop it. By not doing anything … doesn't mean that we condone it, sometimes you get tired of fighting it, or having to feel that you need to justify everything you do constantly. Yeah, I honestly don't know that it will ever change. I'd love to think that it will, but I don't know. I don't think so.'

Remarks made by these participants and others indicates how insidious and difficult to articulate institutional racism can be. Often hidden, institutional racism impacted on support and clearly underpinned the academic experience for the Māori students in this study. Higher education organisations would benefit from listening to their students' perspectives to better understand students' needs in this regard. Educators and policymakers must continue seeking understanding of students' transition experiences. As the term 'student voice' suggests, Indigenous students have legitimate perspectives and opinions, and need to have opportunities for an active role in educational policy development and to practice decision-making.

More research and evaluation of students' perspectives regarding what helps them stay engaged and succeed would benefit students and organisations; a deeper understanding of disengagement signals and of appropriate interventions may become clearer. As Wiseley (2009) proposed, 'we must continue to seek understanding of students' experiences from their perspective, and conduct further research to achieve greater understanding of student transition and transformation as they move through the educational landscape' (p. 190). This may mean some adaptation of research practices in order not to squash participants' voice during data collection and analysis stages in pursuit of patterns, but being open to a range of perspectives. Voices that emerged from this research are a powerful reminder of the importance of engaging with Māori communities in partnerships. This is an area of future research to be conducted by higher education organisations.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to illustrate how Indigenous Māori students deployed capital in different ways to navigate transitions into higher

education contexts. Within this study lay considerations of the ability and potential for Māori students to act as agents within and against the context of cultural and structural pressures. Turning to Bourdieu's concepts of agency, structure, habitus and capital enabled a lens through which to view student's personal history, biography, actions, struggles and successes in navigating the higher education field. The findings illustrated that Māori students can be agentic in their educational trajectories; they can work through and navigate 'structure' rather than being determined by it. Equally, when accounting for the broader and deeper structural context that shapes Indigenous Māori students' experiences (such as racism, discrimination and cultural biases), Bourdieu's theory of practice offered a historicised, flexible lens for the study of structure in complex and powerful higher education fields.

Findings suggest that transitions to higher education for Māori students involve a reciprocal interplay of identity, agency and structure which support or constrain transition experiences. Within wānanga, participants felt their Māori cultural identity was highly valued. An over-riding advantage offered by the wānanga was the Māori environment being a comfortable place for Māori to transition into formal learning. Within polytechnics, there was a sense that Māori culture is included but more could be done; within universities, a need for more inclusive practices to support Māori learner requirements was identified.

This work has important implications for practice in adult education and learning. In polytechnics and universities, more professional development and resources are required to strengthen teaching staff knowledge and teaching practices related to supporting Indigenous student success. In an Aotearoa context, professional development for teaching staff (alongside adequate resourcing to facilitate time for this) should centre on effective teaching strategies and known 'good practices' (Bishop *et al.*, 2003), as well as developing knowledge of Māori language and cultural practices (Hall, Rata, & Adds, 2013). This is notably so for universities in order to further develop into sites of social inclusion embodying adult learning practices.

The socio-political context as a whole could not be ignored when considering the transition experiences of Māori students in this research. In a neoliberal context, the purpose of education has become closely entwined with prioritisation of economic outcomes (Giroux,

1981; 2005). Yet, Aotearoa New Zealand is experiencing unparalleled levels of income and poverty gaps which have major impacts for Māori and other disadvantaged population groups. This echoes Giroux and Giroux's (2008) point that neoliberalism benefits few, and harms many. Neoliberalism impacts more than just policy. It becomes an ideology and a specific style of rule—a style of rule that views higher education as a tool to achieve socio-economic class control. Complexities for Indigenous Māori students navigating the neoliberal model of education in order to achieve education success in this study, were significant. Neoliberal changes accentuate a higher education model which benefits few and potentially harms many through its interest of money and maintaining the status quo of power and knowledge in society.

The most overwhelming barrier faced by students was experiencing racism. This research uncovered how dominant attitudes and stereotypes existing in Aotearoa influence the social status of Māori in contemporary society, which in turn, influences education transition experiences and opportunities. Dominant attitudes and stereotyping have resulted in education interventions traditionally focussed on deficit-oriented teaching and learning strategies. Such interventions dodge the structural dimensions of racism and perpetuate ineffectual outcomes for adult Māori learners.

As Indigenous achievement in higher education contexts continues to be a focus for institutions nationally, effective transitions for Indigenous adult learners are an issue of great concern. This article addresses research gaps concerning Indigenous student voice and transitions into higher education environments as adult learners. Understanding 'lived experiences' and listening to the voices of marginalised adult learners has potential for adult educators to respond to the unique ways in which these students participate in adult learning and education. Such work may support us moving past the notion of 'structuration' (reproduction of structure as we know it) and towards reformation over time. This research adds to understandings of the power of knowledge for social change in the current age.

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Exploring the power of the media in promoting lifelong learning and popular mobilisation drive against 'Galamsey' in Ghana

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This paper explores the power of media in promoting lifelong learning in mobilising the citizenry against 'galamsey' activities in Ghana. 'Galamsey' connotes 'an illegal process of gathering mineral resources, especially gold, and selling them'. It is an activity engaged in by young adults resulting in destroying water bodies and posing water-related challenges to the citizenry. This qualitative study sought to ascertain what informed practitioners in the media space to mount a sustained lifelong learning drive against 'galamsey' in Ghana. The study used in-depth interview and focus group discussions to collect data from 15 participants purposively selected. Six male and female participants also shared their experiences on the 'galamsey' menace and the fight against it. Their thought, views and insightful ideas lie at the heart of this study. It emerged that the 'galamsey' activities were complex and engaged in by both Ghanaians and foreigners using heavy earth moving machines destroying forest vegetation cover and water bodies. The players involved bribe their way for protection. This paper recommends that the Government of Ghana and media houses involved

in the fight against 'galamsey' sustain the lifelong learning drive to save water bodies, arable lands, and forest vegetation cover in Ghana.

Keywords: *Media, lifelong learning, informal learning, mobilisation, 'galamsey', Ghana*

Introduction

The media including radio, television and social media platforms seem powerful tools to promote lifelong and informal learning among the citizenry. Foley (1999) admits that the most interesting and significant learning occur informally, and incidentally, in people's everyday lives. The media possesses the power to promote lifelong, lifewide and life sustaining learning (Jegede, 2018; Stadler, 2007) among the citizenry. It empowers the citizenry to address unemployment and poverty facing them. The informal education provided by over 300 local radio stations, 30 television stations, newspapers, tabloids and social media tools in Ghana (National Media Commission, 2018) could serve as powerful communication tools to educate and empower the citizenry to effect changes in communities for improved quality of life. The provision of such powerful popular education, awareness creation, and conscientisation, thus developing consciousness, but consciousness that is understood to have the power to transform reality (Taylor, 1993, p. 52). It is about creating critical awareness amongst the citizenry to enable them realise their strengths, opportunities, gaps and challenges that they have in their communities. The media then can engender such social movement which could result in positive changes in communities. As the citizenry engage in dialogue, they learn to become critical thinkers, and take action to address their concerns, problems or challenges.

To Freire (1970), the true knowledge of reality, which he terms 'conscientisation', penetrates to what reality is because it is connected with *praxis*—a union of reflection and action. After all, knowledge evolves from continual interaction and cycles of reflection and action, which Freire (1985) refers to as praxis, which occurs 'when human beings participate in a transforming act' (p. 106). Freire adds that human beings are active agents who transform their world. No

wonder, Gertze (2015) opines that 'social movement helps enrich life, stimulating intellectual curiosity, fostering literacy and encouraging an informed citizenry' (p. 60). The questions that arise are: What is lifelong learning? How can it be realised among community members who are seeking social change in their circumstances? What role can media play to aid the citizenry to effect change in their communities? The adoption of critical pedagogy and participatory learning by media in our communities could empower the citizenry to effect a change in their life circumstances. On the contrary, the media practitioners could also be mischievous, and play roles in hindering conscientisation.

The notion of lifelong learning, to Gustavsson (cited in Nafukho, Amutabi, & Otunga, 2005) implies 'a broad approach to knowledge and has a holistic view of education in which informal types of learning can be integrated with one another and considered in one context' (p. 152). The historic roots of lifelong learning relate to the 1960s and Paul Lengrand, a theorist and practitioner in adult education, who introduced *'Education permanente'* in a committee meeting for the advancement of adult education (Carlsen, Holmberg, Neghina, & Boampong, 2016). The ideas of lifelong learning in the 21st century, [however], differ from the thinking behind recurrent education (Carlsen *et al*., 2016). The vision of lifelong learning has evolved over the past few decades to become a constant feature in 21st century policy discourse (Hanemann, 2016); hence the European Union defines lifelong learning as 'all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective' (Carlsen et al, 2016, p. 51). Lifelong learning put the needs and desires of the individual in central focus at the same time as societal needs, influenced by international knowledge development and globalisation of economies (Carlsen et al, 2016).

It is therefore not surprising that Power and Maclean (2013) opine that the idea of lifelong learning became a central theme in UNESCO's work with the publication of *Learning to be* (UNESCO, 1972); arguing in the report that 'lifelong learning needs to be the keystone for education policies and that the creation of the learning society should become a key strategy for facilitating learning throughout life for individuals and societies' (p. 29). To Brown (2018), lifelong learning returned to the international educational policy stage in the early 1970s when the OECD commissioned Edgar Faure to lead an investigation into the type

of education needed for a future oriented society. In support of these assertions, Hanemann (2016) argues that lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important as a key organising principle for all forms of education and learning in a rapidly changing world. Thus based on emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values, the concept of lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of *learning and living* (UNESCO, 2014). Not surprising, Debyser (2013) admits that entrepreneurship has become a key competence for lifelong learning in the European Union. Lifelong learning, therefore, has a measurable impact on people's lives (Field, 2012); and Beddie (2002) argues that lifelong learning is not something confined to individuals—institutions too need to be explicit in their recognition of the centrality of learning—not just training—for their wellbeing. It was on this basis that Brown (2018) perceives lifelong learning as 'educational efforts in the formal, non-formal and informal sectors to help equip individuals and communities to respond to the pressing challenges of the 21st century' (p. 315).

As the citizenry in Ghana engage in informal learning drive using varied media platforms, they could appreciate their current living conditions; learn informally from it, and take action to better their lot. The increased sensitisation and education of the media strengthened the activism of the citizenry in Ghana. This is evidenced by the citizenry uproar and agitation against the activities of 'galamsey' operators, and the steps they took, together with the Government of Ghana, to restore the polluted water bodies, and the degraded environment, to their former state. After all Laal and Salamati (2012) assert that in the 21st century, we all need to be lifelong learners. Such integrated learning through the media might have aided many Ghanaians, and the Government of Ghana to raise up against the activities of the 'galamsey' operators in Ghana. Although media practitioners could sometimes be sensational, and not help the course of the citizenry in learning to improve themselves and their communities, but the 'galamsey' operations, and the damage caused to water bodies and the environment in Ghana, rather attracted the attention of media practitioners, the citizenry, and the Government of Ghana to wage relentless war to address the problems.

Ghana is endowed with rich mineral resources—gold, diamond, manganese, bauxite, etc, but gold is one rich mineral resource that young adults, in particular, are engaged in mining illegally. They do this because it is lucrative notwithstanding the dangerous nature of the

operations. Parry (2014) argued that when small-scale miners solicit for a licence from the minerals commission to validate their operations, it takes a long time before it is granted. Whatever the case is, the damage caused by illegal mining activities seems bigger today than it used to be (Eshun, 2017). He is of the view that 'galamsey' activities in Ghana have resulted in serious degradation of forest vegetation cover, lands, and polluted major water bodies in the recent years. This is because, in the 1960s and 70s, according to Biney (2009), 'galamsey' activities carried out in the communities were in the form of artisanal or small-scale mining; and the operators used simple tools like shovels and washing bows. The same, however, cannot be said today, because the locals and their foreign partners use excavators and heavy earthmoving machines in their 'galamsey' activities; largely leading to the pollution of water bodies, especially Bia, Pra and Birim rivers in Ghana.

The term 'galamsey' connotes the 'illegal gathering of mineral resources and selling them'; and the activities are common in many communities in Ghana, especially within and along the banks of large water bodies, arable farming lands, and forest vegetation cover. The incalculable damage caused by the locals and foreign partners have attracted the attention of the Government of Ghana and media practitioners operating in the communities. A concerted battle waged by the 'Coalition of Media Practitioners against "Galamsey"' and the Government of Ghana, using the military dubbed: 'Operation Vanguard' with the campaign slogan, 'Stop "Galamsey" now' seem to have achieved some success. This is because the media served as catalyst to change the local people's perspectives from despair to possibility. It galvanised and mobilised the citizenry to rise against the operations and activities of 'galamsey' operators. Yet, the damage caused to the environment and the turbidity of water bodies appears huge with some communities lacking clean and potable water to drink. On the basis of the challenges highlighted above, this study sought to answer the question: How does the adoption of lifelong learning by media practitioners galvanise support to combat 'galamsey' operations in Ghana? The study also explores strategies that promote alternative livelihood programmes (ALPs) amongst the young adults in Ghana.

Statement of the problem

The illegal 'galamsey' activities are age-old issue in Ghana. Our great grandfathers have been engaging in the 'galamsey' operations; however,

it was on a smaller scale, with primitive tools such as shovels, washing bows among others (Biney, 2009). Even though their activities did not significantly harm the environment and water bodies, they were furiously chased out by the police officers from the mining sites. Today, the effect of 'galamsey' operations have assumed large-scale dimension, leading to the destruction of the environment and water bodies in Ghana. To Agbesi (2017), illegal mining strips some 28 billion tons of material from the earth. 'Galamsey' activities can be explained against the backdrop of chronic poverty and mass unemployment facing young adults in Ghana. The Government of Ghana responded to the difficulties facing the youth with job creation initiatives, including 'Planting for food and jobs'; 'Planting for export and rural development' and 'One district, One factory'. However, some young adults and their foreign partners continue to indulge in 'galamsey' activities.

Ignorance, illiteracy or the deliberate intentions of the young adults could serve as the reasons for their involvement in 'galamsey' activities. According to Biney (2009) most of the young people engaged in 'galamsey' activities are unskilled, with low levels of education; who choose 'galamsey' operations over education. But 'galamsey' activities still persist despite admonitions from law enforcement agencies. According to Stadler (2007), the media can be educational in its own right and, in a broader sense, as it can inform perceptions of attitudes towards education, educators and socio-economic inequality. The major roles of media, especially radio include informing, educating and entertaining. The media can highlight the ills in the society, although some media platforms promote certain political agendas, and are used as propaganda tools. The media in Ghana recently placed a spotlight on 'galamsey' activities in Ghana. Together with the Government of Ghana, they waged a war against the activities of 'galamsey' operators in Ghana. Recalcitrant galamsey operators, and their foreign partners, are under surveillance, and regular arrests are made by the security operatives in the galamsey sites and communities due to the environmental problems 'galamsey' activities are causing. Despite achieving some success, 'galamsey' activities persist in Ghana. It is against this background that this qualitative study is conducted to ascertain whether the adoption of lifelong learning to fight 'galamsey' by media professionals has yielded the desired results or otherwise. The study also sought to find out how the promotion of lifelong learning by the media could contribute to the

creation of ALPs amongst the young adults to counter the effects of 'galamsey' in Ghana.

The main objective of this study is to ascertain whether media practitioners' adoption of lifelong and informal learning to combat 'galamsey' operations in Ghana achieved the desired result. It also sought lifelong learning strategies to promote ALPs—the provision of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in productive trades, including grass-cutter rearing, fish farming, pomade and cream making, as well as palm oil production and processing to make local people live meaningful lives in their communities (Biney, 2009), particularly amongst the young adults in Ghana. The specific objectives of this study are to:

(1) Isolate 'galamsey' activities and the challenges involved in combating them.

(2) Identify media types in promoting lifelong learning in mobilising support against the 'galamsey' menace.

(3) Establish the benefits of lifelong learning provided by the media to empower young adults with ALPs.

Literature review

This paper reviewed literature in three areas related to the study, including 'galamsey' activities and challenges involved in combating it; media types used in promoting lifelong learning towards mobilising against 'galamsey' activities in Ghana; and benefits of lifelong learning programmes empowering the young adults with alternative livelihood programmes (ALPs).

'Galamsey' activities and challenges combating it in Ghana

'Galamsey' operations have resulted in the destruction and degradation of vegetation cover, arable lands, and the environment in Ghana (Serfor-Armah cited in Eshun, 2017), and has polluted major water bodies in Ghana. The pollution of water bodies in Ghana is so alarming that it is affecting the availability of potable drinking water for community members in the catchment communities around mining sites (Agbesi, 2017). This destructive illegal mining activity is carried out by both local and foreign illegal miners (Agbesi, 2017). The loss of forests has changed the atmospheric conditions and rain patterns of the affected areas

around the country and has negatively affected our water bodies that are now polluted with harmful chemicals, which has resulted in a paucity of raw filtered water (Agbesi, 2017).

Surface mining has also had a devastating effect on the soil in Ghana largely due to the use of heavy machinery (Agbesi, 2017). Also blasting during mineral extraction destroys soil organisms, and disrupts stable soil aggregates, eventually depriving the soil of organic matter. These soils, or newly created substrates/growth are often inhospitable to vegetation due to combination of physical, chemical and microbiological factors (Serfor-Armah cited in Eshun, 2017). There is also a loss of arable farmlands, leading to reduction of crop production in the country. The illegal 'galamsey' activities contribute in no small measure to hunger being experienced in some farming communities engaged in producing cash crops such as cocoa, oil palm, coconut, and oranges in Ghana (Agbesi, 2017). The top fertile soils are removed and destroyed indiscriminately by the illegal galamsey operators. Meanwhile, the rich top soils are the main sources of nutrients to plants and food crops and even vegetables. It may take several years to regain fertile soil removed. These illegal mining activities are making the arable land infertile or less fertile for production of food and cash crops (Agbesi, 2017).

Deforestation is another 'galamsey' activity that is damaging the environment. It involves the clearing of the forest vegetation and the cutting down of trees to enable miners to extract minerals. Serfor-Armah (cited in Eshun, 2017) assessed the impact of small-scale mining on land in the Western part of Ghana, and revealed that mining removes vegetation and top-soil, and often results in loss of farmland permanently. He adds that surface mining accounts for approximately 58% of the region's deforestation, 45% loss of farmland, as well as the spillover effects from expanding mining activities in reserved forests. 'Galamsey' is also a death trap for miners and unsuspecting farmers within the mining communities, as they sometimes find themselves drawn to huge pits which are often left uncovered, or reclaimed for farming activities (Serfor-Armah cited in Eshun, 2017).

Media types used in promoting lifelong learning drive against 'Galamsey'

Media, including radio, television and social media platforms have today become popular education and informal learning tools [in our

communities] (Floyd, 2014; Oduro-Mensah, & Biney 2013; Stadler, 2007). In the case of Ghana, there are over 300 local radio stations, 30 television stations, newspapers, tabloids and social media tools (National Media Commission, 2018). These media outlets constitute powerful educational and mobilisation tools to drive social change in communities and society as a whole. The media platforms in Ghana, if well integrated and utilised, could serve to conscientise, sensitise and educate the citizenry to speak out loudly against the 'galamsey' activities in their communities (Oduro-Mensah, & Biney, 2013). The current citizenry activism and relentless fight against 'galamsey' in Ghana was waged by media practitioners, in partnership with the Government of Ghana, to address the water pollution and environmental degradation due to 'galamsey' activities.

Informal learning is all forms of learning that are intentional, but are not institutionalised, and emanate more from experience that takes place outside formally structured, institutionally sponsored, class-room based activities (Macià, & García, 2016; ISCED, 2011). Since lifelong learning encompasses both formal and non-formal/informal types of education and training, or refers to holistic learning for life and work (Nafukho, Amutabi, & Otunga, 2005), it provides a unique opportunity for change and development. After all, the concept of lifelong is grounded in the four pillars of education expounded by Delors (1998): *learning to know; learning to do; learning to be and learning to live together*. The concept of lifelong learning goes back to the origin of human life in the continent of Africa (Nafukho *et al*., 2005). For instance, the African traditions encouraged continued learning, hence children learnt from adults how to live and function in a society, and likewise adults learnt from children and fellow adults (Nafukho *et al*., 2005). Youngman (2001) has stated that 'it is evident that the practice of people learning throughout their lives was characteristic of pre-colonial African societies' (2001, p. 7).

Macià and García's (2016) review of informal learning found that online networks and communities are a good method of professional development. They are less organised and structured than either formal or non-formal education. Informal learning includes learning activities that occur in the family, in the workplace, in the local community, and in daily life, self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis. This is important because, education, to Wallerstein and Auerbach (2004) is political, and that 'power' and 'empowerment' are central

to the educational process. The point really is that the increased pace of globalisation and technological change, the changing nature of work and the labour market, and the ageing of populations, according to UNESCO (2014) are among the forces emphasising the need for continual upgrading of work and life skills throughout life. Therefore, lifelong learning not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability (UNESCO, 2014). More so, since adults learn from experiences and problem solving, they need continuous development of intellect, capability and integrity, which the media can play a role in fostering these qualities in the young adults in our communities. Beddie (2002), citing *'Campaign for Learning'*, a British charity, perceives:

> *Lifelong learning as a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve an increase in knowledge or understanding, a deepening of values or the capacity to reflect. Effective learning will lead to change, development and a desire to learn more.*
>
> (Campaign for Lifelong Learning, United Kingdom.)

As observed by Freire (1971), the purpose of education is *human liberation;* yet education either acts to disempower [community members] to accept life situations, or it engages us to challenge difficult conditions in our lives. The thrust of this study is that, popular, informal, lifelong learning and education can represent the latter. The reality is that when education empowers and makes people living in the mining communities in Ghana become conscious of the water-related and environmental challenges facing them, they can become empowered through group learning, and the media, to take action on their own, to improve their lot. A study by the author (Biney, 2003) on local leadership and community development found that communities that learn through groups and strong local leadership with high communal spirit executed more self-help development projects than those with low communal spirit and weak local leadership. The point is that when people learn together in a group, they take the initiative to improve their lot and that of their communities. In all these, however, some successes may be realised when the media comes to the aid of community members. According to Earl (2018, citing Williams, 1989) 'to

be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing' (p. 1). The media in our part of the world should give hope not only to the local, religious and administrative leadership, but to community members as well. This is because, it takes the ordinary citizens to effect change and develop their lives and communities, after all the sermons and directions have been given by the leadership. Since hope can be infectious (Earl, 2018), the media then can help the citizenry garner hope, learn and become empowered, to effect positive changes in their lives and communities.

The media can also educate the citizenry for social change. Thus, as whistle blowers, the media is always on the look out to bring the ills of society out into the open, as long as they don't sink into the arena of political propaganda. This popular and informal learning promoted in our communities by the media, in this era of advancement of information communication technology (ICT), is more crucial today than ever. This is against the backdrop of large water bodies and vegetation cover in Ghana wantonly destroyed by 'galamsey' activities engaged in by young adults. The reality is that some young adults are deliberately failing to take advantage of a number of initiatives of the Government of Ghana to make a living. They are more focussed on 'becoming rich in the shortest possible time', which is not possible if one wants to make a solid mark in society. Popular education, according Martin and Rahman (2001), is based on a clear analysis of the nature of inequality, exploitation and oppression, and is informed by an equally clear political purpose. To them, this has nothing to do with helping the 'disadvantaged' or the management of poverty; rather, it has everything to do with the struggle for a more just and egalitarian social order. To Braster (2011), popular education is a concept with many meanings, but in the course of the twentieth century, popular education had to do with *education of the oppressed*. As developed by Popular Education Network (PEN), popular education is defined as the 'type of education rooted in the real interest and struggles of ordinary people, [and] is overtly political and critical of the status quo, [and] committed to progressive and social change' (Crowther, Galloway, & Martin, 2005 cited in Earl, 2016, p. 8; Crowther, Martin, & Shaw, 1999). However, popular education is distinct from populist type of education (Crowther *et al.*, 1999).

As component part of community organising, popular education, can serve as a *mobilisation drive* in bringing people together to fight for a

common course. After all, Freire (1972) has made us understand that education is either for 'liberation' or 'domestication'. It is probably on that basis that Cavanagh (cited in Borg & Mayo, 2007) reveals that the processes of popular education are extremely effective for increasing people's capacities to function democratically and their critical mindedness. Paulo Freire's ideas and writings on education for social change have also influenced popular education (Missingham, 2013). Popular education here refers to education that seeks to support *organising* or *activism* for social justice, democracy, and environmental goals (Crowther *et al.* 2005). It is a form of radical adult education, and hence, usually takes place in non-formal education contexts and often draws on Freirian approaches to dialogic education (Kane, 2001; Brookfield, Jeffs, Larkins, Pye, & Smith, 2003). Popular educators regard the community as the key source of knowledge and the starting point for learning (Arnold, Burke, James, Martin, & Thomas, 1991). Popular education sees empowerment and 'transformation' as necessarily a collective process and explicitly encourages learning processes that lead to collective action for social change.

Pioneered by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, popular education is a people-orientated and people-guided approach to education. This is because it centres on participants' life experiences, and as the citizenry mobilise themselves for action, they learn and conscientise [to improve their living conditions in their communities] (Intergroup Resources, 2012). Thus, a combined effort of education, sensitisation and punitive measures instituted by the media and Government of Ghana, could help in addressing the 'galamsey' problem. The point is that the Government of Ghana, in terms of policy direction, is promoting entrepreneurship, focusing more in the agricultural sector, with numerous initiatives instituted, yet some of the youth are still not participating in the programmes. Maybe, an educational drive involving a multimedia approach should be adopted, in promoting the programmes. Today, in Ghana, farming in all its forms, has been made attractive. Free high yielding seedlings are provided free of charge, and farming equipment and tools are made available in the districts for hiring on credit basis. This step, notwithstanding the 'galamsey' activities, is still visible in the communities of Ghana.

Benefits of media provision of lifelong learning to empower the young adults with ALPs

Today's 'information super-highway' is powered by ICT. It has really made media a critical and powerful tool in educating, informing, and empowering the citizenry. Social media platforms and software are being used today in mobilising community members to effect change for betterment and improvement in their communities. On creating social change with social media, Timms (2013) posed a simple question: On the heels of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, could we trigger a new day of giving after two days of getting? He responded that people all over the country came together to answer that question [on social and community improvement], with a resounding 'yes', and social media certainly helped us get there. In Ghana, today, many communities have community information centres where people can access information, learn and improve their lot. It is not surprising that the media today constitutes a big part of our lives, hence, it is an effective tool for dissemination, information and educating and empowering community members to learn a skill or trade to improve their lot. In any case, today, almost everybody benefits in one form or another from mass media. This, perhaps, explain the reasons why many people are getting onboard electronic and social media platforms, and using their outlets to learn, and become empowered in their respective endeavours. Radio and television stations in Ghana have phone segments, and the citizenry have been calling, asking questions, and also making their concerns and views points known on issues of national concern, especially in the prime time programmes. This is informal learning process offered by the media.

Lifelong learning can empower the citizenry to start putting skills and trades into practice that could go a long way to control the young adults' involvement in 'galamsey' activities (Biney, 2019; 2018; Baah-Boateng, 2018). This is significant because the youth, according to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2017), constitutes about 48% of Ghana's population. Ghana, according to The World Bank (cited in Baafi, & Acheampong 2014), needs to create between six to seven million new jobs by 2030 to absorb people entering the world of work. UNESCO (2019) observes that the whole 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is grounded on the principle of *lifelong learning*, and should be made a reality. Lifelong learning is an overarching tool for human development (Jessup, 1969). With the advancement of

information communication technology, teaching and learning tools are aiding learning, and making it more ubiquitous. Field (2012) is of the view that lifelong learning has a measurable impact on people's lives, and Power and Maclean (2011) reveal that providing opportunities to [people to] 'learn throughout life turns out to be a crucial factor in the struggle to eradicate poverty and to educate for sustainable development'.

Brown (2018), and Ehlers (2017) provide rich information on lifelong learning policy, and critiques thereof. To Brown (2018), when it comes to the international policy on lifelong learning, the first post-World War II developments of lifelong education (or *education permanente*) as a response to early onset economic crises of the late 1960s, and the critical assessments of rigid education systems being made by writers such as Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich [set the pace]. Field (2001, p. 4) traces 'the genesis of the concept (of lifelong education) back to the intellectual crucible of the late 1960s'. It was Edgar Faure's groundbreaking 1972 *Learning to Be* report, grounded in the critiques of the authoritarian, uniform, monolithic and unequal education systems of the time that re-launched interest in lifelong learning. But more than just critique, it looked to the future as its sub-title, 'The world of education today and tomorrow' suggested. The report, to Brown (2018), proposed lifelong education as an organising principle for educational reform and a means of producing the kind of 'complete person' needed to construct a learning society. *UNESCO's Learning: The treasure within* coincided with the European Year of Lifelong Learning in 1996, and stimulated international policy developments and actions to support lifelong learning. Delors' report argued that economic prosperity and social cohesion were both enhanced by lifelong learning, and created four pillars to support a future society – learning to know; learning to do; learning to be and learning to live together. These pillars imagined: the mastery of learning tools (learning to know); education to equip people to do the work of the future, including innovation and adaptation of learning to future work environments (learning to do); education that contributes to a person's complete development: mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality (learning to be); and education to avoid conflict or peacefully resolve it, and to discover other people and their cultures (learning to live together).

Brown (2018) adds that in response to the UNESCO report, the OECD Education Ministers set themselves a task to rethink the roles

and responsibilities of all partners – including governments – in implementing and financing the organisation of lifelong learning for all. The EU's lifelong learning policy that emerged was an 'overarching educational reform policy intended to address a wide range of issues, including education, employment and competitiveness' (Lee, Thayer, & Madyun, 2008). In 1997, Britain's new Labour government under Tony Blair launched a *'Learning Revolution'*, underpinned by a number of national inquiries (Brown, 2018). The *Learning Age* released by the Education Minister, David Blunkett, ushered in a great flowering of policy initiatives, including individual learning accounts; neighbourhood learning development and a national literacy, numeracy and ESOL strategy, which were broad and inclusive (Blunkett 1998). Places not traditionally associated with education programmes such as local libraries, museums and galleries, faith centres, and community and health centres were specifically funded because they were the sites where people who had been reluctant to attend formal education institutions were more likely to go (Brown, 2018).

According to Ehlers (2017), a recent UNESCO report (UNESCO, 2016) shows that, although considerable efforts can be identified to create lifelong learning policies on national, regional and institutional level we are still only beginning to understand how best to support continuous learning for individuals, organisations and regions. To Ehlers (2017), specifically, in the field of higher education, a lifelong learning turn has not yet taken place nor has it even begun to take shape. He adds that it is, therefore, an important question how we can turn the big tanker of academia globally into revolutionary leaders of this field—how we can rethink higher education. He concludes that 'in societies in which the majority of a cohort of young persons will soon be choosing some kind of higher education, they are the gatekeepers who are leading graduates into lifelong learning careers' (p. 1).

Alternative livelihood programmes (ALP)

To sufficiently comprehend programmes christened alternative livelihood programmes (ALPs), the maiden question any reader of this paper would ask is: what are alternative livelihood programmes? The answer is that alternative livelihood programmes are programmes which involve the provision of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in livelihood and productive trades. These trades include: grass-

cutter rearing; snail rearing; gari processing; fish farming; seri-culture; batik tie and dye; bee-keeping, pomade and cream making; oil palm production and processing. These programmes have been instituted by the mining companies as part of their corporate social responsibilities that they provide for community members in the catchment communities in which they undertake their operations. If the above is the intention of the corporate mining companies, then, the next probable question one may ask is: why alternative livelihood programmes? The answer is that the corporate mining companies instituted these programmes against the backdrop that many of the community members in their catchment areas lack the requisite skills to be employed in the mining operations where most of the jobs are skills-oriented and are specialised (Biney, 2009). More so, the mining companies agree that mining is a 'robber' industry, and like human beings, has a definite life-span. It is also a fact that mining companies take so much from the land which the community members earn their livelihoods from. The impoverished land, however, would take much longer time to replenish itself. The best option for mining companies to avoid unnecessary confrontations with members of the communities is to balance their profit concerns with their corporate social responsibility to them (Biney, 2009). On that basis, almost all the mining companies operating in Ghana have one form of trade, or skill that constitutes ALPs they provide to the community members in their catchment communities (Biney, 2009). There are a number of business reasons, aside from external pressure, why mining companies decide to invest in communities through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes, including trying to gain competitive advantage (Yankson, 2010). He adds that community investment programmes such as ALPs are used to facilitate the awarding of concessions, because companies appearing to be socially responsible are often favoured in this process. It is, therefore, a means to securing a stable working environment, and also used for public relations purposes. This is probably because the local communities are key stakeholders for all mining companies, and therefore a strong focus for their CSR initiatives, including ALPs.

One may as well ask another mind-boggling question: Alternative livelihood programmes for what? A short response is that the programmes are to make the community members financially independent and economically self-reliant. The programmes are also meant to help create and bring about congenial and peaceful climate

in the communities in which the mining companies undertake their operations. The business climate in the communities would, then, become one that can best be described as brisk and thriving mining towns, including that of Johannesburg in South Africa (Biney, 2009). They are cities full of life and zest. The programmes are also hoped to secure for the community members in the mining communities that credible and reliable social security that will last them a life time. After all, the corporate mining companies earn millions of dollars from gold dust mined from the lands owned by the community members (Biney, 2009). Thus, with little imagination and creativity, the community members can learn to establish and manage small-scale businesses from the productive trades and skills that they would have acquired by participating in the ALPs (Biney, 2009).

The three organisations involved in the skill training and education of the community members on the implementation of ALPs are the Centre for Biodiversity Utilisation and Development (CBUD) at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), the Opportunities Industrialisation Centres International (OICI), and Empretec Ghana. For instance, Goldfields Ghana Limited that operates both Tarkwa and Aboso/Damang Mines, has more than ten modules of trades and skills that beneficiaries are taught, including: livestock rearing; oil palm nursery, production and processing; cassava cultivation; cassava processing; bee-keeping; aquaculture; soap/pomade making; batik (tie and dye) making, bakery; vegetable farming; and cocoa farming. Goldfields Ghana Limited has about 16 catchment communities that benefited from its ALPs, christened Sustainable Community Empowerment and Economic Development (SEED). The SEED programme started in 2005 was a 5-year programme which came to an end by 2010. Goldfields Ghana Limited implemented on pilot basis pig farming; poultry farming and fish farming modules of the ALPs before the SEED programme. There were 1,336 beneficiaries of the various modules of the ALPs instituted by Goldfields Ghana Limited for community members living in its 16 catchment communities (GGL/OICI, 2007 cited in Biney, 2009). In addition to the livelihood skills training given to the participants on various modules of the programmes, management and entrepreneurial skills were also offered. Training in book-keeping, costing and pricing, accounting, customer relationship, time management, management of small-scale businesses,

financial management and marketing were provided to the participants. Inputs in the form of seedlings, fingerlings, chicks, tools, equipment were also provided to aid participants in their work.

It is significant that corporate mining companies integrated ALPs in their core values and daily activities; however, to Batten (1975a), good intentions are not enough. This is because, the purpose and objectives of instituting ALPs cannot be realised by good intentions alone. In any event, many other corporate organisations established one form of programme or the other but some of such programmes could not be sustained. Thus, good intentions can only become meaningful if they are translated into actions. More so, an approach of development based on what people want to do is more positive than an approach based on needs decided by a single group or an organisation. Thus, moving from needs arrived at by a single group to intentions or decisions arrived at by all the relevant stakeholders in the community is like moving from an input model of development to an empowerment model of development (Biney, 2009). The effectiveness of CSR, including ALPs, in mining has been questioned (Frynas, 2005), as well as the risk of communities' dependency on mining companies (Jenkins & Obara, 2006). Participation in ALPs, especially in the mining communities is low because of a number of other reasons, including fear of price insecurity of the products produced, and the citizenry were also not involved in designing, planning, managing and evaluating the ALPs. Lack of respect for community members, values of communities, as well as cultural difference also influenced participation in ALPs. Inadequate consultation of the local leadership in the communities in the implementation of ALPs emerged (Biney, 2009). These challenges, combined with current state of unemployment in Ghana, probably informed the Government of Ghana to come up with policy strategies of 'One-district one-factory', 'Planting for food and jobs' and 'Planting for export and rural development' to address unemployment and poverty facing the young adults.

Methods

Media practitioners formed the population for this study. The study adopted a qualitative approach to decipher how the informal and lifelong learning popularised by the media practitioners galvanise support towards combating 'galamsey' operations in Ghana. Qualitative

design was chosen primarily to collect in-depth information from the media practitioners on media types used in promoting lifelong and informal learning in combating 'galamsey'; benefits of lifelong learning in promoting ALPs amongst the young adults; and 'galamsey' activities and challenges posed to the citizenry and the Government of Ghana. This study is important because getting to know what informed the media practitioners to come together to conscientise the citizenry to raise a fight against 'galamsey is laudable. This is because the damage and devastation the 'galamsey' activities are inflicting on human life, and the environment, are incalculable. Descriptive and evaluative qualitative research approaches were adopted at every stage throughout the study. In terms of description, the study sought to provide a detailed account of the phenomenon under study, since this approach is useful in presenting basic information about areas of education where little research has been conducted. As to the evaluative aspect of the case study, this study involves description, explanation and judgement (Tagoe, 2009).

Purposive sampling procedures, with the approaches of getting all possible cases that fit particular criteria using various methods, according to Neuman (2004), were adopted. It uses the judgement of an expert in selecting cases, or it selects cases with a specific method in mind (Neuman, 2004). These approaches were sought in selecting the sample for the study. Purposive sampling procedures were adopted by the investigator simply to discover, understand, explain, gain deeper insight and draw judgement on the experiences so far garnered by media practitioners for waging war against 'galamsey' operations in Ghana. Purposively, the study was conducted in Accra, the national capital, where the media practitioners first started waging war against the 'galamsey' menace in Ghana. Having discussed with the media practitioners about my intention and content of the study, a target population of 50 media practitioners contacted, voluntarily expressed their willingness to participate in the study. As a researcher with the intention to select unique cases of media practitioners with rich information on 'galamsey', and also reach as many media practitioners to secure in-depth knowledge on 'galamsey' and its devastating effects, I first contacted five journalists who are adult learners at Accra Learning Centre, on my intention. Thus, using snowball sampling—getting cases using referrals from one or a few cases—the researcher was able to reach 50 media practitioners, who showed interest in the study.

However, the researcher selected a sample size of fifteen (15), having reached a saturated point—a situation where the pattern of responses gathered appears similar during the interview (Marshall, & Rossman, 2011). Along the line of the interviewing, I observed that the pattern of responses gathered were similar, hence, I came to conclusion that I could learn much more from the participants' experiences. In broad terms, Saunders, Sim, Kingstone, Baker, Waterfield, Bartlam, Burroughs, and Jinks (2017) indicate that saturation is used in qualitative research as a criterion for discontinuing data collection and/or analysis. Fusch and Ness (2015) claim categorically that 'failure to reach saturation has an impact on the quality of the research conducted' (p. 1408). This is because I find the topic investigated as an information-rich case for an in-depth study.

In-depth interview with fifteen media practitioners, and six male and female media practitioners selected outside the participants involved in the in-depth interview, formed the main source of information for the study. Six male and female media practitioners engaged in a fight against 'galamsey' were purposively selected to participate in the focus group discussions. The researcher served as the moderator in the focus group discussions sessions. Three research assistants were recruited and trained to record the proceedings and keep watch of time of the proceedings. Two hours each were spent in organising two rounds of focus group discussions for participants in the study. The researcher was interested in learning about media practitioners experiences in the fight against 'galamsey'. The questions posed to the media practitioners were mainly open-ended. All interviews were informal, conversational and dialogical, which made it much possible for the researcher to inquire, probe and provoke the participants further when their responses called for follow-up interrogation. This approach made it possible for the researcher and media practitioners to co-construct the narrative. This position taken by the researcher and participants helped avoid the ethical problems associated with revealing more than the participants care to have revealed. Visual evidence was also captured to illustrate the extent of damage 'galamsey' activities have done to the environment, water bodies, and arable fertile lands in Ghana. Visual method of research, according to Spencer (2011), aid in building convincing case studies using a mix of visual forms, including: archive images, videos, media, maps and still images. Such a method draws the attention of not only the policy makers

and the media practitioners, but the citizenry on the devastating nature of 'galamsey', and step up the activism to get the problems addressed.

The questions were grouped into three sections based on the three specific objectives raised. Section 1 was on 'galamsey' activities and the challenges involved in combating it, and the questions posed were: What is your view on the 'galamsey' activities? Are the rewards of 'galamsey' to the youth worth the damage caused to the citizenry? Would you say the educational drive waged against 'galamsey' has succeeded? If yes, provide reasons. Section 2 was on media types used in promoting informal and lifelong learning programmes. The respondents were asked some of the following questions: What media types were involved in the fight against 'galamsey'? What were the reasons for this fight? Would you say this fight against 'galamsey' has received the support of the citizenry? If yes, have you leveraged this support to carry through the informal education? Section 3 stressed the benefits of lifelong learning provided by the media to empower young adults with ALPs asked the media participants: Did you integrate ALPs into your lifelong learning drive? Did the education on ALPs receive the attention of the young adults? What were some of the trades and skills promoted to the young adults? Descriptive, narrative evaluative analyses steps, as recommended by Creswell (2012, 2013), Mills (2011), and Chilisa and

Preece (2005), were followed, and performed on the data. The results of the study are presented next.

Results and discussions

This part of the paper is divided into three sections. The first section isolates 'galamsey' activities and the challenges in combating it. It also identifies media types used in promoting a lifelong learning drive towards support against the 'galamsey' menace; and finally establishes benefits of lifelong learning provided by the media to empower young adults with ALPs. All the fifteen (15) media practitioners, and six (6) male and female others involved in the focus group discussions respectively, participated in the study.

'Galamsey' activities and the challenges in combating it in Ghana

Asked about their views on 'galamsey' operations in Ghana, the participants said that in its present form, the 'galamsey' venture is an enemy to the economy of Ghana. This supports the President of Ghana's observation that corruption and 'galamsey' remain key national challenges (GNA, 2017). When probed further to elaborate, the participants indicated that the destruction of the forest vegetation cover, pollution of water-bodies, and damage to the environment are incalculable. These are two apt ways some participants put it.

> *'Galamsey' has not only led to the destruction of water bodies, arable lands and the overall damage of the environment, but has contributed to a large measure to destroying human lives.'*

> *'Galamsey' has led to the destruction of families, because sometimes a whole family members involved in it are trapped in a pit and died.'*

As to whether the rewards from 'galamsey' activities are worth the damage done to the environment, the participants responded in emphatic 'no'. When asked to provide reasons for the response, the participants intimated that the effects of 'galamsey' operations are still being felt in Ghana, especially in terms of the water quality that they drink, the cocoa farms destroyed, and arable lands for farming are immeasurable. A participant expressed it like this:

> *'The benefit the youth who engage in "galamsey" gains are just for their parochial interest, but generally, "galamsey" does not help the entire citizenry of Ghana.'*

On whether the war waged by media practitioners has succeeded, the participants were in the affirmative 'yes'. Probing further, the participants were of the view that the 'galamsey' activities have reduced somehow, because the citizenry supported the media to fight the 'galamsey' operators and the 'money bags' behind their operations in Ghana.

Media types and lifelong learning drive mobilised against 'galamsey'

On media types involved in the fight against 'galamsey', the participants mentioned print, electronic and social media as the main tools against 'galamsey'. This finding confirms the author's (2019) and Stadler's (2007) observation that radio, television and the Internet are critical in educating the citizenry on livelihood programmes. This is important because the media possesses the power to 'move our emotions', 'challenge our intellects', define us, and 'shape our realities' (Biney, 2019). These types of media maximally impact our learning in our communities, and stimulate the local community members to act and improve their living conditions. Media practitioners, as professionals, keep bringing to the fore issues of national concerns for discussion. They also serve as empowering agents providing educational programmes, and also provoking the citizenry into conversations. The citizenry follow through some of such conversations, and learn from them. Such media platforms are interactive, and allow citizenry voices to be heard. Both formal and informal education provided by the media deepens learning, and create critical awareness amongst the citizenry, to make themselves useful and their communities sustainable. As to the reasons to initiate the fight against the 'galamsey' operators, the participants said the preservation of the environment and water bodies are keys to their survival. These are the apt ways some of the participants expressed it:

> *'To save arable land for farming, especially cash crops cultivation. We find ourselves in an era where the Government of Ghana is encouraging and calling on people to go into farming, and I think the environment and water bodies are important to us and must be saved now.'*

> *'The 'galamsey' activities were complex, one engaged in by both Ghanaians and foreigners using heavy earth moving machines destroying forest vegetation cover and water bodies. As rich business, the players involved keep bribing their way for protection, and their activities must be stopped now.'*
>
> *'To help streamline mining operations in more sustainable manner, thus, proper regulatory measures should be instituted in mining activities in Ghana.'*
>
> *'The 'galamsey' activities are destroying many of the large water bodies in our communities, and affecting the quality of water we drink in our communities.'*

The participants engaged in the focus group discussions (FGD) expressed similar sentiments, indicating that chemicals, including mercury, which were used to extract gold from the ore, end up seeping into the water bodies, and are affecting their health. This confirms Cochrane and Gunderson (2012) observation that health is one way to describe our capacity to be alive and to play our roles as members of families and, indeed, as citizens. On whether the fight against 'galamsey' has received the support of the citizenry, the response was in the affirmative. The media practitioners interviewed said that they have leveraged on the support they received from the citizenry to push further the *informal education* they initiated against 'galamsey' operations. After all Schugurensky (2006) has made us understand that much of the relevant learning acquired throughout our lives occurs in the area of informal education. Good observation, yet formal education which seeks to make us knowledgeable cannot necessarily be separated from informal education. They both work in tandem to make us better. The mass media, electronic and social media, today, continue to empower us in whatever spaces we find ourselves in. On the motivation for pushing further informal and lifelong learning to the citizenry, the participants said that their sole motivation is to save the environment to ensure their survival; and as the adage goes 'when the last tree dies, the last man dies' were true yesterday, so it is today.

Benefits of media provision of lifelong learning to empower the young adults in ALPs

On integrating ALPs into the lifelong learning initiated by media practitioners to break the back of 'galamsey', the participants indicated 'yes'. On the intention of the media, they said, it is to promote ALPs because it holds future prospects more than that of 'galamsey' to the young adults. This is because they find the 'galamsey' operations more dangerous and harmful to their health. These are the best ways some participants expressed them:

> *'Skills in snail rearing, grass-cutter rearing, batik tie and dye, pomade and cream making and bee-making were promoted to the young adults.'*
>
> *'Although, corporate mining companies started the ALPs and in the 2000s, and implemented it to some extent at their catchment communities. This important programme could not be transformed to assume the national scale or dimension. The initiative of the programme, planning, implementation and evaluation were in the hands of the mining companies. However, consultation and input of local leadership were not sought.'*
>
> *'It transformed lives of some people, but many others were not captured on the ALPs, to acquire the required skills and have a trade of their own.'*
>
> *'The Government of Ghana embarked on ALPs in 2017, which was meant to sustain the livelihoods of communities that have been hit by "galamsey" activities, to make the young adults useful.'*
>
> *'The initiatives of Government of Ghana in the agriculture sector such as "planting for food and jobs' planting for export and rural development" were also promoted to the young adults to take advantage of them.'*
>
> *'Many opportunities in the agriculture value-chain were also promoted to the young adults to get involved.'*
>
> *'The idea of self-employment and entrepreneurship were also promoted to the young to take advantage of them.'*

> *'The Government of Ghana has created enabling environment for small-scale enterprises through skill development fund, popularly referred to as "skilling Ghana" revolving fund.'*

Asked whether the young adults are taking advantage of the ALPs, the participants said:

> *'Some have taken advantage of the numerous ALPs, but others are not.'*

When the participants were probed further, the reasons why young adults are not taking advantage of ALPs advanced include the following:

> *'Many more young adults cannot access the funds to start micro or small-scale businesses of their own. This is because, those supported with the revolving fund fail to pay back the money, and on time, too, to enable others to access it.'*

> *'Even when the young adults make themselves available to acquire one skill or the other, the initial fund to kick-start the trade or business becomes a challenge, thus dumping the spirit and motivation of many more youth, to get onboard the ALP.'*

> *'That notwithstanding, some young daring adults have ventured into the ALPs, and are doing well in their small-businesses.'*

Although the participants admitted that it was because of lack of job opportunities as to why they got involved in 'galamsey' activities, yet many others do not want to take advantage of the ALPs based on the reasons aforementioned. Agbesi (2017) observes that the huge sums of money young adults get from 'galamsey' activities serves as a bait to their participation, notwithstanding the dangers involved in 'galamsey' activities. It could also mean that a lot more education is to be offered to the young adults to realise the essence of investing their investible time, energies and resources in acquiring skills or trades. The FGP participants expressed similar sentiment, but added that notwithstanding the regular accidents which occur at 'galamsey' mining sites, 'we woke up in the morning to see the young adults going to work at 'galamsey' sites' (FGD).

Conclusions

The paper attempted to decipher whether media practitioners adoption of an informal and lifelong learning drive to fight 'galamsey' is yielding the desired results or otherwise. The study looked at 'galamsey' activities and challenges involved in combating it. It also explored media promotion of informal education and lifelong learning programmes in galvanising support against the 'galamsey' menace, and finally, establishes benefits of lifelong learning provided by the media to empower young adults with ALPs. It emerged that radio, television, newspapers, and social media platforms were essentially used by media practitioners to fight 'galamsey'.

Some of the young adults have taken to ALPs, and are acquiring all the relevant skills and trades, as well as building an enterprising mindset. However, many more young adults are not taking advantage of the marketable skills to make themselves relevant in their communities. It means that more informal education and lifelong learning integrated with ALPs should be vigorously promoted by the media and relevant governmental agencies in Ghana to young adults. Indeed, the media in particular, should be relentless in leading the conversation on 'galamsey' and ALPs, and in providing an important educational drive. This is because adopting this approach is a good way to shape and improve the lives of the young adults in our communities. This is important because, as future leaders, if they are properly positioned with relevant skills in their communities, they would not only improve their quality of life, but also ensure the betterment and sustainability of their communities.

The sustainability of ALPs in our communities, and the development of new components of ALPs and successful implementation should be properly discussed, and implemented. But the ALPs can only make progress when the media takes up the challenge of deepening the educational drive on ALPs and progressing the national agenda. Sottie (2019) opines that Ghana would earn a lot of foreign exchange if it developed its *bee-keeping industry*; for bee-keeping can create jobs for many young people who are unemployed in Ghana. Hence, more lifelong learning and informal education can serve as key to empowering our young people in the communities.

Much success can be realised in attracting the young adults signing on to ALPs, granted that a sustainable revolving fund, and its effective

management, is instituted. This is necessary today, because the existing revolving fund cannot cater for the numbers of young adults who solicit their support. More so, there should be an end to the situation where people solicit for funding of their trades and start-ups and end up refusing to pay back the credit granted them. Instituting *group lending* or *funding* with the instruction that individual's liability is the group members' liability, would make the individuals in the group do the right thing, or else group pressure would be applied on the defaulting group member. Instituting such a strategy would make group members more responsible in their trades and small-businesses that they establish for themselves.

To conclude, even though the Government of Ghana has tackled illegal mining activities through a collaborative approach; thus establishing a 'Joint Taskforce of Inter-ministerial Committee of Illegal Mining,' to fight 'galamsey, this strategy can only succeed if it is sufficiently implemented. When that is done, it will effectively elicit total support of the citizenry to ensure meaningful and sustainable change in the mining communities of Ghana.

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About the author

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Book review

Spaces of political pedagogy
Occupy! And other radical experiments in adult learning

Cassie Earl
Routledge, Abington and New York, 2018
195 pp.

Reviewed by Dr Shaun Rawolle

Deakin University

Some academic books are slick: they are tightly crafted and packaged and reveal little of the human emotion and struggles that underpin their production. *Spaces of political pedagogy* is not one of those books. What it offers is an engaging account of a quite profound research struggle to come to terms with the kind of learning and knowledge that comes with political activism, in the social momentum that comes from protest events and movements and pedagogical innovation that is not tied to pre-determined economic paths and narratives.

My interest in this book comes from an interest in neoliberalism, which broadly considers the ways that higher education has been restructured to reflect economic orthodoxy (see Rawolle, Rowlands, & Blackmore 2017; Rowlands, & Rawolle, 2013). The dilemma that neoliberalism

raises for academics in higher education is that to compete and survive means to play the games that are taken seriously in higher education, which have systematically been reshaped to emphasise a narrow set of measured performance indicators, and to do so in spaces that are more or less contained. With Julie Rowlands, I have written about this default narrative about higher education as the establishment of a doxa in the field, where the commonsense flow of practice is arranged around intellectual competition and the acquisitions of desirable positions, rewards and recognition (Rowlands, & Rawolle, 2013). The illusio that is required to even maintain a position in the field pits academics against one another, and in competition with agents in other fields whose work may impinge on desirable rewards. I am keenly aware of the fact that doing this kind of work, documenting the mechanisms of domination in higher education can be seen as a form of disillusionment, where what in fact might be more useful is providing an account that makes hope practical. The imposed settlement foisted on higher education is structural in nature, and seems highly problematic and unsustainable, particularly for academics whose work is broadly critical and aligned with radical transformation and reconsidering of the terms of the social contract.

Despite the overwhelming domination of alternative voices in the setting of policies and politics around higher education, there is a sense that the heavy handed tactics of our modern economic and political system in fact do not completely hold people at bay. More and more we see evidence of the rage against these structures and the critique of the inequalities of the broader society, both from outside the academe and positions of power, but also from within, and from economists and politician who are not captured by vested interests and in maintaining current patterns of inequality. While some aspects of crisis are in built into explanations of neoliberal societies, there is a sense that there is more to be understood, that aren't easily repositioned by the theoretical brilliance of classical economics, and that in fact erupt through the cracks, from environmental activists, refugee and human rights activists, environmental movements and scientists. What interests me in *Spaces of political pedagogy* is then an argument about what can be learnt from the successful activism of large scale events like the *Occupy!* movement, which spread throughout the rest of the world in 2011–2012, following the democratic movements known collectively as the Arab Spring in the early 2010s. What might *Occupy!* have to say about the pedagogy of

activism, and how might this momentum be kept alive in other settings, and indeed within higher education institutions themselves?

While there are a variety of insights of *Spaces of political pedagogy*, one of the core arguments that it proposes is that there are pedagogical insights to be made from social movements, and that the lived experiences of those involved in activism like *Occupy!* should be actively engaged to inform activists and scholars of alternative and utopian futures, and indeed as a counter to theorists of social justice and social contracts. This argument is convincingly located in the lived experiences of those involved in such radical experiments, and offers some necessary but uncomfortable insights into the realities of creating spaces not predefined by various dominations. The fieldwork that underpins this argument is carefully put into conversation with a range of radical and progressive education, Feminist and critical theorists, from Freire, Williams and Marx through to Shor, Ranciere and in particular the insights of Holloway, whose arguments about 'a crack' in capitalist thought hold much of the later chapters together. There are two empirical sites and three research cases that the argument build on. The main empirical focus for the book is the initial site in Occupy London, in the Tent City University and the lives of activists and others who formed participants at the site. The second site is the University of Lincoln, and in particular the radical work undertaken that named a connection to Occupy, in the Social Science Centre, and Student as Producer initiative, both led by Mike Neary. While on first glance seemingly discrete, the second site raises an interesting question about whether the radical experiments in democracy taking place at *Occupy!* sites could inform and have a place in an institutional setting like a university without being captured by neoliberal logics. The book offers an account of how to understand the learning that comes from seemingly discrete and time bounded protest movements, the pedagogy involved, and ways to research and do justice to the activists who invest their lives in such movements. The core and to me convincing insight from this argument is that in order for the relations between people to be guided in non-dominating ways, specific kinds of work is required to provide a space for radical and critical pedagogy. The proposed solution is to consider a more widely considered version of action research, one that would help to capture the way that this space is made possible, and help to imagine peoples' future lives differently. This is a powerful argument.

From a structural perspective, the book is divided into an introduction and seven chapters, which roughly align into three broad tasks: the introduction and first three chapters establish the problem that the research confronts, but they also enmesh this problematisation with a stance, broader than just a theoretical or epistemological stance, but that of a bricoleur, to help situate the role that a researcher plays in a space like *Occupy!*, the purpose of researching such spaces and the very possibility of being a part of such a movement in that role.

The second task involved the presentation of the cases, which carefully weighs the exhilaration and success of creating something new, collective and united against the kinds of day to day practices that reveal the micro-aggressions and the reproductions of patterns of domination, like feelings of being silenced in decision making when consensus is required, or the realities of who steps forward to continue the everyday tasks of keeping a site functioning, from feeding, doing the dishes, ensuring people have places to sleep and keep warm. Chapter 4 focussed on the *Occupy!* site and in particularly compelling reading in this regard. The contrast then to the Social Science Centre and Students as Producer raise such important questions for how to sustain the learning from democratic experiments into universities and to keep such counter knowledge valued and in practice.

The third task involves reading across cases to help to understand what knowledge might be gained, and what implications there are for researchers and activists. How can the cracks in capitalist logic outlined in the empirical chapters be joined and made to continue, when such spaces are seemingly contained, either by time, or by space, into smaller and smaller opportunities.

In sites of active political dissent, where what is called for is a rethinking of the relations between people, and where the inequalities and suffering of capitalist societies are named and confronted, is it possible for alternative forms of decision making and relating to emerge? If people are educated in capitalist systems, are they destined to reproduce the patterns of relating underpinned by domination? What does theory have to say to inform our understanding of these attempts to restart conversations about the structures of societies and the unequal distribution of the rewards that they produce? The experiences of individual people show the tensions that exist between the need to put

in place rules to structure decision making and individual dissent with particular decisions or directions.

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