Is it the Taking Part that Counts?
Access to Lifelong Learning Opportunities in Germany's Regime of Dis/Ability

Silke Schreiber-Barsch

Published: May 8, 2019

Abstract

This paper reveals why the issue of transforming the system of lifelong learning towards an 'inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning' (United Nations, 2006, p. 16), due to national ratifications of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), cuts right to the core of democratic societies and national policy agendas. Following the socio-spatial works by Löw (2001; 2008), the example of the German lifelong learning arena serves to illustrate the benefit of spatial theory in the adult education discourse. Empirical findings of a qualitative research design allow insights into how access to a place of learning is interpreted and organised by adult education professionals. It opens up an understanding of who gains access to public adult education institutions and, imperatively, why access is not merely a pedagogical issue, but a negotiation of citizenship and politics and is, thus, of a genuine political nature.

Questo articolo mostra per quali motivi trasformare la formazione permanente in un "sistema inclusivo a tutti i livelli in tutte le fasi della vita" (United Nations, 2006, p. 16), sulla base delle ratifiche della Convenzione delle Nazioni Unite sui diritti delle persone con disabilità (2006), al centro dell'interesse delle società democratiche e delle agende politiche nazionali. Facendo seguito alle pubblicazioni socio-spaziali di Löw (2001; 2008), il modello della Germania dimostra i benefici della teoria spaziale nell'ambito della formazione permanente. Dati empirici di una ricerca di tipo qualitativo permettono di vedere chiaramente come l'accesso a uno spazio di apprendimento viene interpretato e organizzato da professionisti della formazione in età adulta. Questi dati danno inoltre la possibilità di capire chi ha accesso alle istituzioni pubbliche per la formazione in età adulta e, di conseguenza, di vedere come l'accesso stesso non sia una questione meramente pedagogica, bensì strettamente legata al tema della cittadinanza e di conseguenza di chiara natura politica.

Keywords: Adult Education; Inclusion; Dis/Ability; Spatial Theory; Citizenship.

Silke Schreiber-Barsch: University of Hamburg (Germany)
✉ silke.schreiber-barsch@uni-hamburg.de
Silke Schreiber-Barsch is an Assistant Professor in Adult Education at the Faculty of Education, Unit of Lifelong Learning, University of Hamburg (Germany). Her main research areas are international and comparative adult education, theory and practices of lifelong learning, issues of participation and social inclusion/exclusion, with particular emphasis on education and adults with dis/abilities through the analytical lens of relational spatial theory, and global citizenship education.

1.   Introduction

Education for all—and especially for some has been a leading leitmotif throughout the history of adult education in the global North and South. It refers to adult education's mandate to foster, via learning and education, the social inclusion of adults and, in particular, marginalised or vulnerable groups in society (Schreiber-Barsch, 2018). The works of Paulo Freire (1968) in Latin America or the European popular educational movements (Steele, 2007) give exhaustive credit to this. At the same time, it becomes obvious that in executing the mandate of social inclusion, adult education and its practitioners have continued to oscillate between two poles. Between the objectives of the learner's adaptation to society's requirements on the one hand and of his / her empowerment to social transformation, critical reflection and resistance against just these requirements with the option to initiate social change on the other. Under these auspices, the mandate of social inclusion has always strengthened a profound linkage to social struggles in the sense of "collective mediations" of citizenship (Isin & Nyers, 2014, p. 1; Kabeer, 2005).

Against this backdrop, the paper aims to narrow the issue of social inclusion on one specific category of social diversity: the category of dis/ability. In the wake of the ratification of the United Nation (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by its member states in 2006, national education systems are called upon to ensure "an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning" (United Nations, 2006, art. 24). This claims to finally fully ensure the existing right to education for all (United Nations, 1948, art. 26). However, especially in countries like Germany with a traditionally highly segregated education system (Poore, 2009; Richardson & Powell, 2011), this political agenda-setting shakes the very foundations of who's in and who's out in society's lifelong learning system.

This on-going upheaval represents the framework of this paper within which social struggle and transformation are exemplified by the question of who gets and, in what way, access to the contested terrain of a learning place in the public space such as a public adult education centre. Is it truly the taking part of adults with dis/abilities that counts in realising inclusive learning and easy access learning opportunities? Using the spatial theory approach by Martina Löw (2001), the paper will elaborate upon why a public adult education centre is more than a territory shared by learners, professionals and pedagogical material. A spatial approach reveals the inherent symbolic dimensions of expected *normality* and of the distribution of power and dominion, determining who is to what extent able, powerful and considered able to redefine, reorder and, finally, ensure the given ideas about learning and participation.

2.   Germany's regime of dis/ability with regard to adult education and learning

Given the call for a paradigm shift in Germany's traditionally highly segregated education system by means of the ratification of the UN Convention in the year 2009, a political agenda-setting process has been launched towards an inclusive system of lifelong learning from the cradle to the grave: *Our way to an inclusive society* (BMAS, 2011; 2016). A remarkable aspect is that, on this policy level, the issue of inclusion in the sense of dis/ability is almost entirely focused on the formal context of schooling and vocational education and training (joint learning of pupils with and without dis/abilities)—and almost seems to fade away beyond. Inclusive learning has become an aspect of the mandatory system's part, not of the voluntary arena of adult learning and education. This leads to a point made by Masschelein and Quaghebeur (2005). By referring to Foucault's concept of governmentality (1978), they raise the debate on governmental techniques of a participatory regime: Who shall participate in what and under what conditions, thus: is *Participation for Better or for Worse*? Similarly, Edwards, Armstrong and Miller (2001) had emphasised that in spite of all claims for social inclusion and lifelong learning, not all adults necessarily would want to be included in what is on offer. Thus, neither inclusion nor participation are context-free, but are to be seen as embedded in a specific participatory regime at a given time in a given society.

Against this backdrop, a glance at the categories of inclusion and dis/ability is needed in order to clarify their understanding in the present paper. This provides the foundation for introducing the analytical lens of spatial theory used in the empirical research on inclusive learning places in the public space of adult education.

Due to its prominent role in the UNESCO policy agenda-setting process since the beginning of the 1990s, *inclusion* has become a rather fuzzy term and, therefore, always needs to be contextualised (Wilson, 2000). In doing so, the paper begins by referring to the social sciences discourse on social inclusion / exclusion as it had originated in the 1960s (Lenoir, 1974; Castel, 1995). As outlined earlier (Schreiber-Barsch, 2018), a differentiation in *system*, *process*, *condition* appears to be useful. First, it is supposed that societal *systems* of inclusion / exclusion do not follow steady, quasi-natural logics, but represent socially (re)produced entities that are permanently under negotiation. Objects of negotiation are socially, culturally and politically defined terms of membership, recognition and participation in society. In the case under scrutiny, that would mean the policy level of the UN Convention and the agenda-setting process at the national system's macro level. Moreover, inclusion / exclusion are, second, not dichotomous, but dialectical and constantly on-going *processes* that proceed along social features like gender, age, ethnic origin, corporeality and the like; in varying degrees (more or less inclusive / exclusive) and duration (time). This emphasises the common practice of inclusion *and* exclusion without necessarily knowing whether inclusion or exclusion is considered to be the favourable choice in a specific case. Exclusion, thus, only becomes abnormal in the sense of problematic, if to be excluded entails a solidified loss of opportunities to participate in society in a way that the individual or a collectivity (like a social group) view as a disadvantage or as a the loss of an appropriate living standard (Bartelheimer, 2007). Along the UN inclusion-agenda, primarily social processes with regard to the category of dis/ability and their inclusive / exclusive dynamics are put in the limelight. The logic of the Convention argues that barriers to learning and, thus, to participation in society due to being disabled are a non-acceptable standard of living and a loss of personal opportunities. Third, inclusion / exclusion generally stand for a normative framework of a desired societal *condition* (i.e. an exclusive or inclusive society). In its modern welfare state version, usually the normative framework of justifying social inclusion is closely linked to ideas of equality, human rights and democracy (Young, 2002; Wilson, 2000) and to the right to education (United Nations, 1948, art. 26)—which directly sets the link to the case under scrutiny.

Discussing inclusion in the sense of dis/ability, makes it, moreover, necessary to define the understanding of dis/ability prominent in this paper. Dis/ability is not an ontological category, but it could be congenital, acquired (by accident, disease etc.) or also socially constructed. This complexity refuses one-dimensional explanatory models. In acknowledging this, the UN Convention shifted from the traditional medical model of dis/ability to the social model of dis/ability, emphasising the interrelatedness of being, in whatever sense, individually impaired as well as living in disabling societal conditions. The paper, however, pursues a cultural model of dis/ability, following the strands of the Critical Disability Studies. They argue for a multi-factorial account of dis/ability in its interrelatedness with biological, social, cultural *and* psychological aspects, attitudes and norms and explicitly pay attention to the interwoven power structures (Rocco & Delgado, 2011; Shakespeare, 2013; Snyder & Mitchell, 2006; Riddell & Watson, 2014). Ultimately, the paper uses the term 'adults with learning difficulties' in order to avoid the stigmatising label of intellectual or cognitive disability, but favouring the term brought forward by the self-advocacy group *People First*.

Focussing on adult education, it becomes apparent that, in Germany, the traditionally highly segregated education is reproduced as a similar counterpart in adult education. For centuries, segregation was based on a deficit-oriented categorisation of learners into *normal* and *special* learning institutions along the so-called "able/not-able divide," as Campbell (2009) argues from the perspective of the Critical Disability Studies. This has resulted in the on-going status quo that, in Germany, learning opportunities for adults with impairments or learning difficulties continue to be provided almost exclusively in sheltered workshops or in care institutions without any primary adult education mandate—hence not in public spaces such as, for example, a public adult education centre (Lindmeier, 2003; Heimlich & Behr, 2009). Empirical data on the rudimentary participation of learners with dis/abilities in the arena of lifelong learning confirm their positioning at the outer periphery of this arena (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2014), which, again, echoes the features of the current participatory regime. It clearly

emphasises that adults with impairments or learning difficulties are not recognised as regular clients of and prospective participants in adult education. One of adult education's core principles is identifying target groups that are seen both as capable of *and* vitally in need of learning and that are thus addressed using specific target group-oriented measures (Hippel & Tippelt, 2009). However, historically, adults with impairments or learning difficulties have not been even granted the status of a *prospective* clientele of adult education (see e.g. Theunissen & Hoffmann, 2003). Even worse, the long-term effects of the inhuman *euthanasia program* (called T4) by the National Socialist dictatorship with the systematic killing of more than 70,000 people with all kinds of disabilities between 1939 and 1945 are still present. The age gap of elderly people with dis/abilities in relation to the number of elderly without, has only recently been closing (Dieckmann & Giovis, 2012, p. 15).

This emphasises that a glance at Germany's regime of dis/ability is not a purely pedagogical issue. But it cuts right to the core of democratic societies and their participatory regimes in positioning people according to the existing order as a citizen or "not-yet-being-a-citizen" (Biesta & Lawy, 2006) or also a "lesser citizen" (Kabeer, 2005) due to dis/ability, installing a "regime of dis-citizenship" (Devlin & Pothier, 2006).

In this sense, a public adult education institution is of interest for the question under scrutiny, because it provides a public space for learning, and, by this, also for performing and communicating political subjectivities. As Amin (2015) has pointed out, public spaces are in essence political arenas. Under negotiation is the very foundation of citizenship which is understood, following Biesta and Lawy (2006), as a "practice of identification with public issues" (ibid., p. 72); it represents transformative processes of how "people relate to, understand and express their place and role in society" (ibid., p. 73). Pursuing this argument, civic learning has to be seen as a cultural process and, by being performed through gaining access to and occupying public spaces, a wayfinding into society. Adult education's objectives of fostering not only the learner's adaptation to society's requirements, but also his / her empowerment to social transformation and critical reflection becomes more than obvious and more than necessary.

3.   Space is more than place: Adult Education, Spatial Theory and Dis/ability

As outlined earlier (Schreiber-Barsch, 2016), in Germany, public adult education centres, the so-called *Volkshochschulen*, represent a public learning space legitimised by their general accessibility and their public and professional mandate. Their historical roots stretch back to the end of the 19th century (Süssmuth & Sprink, 2009). Today, about 900 public adult education centres exist throughout Germany, operating as independent legal entities, but working under the auspices of the state, the respective federal states and the local authorities (Huntemann & Reichart, 2014). They offer further education, in-house training, vocational certificates as well as literacy or citizenship courses and the whole range of liberal adult education learning offers. About 40 % of their financial resources stems from public subsidies, with revenues from participation fees amounting also to 40 % (as for 2013; ibid.). Their traditionally close ties to the public sector and their historical leitmotif of providing adult education for all and especially for some, beyond any particular political convictions, age cohorts, financial situations or learning objectives, explains why their work is labelled *adult education in public responsibility*.

However, data on public adult education centres still manifests the traditional participatory regime along the able/not-able divide. The share of target-group oriented courses amongst the total number of all courses is 17 %; of this, 2 % are explicitly labelled as for "people with disabilities" (Huntemann & Reichart, 2014). In another current survey (Koscheck, Weiland & Ditschek, 2013), all adult education providers were asked, for the first time, to estimate (because quantitative data rarely exists and is complicated, if not unethical, to gain) the number of participants with disabilities / impairments in their regular course portfolio; the findings revealed a percentage of less than 5 %. Whether or not it is possible to calculate an *adequate* participation rate, there is no denying that the proportion of adults with impairments or learning difficulties is very low.

What becomes apparent is the cultural and political dimension of the issue, as this low participation rate cannot be explained solely by a lack of wheelchair ramps or insufficient formal rights—certainly, no

public adult education centre has a mission statement saying they are *not* open or *not* responsible for this clientele. It manifests the symbolic framework that public adult education centres are meant for abled adults and sheltered workshops or similar institutions are meant for non-abled adults. This is what Holston (2007) defines as the "know-your-place" rule, re-produced by most of society's members, be they individuals, organisations, professionals or the like, and by explicit facts and internalised attitudes and norms, an interactive *doing disability* (Waldschmidt, 2008).

Thus, even though formal access might be provided, voices are not acknowledged and recognition is granted only pro forma. Young (2002) has called this internal exclusion: "Though formally included in a forum or process, people may find that their claims are not taken seriously and may believe that they are not treated with equal respect" (ibid., p. 55). This mechanism can be illustrated by providing a short interview sequence of the empirical data to be presented in the following chapter (chapter 4). In our explorative qualitative study (Schreiber-Barsch & Fawcett, 2017), one interviewee, a head of a public adult education centre, explained why their institution has to be seen from his / her point of view as a role model for inclusion:

> ...the people [with learning difficulties; SSB] water our FLOWERS. They come and remove the paper for recycling. They come and make our notice board nice. And all these things, distributing programme booklets and leaflets at the beginning of the term. [...] So, if you had been here on Monday, you would have thought: wow, what's going on here? There was a hustle and bustle from many people, also people with a cognitive disability, doing things, removing the waste paper, fetching recyclable bottles from the storage room, because they take them away. [...] It is very extreme here, because we have this close collaboration. That we can just say: OK, come over and do something with us together. And... of course, they do not get money from us, but they then get something like a big pile of chocolate or something like that... (INT_1_00:07:22-2).[1]

This sequence is interesting because it allows insight into the traditional logics of the able/ not-able divide at an adult's place of learning. It is assumed that inclusion is successfully implemented by the sole physical presence of people with learning difficulties at the territory of the centre—echoing that it is the taking part that counts. Their presence at the centre is explained not e.g. with regard to learning interests or to their participation in course offers, but to the close territorial proximity to the nearby care institution and the benefit of integrating them in the administrative working context of the centre, thus, labelling it rather as a charitable mission. Ultimately, this corresponds to the type of remuneration for their work (not money, but sweets).

3.1.   Analytical Approach: Martina Löw's relational understanding of space

Using relational spatial theory (Löw, 2001) enables the analysis of the interrelatedness of material, personal, social, *and* symbolic dimensions of space and, thus, opens up an understanding of the spatial order of learning places.

The so-called *spatial turn* in social science and humanities has brought the phenomena of space and place into the foreground since the beginning of the 1990s. This paper draws on the work of Martina Löw (2001; 2008), who, with her concept of space, has provided one of the most influential German-language sociological works in recent years. Löw's aim is, in reference to the work of Giddens (1984), to overcome theoretical dichotomies and understand space as a *duality* of structural order/ing and action (Löw, 2001; 2008). Significant for this paper is Löw's relational understanding of space; defining space as a *relational ordering of social goods and living beings at places* (Löw, 2001). This order/ing is re-produced by what she calls processes of *synthesis* and *placing* of these elements (see below). Furthermore, her approach allows an analytical differentiation between space and place, as place refers to a concrete, territorial locus, whereas at one locus many social spaces may be produced, re-arranged and negotiated (ibid.). The same territorial public adult education centre may represent an everyday learning space for

---

1. Names of the interviewees are in each case anonymised; INT is an abbreviation for *interview*, followed by the indication of the interview's number, and, in some cases of the respective interview sequence. Capital letters *within* a citation comply with an emphasis by the interviewee.

some, but a distant world for others. Thus, social spaces are settings of human activities and appropriation processes, meaning that given spaces are appropriated, as well as new ones created (Deinet, 2010). Yet, a learning space only emerges at the moment when subjective appropriation processes are happening at a specific learning place by performing learning activities (Kraus, 2015). The importance of including the aspect of *action* is based upon its function as a *mediating category*, as Löw states, which "makes it possible to link bodily positioning, perception, and the constructional performances of subjects with material artefacts and institutional frameworks" (Löw, 2008, p. 31).

Institutionalised order/ings like the aforementioned "know-your-place" rule are defined by Löw as *spatial structures*. Löw elaborates that spatial structures enable *and* constrain action and that they are deeply anchored in institutions. Thus, "institutions are enduring regularities in social actions" (Löw, 2008, p. 39), through (re)producing rules, selectively allocating resources, executing negative sanctions in case of rule violations and so on. The German history of adult education and dis/abilities illustrates the mechanisms and powerful consequences of such spatial structures: in this case of the traditional spatial structure of *segregated spaces for adult learners with dis/abilities* (Schreiber-Barsch, 2015; 2017), establishing the basic pattern of segregated learning institutions.

It is against this background that the policy agenda on inclusion has set changes in action, because from now on, the traditional order was labelled as a *dis-order* (Fritsche, 2010). This means it is defined as problematic in accordance with the aims of the UN Convention and its national agenda-setting on an inclusive learning system (BMAS, 2011; 2016) and as to be tackled with public measures. However, the actual implementation of the agenda-setting on an inclusive learning arrangement—be it minimal or thorough—in learning places for adults, illustrates the ambivalent struggle to re-arrange institutionalised social order/ings and to redistribute lines of power among the parties concerned. Thus, are the traditional divide and barriers being removed, merely shifted, or even (re)produced under a different guise in the name of inclusion and equal access?

4.   The *architecture of inclusion*: proposing a heuristic framework

The starting point of piloting an explorative study was the assumption that research on professional activities with the aim of implementing a howsoever *inclusive learning place* for adults would allow significant insights into the spatial order/ings of social space with its interrelatedness of material, personal, social, *and* symbolic dimensions, being embedded in a certain participatory regime. It is about the professional spatial activities in the sense of a *relational ordering of social goods and living beings at places* (Löw, 2001), targeted on the leitmotif of inclusion. Professional activities are understood, in the pilot study, as management and planning activities under the auspices of the claims of the policy agenda on inclusion, the respective institution's profile and requirements, the individual professional's beliefs and range of actions and, furthermore, the professionally assumed needs and wants of adults and prospective participants.

The research project, described in detail by Schreiber-Barsch and Fawcett (2017), adopted a qualitative research design (following Grounded Theory; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Strübing, 2014). Semi-guided expert interviews were used (Bogner, Littig & Menz, 2014) (of approximately 90 minutes) with pedagogical professionals from the field under scrutiny (academic / institutional stakeholders working in or with institutionalised learning settings for adults, meaning, mostly, public adult education centres or publicly accessible disabled care providers; n=7). The research question asked how inclusion, in the sense of the UN Convention, is operationalised in institutional learning settings for adults. Thus, what renders a learning place an inclusive learning place? Accordingly, the professional's perspective was given priority, yet, representing as a pilot study the starting point for a follow-up with participatory research methods, giving voice to adults with learning difficulties themselves. The data was analysed using selective coding following Strauss and Corbin (1998), which is based on the identification of one (or more) core categories that concern and explain the primary phenomenon (here, the operationalisation of inclusion).

Following Löw's approach, professionals' activities are understood as processes of (re)producing learning spaces through spacing and synthesising (see Sect. 3.1): *spacing* as activities of positioning and re-arranging of social goods and living beings, and *synthesising*, meaning the active performance of individuals via perception, imagining or remembering to merge the positioned and re-arranged elements to

spaces. Hence, in our research, we elaborated on the spatiality of the professionals' activities, deriving the interwoven processes of spacing and synthesising from their explanations of how they are operationalising inclusion. Such spacing and synthesising as an expression of professionally performed procedures is neither completely determined, nor completely arbitrary; it is individually performed against the backdrop of common expectations, routines, professional know-how with regard to how to render possible adult learning. In this sense, also non-performing an activity is understood as a performance. Accordingly, the same features of the same place of learning could be perceived as a barrier impeding participation of e.g. an adult learner in a wheel chair, or, as an impulse to question the usual distribution of course rooms and think about alternatives. Irritations in the wake of managing and planning adult learning at a certain place could be responded by performing rather a managing optimism (Fritsche, 2010), or, a managing pessimism—opening up a quite diverse learning space and opportunities for participation. Thus, the person performing the processes of spacing and synthesising, here at a public place of learning, is of key significance in (re)producing societal structures of power and dominion (Löw, 2001, p. 215).

4.1.   The professionals' core activities in realising inclusive learning

Our findings elicit a conceptual model, which is called the *architecture of inclusion at public learning places for adults* (Schreiber-Barsch & Fawcett, 2017). The model serves as a heuristic framework, offering insights into the *specific* variance of activities targeted at realising inclusion, and, moreover, into possible consequences of such activities regarding the learner's opportunities for participation, as shown in table 1.
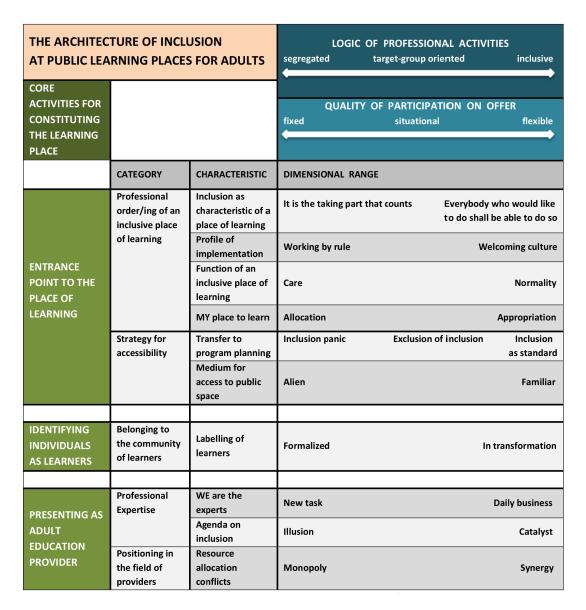
THE ARCHITECTURE OF INCLUSION AT PUBLIC LEARNING PLACES FOR ADULTS			LOGIC OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES segregated target-group oriented inclusive		
CORE ACTIVITIES FOR CONSTITUTING THE LEARNING PLACE			QUALITY OF PARTICIPATION ON OFFER fixed situational flexible		
	CATEGORY	CHARACTERISTIC	DIMENSIONAL RANGE		
ENTRANCE POINT TO THE PLACE OF LEARNING	Professional order/ing of an inclusive place of learning	Inclusion as characteristic of a place of learning	It is the taking part that counts		Everybody who would like to do shall be able to do so
		Profile of implementation	Working by rule		Welcoming culture
		Function of an inclusive place of learning	Care		Normality
		MY place to learn	Allocation		Appropriation
	Strategy for accessibility	Transfer to program planning	Inclusion panic	Exclusion of inclusion	Inclusion as standard
		Medium for access to public space	Alien		Familiar
IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUALS AS LEARNERS	Belonging to the community of learners	Labelling of learners	Formalized		In transformation
PRESENTING AS ADULT EDUCATION PROVIDER	Professional Expertise	WE are the experts	New task		Daily business
		Agenda on inclusion	Illusion		Catalyst
	Positioning in the field of providers	Resource allocation conflicts	Monopoly		Synergy

Table 1 – The architecture of inclusion at public learning places for adults in public space: the spatiality of professionals' activities (own illustration; Schreiber-Barsch & Fawcett, 2017)

Following the iterative analysis process of Grounded Theory (see above), the interviews elicited three components as key areas of professional *core activities* in realising an inclusive learning place. Moreover, each component is based upon a *category*. These categories, in turn, consists of certain *characteristics*. The specific feature of each characteristic is illustrated by a *dimensional range*, which runs between two poles. These poles determine the variance of activities, which had been articulated by the interviewees. (With regard to the citation of the interviews, it shall be noted that the names of the interviewees are in each case anonymised; INT is an abbreviation for *interview*, followed by the indication of the interview's number, and, in some cases of the respective interview sequence. Capital letters *within* a citation comply with an emphasis by the interviewee.)

A summary of the findings provides insight into the heuristic framework, beginning by referring to the identified key areas of professional *core activities* in realising an inclusive learning place:

1) *Entrance point to the place of learning* (the key component): Who is given what kind of access? And, who is assigned to which places at the place of learning?

Findings emphasise that access represents a key momentum in realising inclusion. Access is prior to whatever kind of participation in e.g. a course offer, and is, thus, of key significance. It serves as an institutionalised hinge between adult education providers and adults interested in learning—representing the processing of adult education and, at the same time, the outcome of a certain participatory regime.

The findings show that access is negotiated along the categories of respective *professional order/ings of an inclusive place of learning* and of practical *strategies* to implement accessibility. These include statements on the professionals application of features like the layout of program booklets or flyers (using (no) simple language, (no) guidance by means of pictures / symbols, or the like), the labelling of course offers (using or avoiding the term "cognitive disability") or also the handling of the physical conditions of the premises. The variances run between the poles of a narrow understanding of territoriality / materiality *as* inclusion (e.g. a wheelchair ramp *as* inclusion, the physical presence of a disabled body at the learning place *as* inclusion) up till awarding a maximum autonomy to the individual learner in taking a decision to participate or not. Furthermore, with regard to the frameworks of implementation, the statements show a dimensional range between a managing pessimism (pro forma minimum solutions) up till an inclusion-mainstreaming as centre of the overall quality feature of the institution. Concerning concrete strategies for accessibility, the interviews show a different understanding of how to make use of aspects or opportunities which could serve as a vehicle (medium) for fostering access to a public space of learning (e.g. providing open meeting places for communication and socialising). Such (non-existing) vehicles keep the place of learning either still alien or render it more and more familiar for learners of all kinds. This highly influences the adult's perceptions whether a place is considered as *my place to learn*, being a legitimised addressee and prospective participant of learning offers.

2) *Identifying individuals as learners*: What kind of learners are identified to belong to what kind of clientele?

This points to the question of who is seen both as capable of *and* vitally in need of learning. The processes and contents of such labelling procedures are described between the poles of, on the one hand, having a formalised (= fixed) texture (regarding e.g. assumptions about preferred course topics or expectations of learning objectives), or rather, on the other hand, showing a texture in transformation. Under negotiations are the professionals' expectations of the however defined *normal* learner and his / her interests, needs and capabilities and their transfer to a more or less adapted spatial order/ing. This also includes understandings of who actually owns the status of an expert with regard to inclusion and settings of inclusive learning (who is competent to define whether something is inclusive?).

3) *Staging as adult learning provider*: How are adult education providers presenting themselves in the public space of learning and within the contested terrain of supply and demand? And, which provider declares himself—or someone else—as expert for the provision of inclusive learning? It shows a struggle over the professions competencies, resources and positions within the local arena of provision.

The interviews state a consensus. Not only on the high relevance of the UN Convention on being a crucial catalyst for having put inclusion on the top of the agendas and, finally, initiated its transfer to practice. But also on the perception of who is seen as expert for the provision of inclusive learning—as all providers declare this expertise for themselves, depending on from what expertise is derived from (from historical leitmotifs of social inclusion, from know-how in Special Needs Education, or the like). At the same time, the prioritisation of inclusion in the public space of lifelong learning also fuels resource allocation conflicts in the social space of a certain territory. Persons with dis/abilities are referred to as being a social group "under siege" from the diverse providers and their striving for resources, which rather fosters ideas of a monopoly than synergy.

4.2. Logic of professional activities – quality of participation on offer

Furthermore, the insights into the professionals' activities of (re)producing learning spaces through processes of spacing and synthesising elicit two vital logics. Vertically, these run through all categories and they sum up, on the one hand, on a meta-level the overarching logic of the respective professional activities, and, on the other hand, in consequence, a specific quality of participation on offer at the place of learning. These logics do not have a clear distinction, yet, they emphasise highly obvious tendencies.

a) *A segregated model of professional activities*

A segregated model of professional activities corresponds to a fixed quality of participation, according to which the professionals (more or less consciously) order certain learners to specific places, learning objectives, needs and / or social features and hereby continue to prefer the traditional physical segregation of learning places. Correspondingly, inclusion is imagined and performed as a "piece of scenery" (INT_7); a Potemkin village that pro forma opens up the opportunity for participation. Yet, it positions learners only on assigned places and keeps inclusion on the shiny surface of the learning place. The participation of adults with dis/abilities is seen as functional first and foremost for others, not for themselves: "then I just push three wheelchairs in as well and this will be also nice for the other ones" (INT_5).

b) *A target-group oriented model of professional activities*

In this model, the rather inflexible structures dissolve towards a situational quality of participation, this means towards a situational case-by-case decision making in the procedures of planning and managing and with regard to interests, needs, capabilities and preferences of individual learners or required actions. Nevertheless, the learners remain in specifically labelled groups of learners and specifically arranged learning settings. For example, an inclusive course offer is indeed integrated in a program booklet of an adult education centre, but the administrative proceeding (registration, information) and the implementation (place of learning, teaching staff, course material) remains allocated to a disabled care provider—in this sense, inclusion is outsourced and excluded.

c) *An inclusive model of professional activities*

The inclusive model goes beyond inflexible structures, situational case-by-case decision making or also prior assignments of certain learners to specific places and learning arrangements. Rather, he or she who would like to learn and to participate will be given opportunities to do so. It shows a flexible professional attitude in acknowledging of whatever could be seen as relevant for participation and of inclusion as an on-going process of trial and error, of finding (also unconventional) solutions or at least a compromise. Irritations in the wake of planning and managing are valued as productive impulse to encourage alternative paths and multi-dimensional perspectives on an issue under scrutiny. However, this neither means reproducing the traditional welfare attitude under a different guise (because *all* learners are seen to contribute their share and to take their part of responsibility), nor the view that an inclusive setting of teaching and learning needs to be fully and completely accomplished *before* being granted to declare oneself as an inclusive learning place. This could be called a professional's awareness of limits (not to be confused with the managing pessimism), which renders transparent the current status of inclusion: "Ok, I call it inclusion, but I know, that it is not yet inclusion" (INT_1).

5. Conclusion: It is the quality of participation that counts

In concluding, the paper draws attention to the point that it is not the taking part that counts in the arena of inclusive learning and teaching, but it is the *specific* quality of participation that counts and that is on offer for those interested in learning. Therefore, as described, the multi-dimensional issue of access to a place of learning needs to be recognised as an institutionalised order/ing of a social space with its interrelatedness of material, personal, social, *and* symbolic dimensions, and under the auspices of a certain participatory regime.

Against this backdrop and apart from non-negotiable responsibilities on the policy level and on institutional levels to acknowledge the right to exercise existing rights (right to education), the following understanding of an inclusive system of lifelong learning is brought to the fore. It means recognising and establishing a parity of esteem of *all* adults interested in learning in being able to decide whether to participate in what is on offer or not. It renders possible the ability to decide and to act in the most self-determined manner in accordance with personal interests and desires—whether this is *not* to participate or to participate and whether this is merely taking part in courses in the current regime of power or contributing in calling for a revision of the regime itself. In this sense, decision-making includes three premises: to be *allowed* to decide (legitimacy), to be *able* to decide (capability) and to be *willing* to decide (empowerment). This demanding, yet highly interconnected triad emphasises once again the significance of public places and the transformative force of being acknowledged right there and virtually occupying places that were not meant for oneself before. This will, very visibly, re-order the topography, the procedures and the pedagogical settings of adult education and the participatory regime of lifeling learning.

References

Amin, A. (2015). Animated Space. *Public Culture*, *27*(2), 239–258. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2841844.

Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2014) (Eds.). *Bildung in Deutschland 2014*. Bielefeld: W. Bertelsmann.

Bartelheimer, P. (2007). *Politik der Teilhabe*. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Biesta, G., & Lawy, R. (2006). From teaching citizenship to learning democracy: overcoming individualism in research, policy and practice. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *36*(1), 63–79. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640500490981.

BMAS (2011). *Unser Weg in eine inklusive Gesellschaft. Der Nationale Aktionsplan der Bundesregierung zur Umsetzung der UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention*. Berlin: BMBF.

BMAS (2016). *Unser Weg in eine inklusive Gesellschaft. Nationaler Aktionsplan 2.0 der Bundesregierung zur UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention (UN-BRK)*. Berlin: BMAS.

Bogner, A., Littig, B., & Menz, W. (2014). *Interviews mit Experten. Eine praxisorientierte Einführung*. Wiesbaden: VS.

Campbell, F.K. (2009). *Contours of Ableism. The Production of Disability and Abledness*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Castel, R. (1995). *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale. Une chronique du salariat*. Paris: Gallimard.

Deinet, U. (2010). Aneignungsraum. In C. Reutlinger, C. Fritsche & E. Lingg (Eds.), *Raumwissenschaftliche Basics* (pp. 35–43). Wiesbaden: VS Verl.

Devlin, R., & Pothier, D. (2006). Introduction: Toward a Critical Theory of Dis-Citizenship. In D. Pothier & R. Devlin (eds.), *Critical Disability Theory* (pp. 1–22). Vancouver & Toronto: UBC.

Dieckmann, F., & Giovis, C. (2012). Der demografische Wandel bei Erwachsenen mit geistiger Behinderung. Vorausschätzung der Altersentwicklung am Beispiel von Westfalen-Lippe. *Teilhabe*, *51*(1), 12–19.

Edwards, R., Armstrong, P., & Miller, N. (2001). Include me out: Critical readings of social exclusion, social inclusion and lifelong learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *20*(5), 417–428. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370120116.

Foucault, M. (1978). La 'Gouvernementalité.' In D. Defert, F. Ewald & J. Lagrange (eds.), *Foucault: Dits et e'crits II, 1976–1988*. Paris: Quarto Gallimard.

Fraser, N. (1995). From redistribution to recognition. *New Left Review*, *212*, 68–92.

Freire, P. (1968). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Fritsche, C. (2010). Maßnahmen gegen Unordnungen im öffentlichen Raum – ein Systematisierungsversuch unterschiedlicher Strömungen. In C. Reutlinger & A. Wigger (Eds.), *Transdisziplinäre Sozialraumarbeit: Grundlegungen und Perspektiven des St. Galler Modells zur Gestaltung des Sozialraums* (pp. 55–67). Berlin: Frank & Timme.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Heimlich, U., & Behr, I. (2009). Inklusion von Menschen mit Behinderung in der Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung. In R. Tippelt & A. V. Hippel (Eds.), *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung* (3rd ed.) (pp. 813–826). Wiesbaden: VS Verl.

Hippel, A.v. & Tippelt, R. (2009). Adressaten-, Teilnehmer- und Zielgruppenforschung. In R. Tippelt & A.v. Hippel (Eds.), *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung* (3rd ed.) (pp. 801–812). Wiesbaden: VS Verl.

Holston, J. (2009). Insurgent Citizenship in an Era of Global Urban Peripheries. *City & Society*, *21*(2), 245–267. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-744X.2009.01024.x.

Huntemann, H. & Reichart, E. (2014). *Volkshochschul-Statistik: 52. Folge, Arbeitsjahr 2013*. Retrieved March 29, 2019 from http://www.die-bonn.de/doks/2014-volkshochschule-statistik-01.pdf.

Isin, E. F., & Nyers, P. (2014). Introduction: Globalizing citizenship studies. In E. F. Isin & P. Nyers (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies* (pp. 1–11). London: Routledge.

Kabeer, N. (2005). Introduction. The search for inclusive citizenship: Meanings and expressions in an interconnected world. In N. Kabeer (ed.), *Inclusive Citizenship. Meanings and Expressions* (pp. 1–27). London and New York: Zed Books.

Koscheck, S., Weiland, M. & Ditschek, E. J. (2013). *Wbmonitor Umfrage 2012: Klima und Strukturen der Weiterbildungslandschaft*. BiBB and DIE. Retrieved March 29, 2019 from http://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/wbmonitor_Ergebnisbericht_Umfrage_2012.pdf.

Kraus, K. (2015). Lernort. In J. Dinkelaker & A.v. Hippel (eds.), *Erwachsenenbildung in Grundbegriffen* (pp. 133–138). Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Lenoir, R. (1974). *Les exclus. Un français sur dix*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Lindmeier, C. (2003). Integrative Erwachsenenbildung. *DIE Zeitschrift für Erwachsenenbildung*, *4*, 28–35.

Löw, M. (2001). *Raumsoziologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Löw, M. (2008). The Constitution of Space. The Structuration of Spaces Through the Simultaneity of Effect and Perception. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *11*(1), 25–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431007085286.

Masschelein, J. & Quaghebeur, K. (2005). Participation for Better or for Worse? *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *1*, 51–65.

Poore, C. (2009). *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Rancière, J. (1999). *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Richardson, J.G. & Powell, J.J.W. (2011). *Comparing Special Education. Origins to Contemporary Paradoxes*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Riddell, S. & Watson, N. (2014). *Disability, Culture and Identity*. London: Routledge.

Rocco, T.S., & Delgado, A. (2011). Shifting Lenses: A Critical Examination of Disability in Adult Education. In T.S. Rocco (Ed.). Challenging Ableism, Understand Disability, Including Adults with Disabilities in Workplaces and Learning Spaces. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *132*, 3–12.

Schreiber-Barsch, S. (2018). Global Citizenship Education and Globalism. In I. Davies, D. Kiwan, C. Peck, A. Peterson, E. Sant, J. Sim & Y. Waghid (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Citizenship and Education* (pp. 113–131). New York: Palgrave / Macmillan.

Schreiber-Barsch, S. (2017). Space is more than place: The urban context as contested terrain of inclusive learning settings for adults and arena of political subjectivation. In H. Sacré & S. de Visscher (Eds.), *Learning the city. Cultural approaches to civic learning in urban spaces* (pp. 67–81). Cham: Springer-Briefs in Education.

Schreiber-Barsch, S. (2016). Ist Dabei-sein alles? Inklusive Lernorte der Erwachsenenbildung und die Dialektik von Zugang und Barrieren. In K. Dollhausen & S. Muders (Eds.), *Diversität und Lebenslanges Lernen. Aufgaben für die organisierte Weiterbildung* (pp. 217–229). Bielefeld: WBV.

Schreiber-Barsch, S. (2015). Von Sonder-Räumen zu inklusiven Lernorten. Raumordnungen in der Erwachsenenbildung. In C. Bernhard, K. Kraus, S. Schreiber-Barsch & R. Stang (Eds.), *Erwachsenenbildung und Raum. Theoretische Perspektiven – professionelles Handeln – Rahmungen des Lernens* (pp. 193–204). Bielefeld: WBV.

Schreiber-Barsch, S., & Fawcett, E. (2017). Inklusionsarchitekturen: Wie wird ein Lernort zu einem inklusiven Lernort im öffentlichen Raum des Lebenslangen Lernens? *Zeitschrift für Weiterbildungsforschung*, *40*(3), 295–319. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40955-017-0097-x.

Shakespeare, T. (2013). *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Snyder, S. L. & Mitchell, D. T. (2006). *Cultural Locations of Disability*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Steele, T. (2007). *Knowledge is Power! The Rise and Fall of European Popular Educational Movements, 1848–1939*. Oxfort et al.: Peter Lang.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research – Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Strübing, J. (2014). *Grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Wiesbaden: VS.

Süssmuth, R. & Sprink, R. (2009). Volkshochschule. In R. Tippelt & A.v. Hippel (Eds.), *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung* (pp. 473 – 490) (3rd ed.). Wiesbaden: VS Verl.

Theunissen, G. & Hoffmann, C. (2003). Entwicklung, Theorie und Perspektiven einer Erwachsenenbildung bei Menschen mit Lernschwierigkeiten und mehrfacher Behinderung. In G. Theunissen (ed.), *Erwachsenenbildung und Behinderung* (pp. 45–64). Bad Heilbrunn/Obb.: Klinkhardt.

United Nations (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* Retrieved March 29, 2019 from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf.

United Nations (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.* Retrieved March 29, 2019 from https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html.

Waldschmidt, A. (2008). „Wir Normalen" – „die Behinderten" ? Erving Goffman meets Michel Foucault. In K.S. Rehberg (ed.), *Die Natur der Gesellschaft* (pp. 5799–5809). Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verl.

Wilson, J. (2000). Doing justice to inclusion. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 15*(3), 297–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/088562500750017907.

Young, I.M. (2002). *Inclusion and Democracy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.