

Adult Education

Historical and Theoretical Aspects

 EÖTVÖS
UNIVERSITY
PRESS

ADULT EDUCATION – HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL ASPECTS

Edited by Sándor Striker

Budapest, 2012



Selected Papers of the Conference
"Adult Education and Citizenship Relations in Space and Time"
held in Budapest, Hungary, 16–18 June 2011

Copyrights transferred to the authors by the Scientific Committee.

Edited by Sándor Striker

Papers selected by Orsolya Kereszty

© Márta Fülöp, Ian Davies, Ebru Aktan, Alejandra Navarro, Hajnalka Szarvas, Sándor Striker,
Mária Arapovics, Katalin Czippán, Mária Kraici Szokoly, Orsolya Kereszty, 2012

ISBN 978 963 312 099 6

 **EÖTVÖS**
UNIVERSITY
PRESS www.eotvoskiado.hu

Executive Publisher: The Dean of the Faculty
of Education and Psychology, ELTE
Editor-in-Chief: Dániel-Levente Pál
Layout: Livia Lendér
Printed by Prime Rate Ltd.
Cover: Nóra Váraljai



CONTENTS

Introduction	7
Institutional Profiles	9
Márta Fülöp–Ian Davies–Ebru Aktan–Alejandra Navarro: The Cooperative Competitive European Citizen: Is This Notion Present in the Representation of Citizenship among Student Teachers in Four Countries?	11
Márta Fülöp–Hajnalka Szarvas: The Ability of Cooperation in a Competitive Context as a Civic Competence	21
Sándor Striker: Democracy, Participation vs. Paternalism – Patterns of Informal Adult Learning	35
Mária Arapovics: Learning the Democratic Active Citizenship – The Role of Civil Society and NGOs in Lifewide Learning	53
Katalin Czippán–Mária Kraici Szokoly: Education on Sustainable Development in Adult Education	69
Orsolya Kereszty: Adult Education in the Feminist Movement in Hungary in a Global Context (1867–1914)	73
Our Authors	87

SÁNDOR STRIKER*

DEMOCRACY, PARTICIPATION VS. PATERNALISM – PATTERNS OF INFORMAL ADULT LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

The paper aims at focusing on analyzing present day issues of the phenomena of adult informal learning as a significant part of life-wide learning processes. The author would propose, that there is a striking, yet quite unnoticed self-contradiction within the notion of acquiring 'competences' through formal education, especially in fields as 'active citizenship' and 'democracy studies'. These concepts are deeply rooted in the contexts of ethics (morality) and praxis, therefore a) their acquisition through documents is leaving the learner helpless in actual situations, while b) if the learner is put into made-up situations of training, he/she inevitably must be made sure that it is only a fake situation, where responsibilities are suspended. No wonder, that in terms of learning democracy one tends to learn much more from real life experiences. "The medium is the message" as Marshall McLuhan put it about media and communications nearly half a century ago. The light bulb, as he has pointed out, "creates an environment by its mere presence"¹. Accordingly, we would argue, democracy – or the lack of it – shines through actual human encounters day by day, minute by minute, situation by situation. While, on the other hand, there is a far too often overlooked opportunity, that a society, a human community – a culture – may influence democratic and co-operative behavior by thoughtfully arranging space and time for the purpose.

In the conference paper the author aims at interpreting *venues of social interaction* as principal learning spaces for informal learning of democracy, especially in adult life.

Keywords: informal adult learning, life-wide learning, democracy, paternalism, participation, social responsibility, cross-cultural learning.

* Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Institute of Education Department of Andragogy

¹ McLUHAN, M. (1964): *Understanding Media*. London: Routledge.

OUR CONSCIOUSLY ORGANIZED WORLD – THE CONCEPT OF MESS

Recently several expeditions were executed to tidy up the Mount Everest. Several tons of litter – basically an awful amount of thrown away climbing tools – was collected and removed, together with two human corpses. For millions of years, nature was not aware the concepts of 'tidy' and 'untidy', yet it were not our human ancestors, who introduced them to the world for the first time. Waste management – one would say – on the one hand has been invented by various living beings living communal life as ants and termites, while on the other hand by higher species who live in nests or produce excrement. They both do clean up regularly, for sure, to keep their place livable. These facts definitely tell us, that it is not a human concept to manage and treat environment as it should be after our infiltration – for the sake of being able to keep on infiltrating into it and living in it. Yet I would propose that it took humans to invent the concepts of 'order' and 'disorder', as it is a human asset to consciously change the world, 'to humanize nature'. Before the appearance of mankind no place in the Earth could have ever been called 'a mess'.

HOW THINGS ARE TO BE AND HOW THINGS ARE TO BE DONE?

Some animals, as we said above, including us, human beings take the above two questions rather seriously, presumably for the sake of survival. In the present paper we would not deal with the learning and teaching processes of the non-human, animal world, although one could hardly deny, that these processes not only exist, but that they also rather crucial in the animal world as well. We would, for the time being, step one step away from the pre-human, pre-social context, and begin our investigation with the learning processes inherent in the human world, pre-dominantly in adulthood. The reason for paying only very limited attention on childhood learning processes in the present paper is that the focus of our interest is not primarily on educational theory, but on issues of democracy, sovereign personality and social responsibility.

We would not deny, obviously, that children go through a tremendous amount of learning process in their families and in institutions designed to offer them formal education – but, from the point of view of real life situations it is mostly the circumstances, incidents and by-plays which offer them opportunities of learning in the forms of informal – life wide – learning. Traditional school education focuses much more on introducing how things are, rather than on how things are to be done.

In modern times, school education may be evidently much more complex and comprehensive. The present day complexity of formal education is fairly well illustrated by a model prepared by the Educational Bureau of Hong Kong².

² *Basic Education Guideline Booklet 6 – Life-wide Learning. Enriching Learning through Authentic Experiences*, p. 3. With the special permission of use by EDB, Hong Kong.

One can see, that in optimal cases, schools provide support for students not only in gaining knowledge in 'KLAs' (key learning areas) and contributing to their 'physical and aesthetic development', but involve them in 'moral and civic education', and 'community service' just as well as ensuring them 'career related experiences'. This holistic approach of formal education acknowledges the influence of informal learning on the students – the tips of the star, representing the learner, extend into the reality the school and student are both embedded into.

That reality is the sphere of social life a school leaver meets – as he or she becomes a responsible, employable adult³. In *Figure 1*, this sphere – the space around the school-circle – is tagged by the institutions and actors of the Hong Kong scenario.

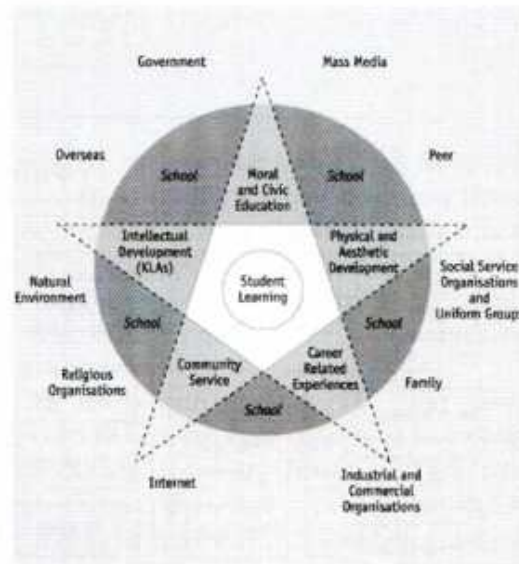


Figure 1.

In their world, a young person (a student) is subject to a whole variety of extramural (non-school) influences from family and peers to a whole social kaleidoscope: social service organizations and uniform groups (boys' scouts to Salvation Army etc.), industrial, commercial and religious organizations, mass media and the internet. One can clearly see the complexity of the concept of life-wide education *Figure 1* represents, and we would be but very glad and satisfied, if all of us would have gone through in our childhood all those five learning experiences listed above, depicted within the school-circle of the Hong Kong model – and those five experiences would have cuddled up harmoniously to the world adjacent to our school activities.

Informal adult learning, in my view, mostly relates and compares new experiences to pre-adult – childhood – school curriculum and experiences, when having left the school the young person steps into a world where he or she is in charge and has to control his or her actions and decisions – together with all their consequences and responsibilities. One cannot say, that the outside world has not been an unfamiliar word to the young school leavers, as it has been around him/her all through his/her formal studies, as underlined by the promoters of the complex concept of life-wide learning, shown in *Figure 2*., on a model worked out again by the Hong Kong Education Bureau:

³ School leavers worldwide can be of age between 14 to 18 and minors till 18 to 21. We are talking about their move into a social sector of adult responsibilities – regardless of varieties of local legal grids.

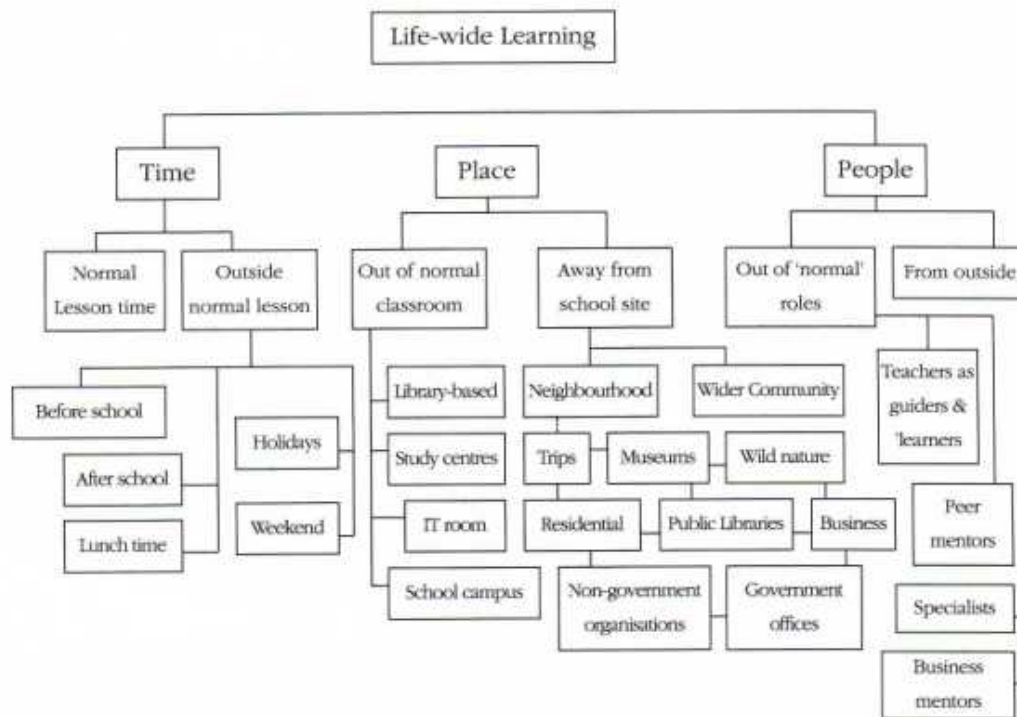


Figure 2.⁴

We show this model to emphasize the idea, that informal learning situations can be considered rather important and influential from the point of view of the formation of the personality of any young person – and that this influence stay with us all our life. When life-wide learning is put into perspective, we can see, that schooling, formal education is but one single source of gaining knowledge and experiences. Children may go to library, to museum, to camps and excursions or visit their friends and talk to others in clubs or discos, and they pick up bits and pieces of information all over – and one should not think we cease to pick up things similarly after we have left school.

In the course of our present discussion, *we take the concept of informal adult learning within the concept of the above sense of life-wide learning.* First we should see the characteristics of informal learning.

⁴ Life-Wide Learning: Extending, Enriching, Enabling, by Stephen, YW YIP, With the special permission of use by EDB, Hong Kong

CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMAL LEARNING

HOW CAN IT HAPPEN?

Informal learning differs from formal learning in *its methods/ways and its situational context*. In terms of methods/ways, we should differentiate between three types of informal learning, *the intentional, the incidental and the unconscious/tacit* ones. We use the expression 'methods/ways' in the knowledge that most of the cases, informal learning by definition is not ruled or guided by 'methods'. We refer to Daniel Schugurensky and John P. Myers, who offer a typology of informal learning, describing, *how informal learning can happen*:

"Informal learning can be organized in three main areas. The first area, known as »self-directed« learning (TOUGH, 1971) or »explicit informal learning« (LIVINGSTONE, 1999), is the result of deliberate learning projects. This type of learning is intentional and conscious. The second area is incidental informal learning, which is unintentional because it was not deliberately pursued in the first place but is conscious in retrospect. The importance of this area for the exploration of informal learning is evident in a study by GEAR ET AL (1994) who report that, in spite of using Tough's concept of »learning projects« to ask about informal learning, 80% of the learning episodes mentioned by their interviewees were not intentionally sought. The third area, known as »tacit informal learning«, relates to the learning acquired through socialization which is usually unplanned and unconscious. This is what POLANYI (1966) described in a book entitled precisely The Tacit Dimension, which can be characterized as »that which we know but cannot tell.«"⁵

David Livingston, quoted by the authors above, gives the following definition:

"Informal learning is any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria. Informal learning may occur in any context outside the pre-established curricula of educative institutions. The basic terms of informal learning (e.g. objectives, content, means and processes of acquisition, duration, evaluation of outcomes, applications) are determined by the individuals and groups that choose to engage in it."⁶

The European Commission is rather straightforward in defining informal learning. In most of the documents released, nothing, but the following definition can be read:

⁵ Informal Civic Learning Through Engagement in Local Democracy: The Case of the Seniors' Task Force of Healthy City Toronto by Daniel Schugurensky and John P. Myers, at http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/legacy/research/edu20/home.html?cms_page=edu20/home.html

⁶ Adults' Informal Learning: Definitions, Findings, Gaps and Future Research By D. W. Livingstone, WALL Working Paper No.21, 2001, Retrieved June 12, 2011

“Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is mostly unintentional from the learner’s perspective.” (CEDEFOP 2009: 74)

This definition seems to be rather close to the term “cognitive process” in psychology.⁷ Thus informal adult learning may occur day by day, minute by minute anywhere, in any way, if we accept the above definition. Any sensation of ours can lead to a cognitive process, therefore to informal learning.

We would add that most of informal learning in childhood is unconscious/tacit, from the early cognitive processes through the acquisition of the first words, including most of the processes of childhood socialization. This is the very reason, why we differentiate between childhood and adult age informal learning. An adult has gone through his/her own processes of socialization and formal schooling, while a child is still within this period of formation. Furthermore, an adult is a responsible member of the society, who enters venues of *Figure 2*, with the rights and responsibilities of a citizen – and he/she enters and encounters more venues and scenarios, than listed in *Figure 2*, for the world of children. Therefore the informality aspect of adult learning may be identical with that of childhood informal learning, but the *locations and situations become extended*.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMAL ADULT LEARNING

WHEN AND WHERE CAN IT HAPPEN?

Looking back to the definition of Daniel Schugurensky and John P. Myers above, we would continue from their statement, that informal learning “can be organized”. It may seem to be somewhat of a contradiction that one speaks about “organized informal learning”. Yet it may happen any time one asks a question. Many of us do not cease to ask questions. So when we ask a question, we organize a potential informal learning situation. It may become a learning situation, or it may not – it depends on whether we get an answer or not. The same chances are open for us minute by minute, as according to that rather lay EU formula said above, informal learning is “learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure.” (Ibid.)

But there is something more in it – may get up, go to the bathroom, wash our face and brush our teeth, then we may dress up and prepare some breakfast – and we may do this day by day, week by week, and during all these maneuvers, we could notice, that one morning is brighter, while the other is darker, our bread

⁷ “An operation that affects mental contents” in the Farlex Thesaurus, of which “cognition” is “the act or process of knowing, perceiving, or remembering” by the Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, 2003 by Saunders, an imprint of Elsevier.

is sometimes fresh and sometimes it is a bit dryish. We would, undoubtedly perceive all this and remember other types of mornings, but from this daily routine we would not really learn much.

Novelty is an indispensable component of learning. Routine is not a source of learning, this is maybe the very division line between gaining skills or some knowledge. For acquiring novelty one needs to meet something different. This leads us to draw up the ways, learning may occur – informal learning in our case. The general cause, therefore, of informal learning is to find ourselves in a new situation or to get new information – and *to realize the novelty of the given situation or information*.

For further discussions we need to specify typical situations, where informal adult learning arises. We propose the following characteristic situations and attributes, which may induce informal adult learning – allowing the fact, that these situations are not necessarily distinct, as they can be characteristics of the same situation as well.

Characteristic informal adult learning situations may occur at:

- facing novelty (1)
- facing difference (2)
- change of place – geographic mobility (3)
- change in social disposition – social mobility (4)
- cross-cultural encounters (5)
- meeting people – in private and 'officially' (6)
- search for knowledge and pleasure – steps towards exploring nature, art, or history⁸ (7)
- personal growth (8)

Novelty (1) is the earlier unknown ingredient of some freshly acquired information. Getting to know it is 5 p.m. is an information which brings no knowledge. Yet novelty may be inherent in any fact and sensation, in any physical or mental encounter. Novelty is the attribute inherent in all seven subsequent characteristic informal learning situations listed above, which makes the situation a learning situation. It is the novelty ingredient of a difference, which makes it worth to remember.

Facing *something different* (2) is the characteristic of sensing a yet un-experienced way of solutions or other features which are therefore unexpected. It has become a must in modernity, no wonder, that one of the most long-lasting quotation from *Monty Python's Flying Circus* goes as "And now for something completely different" – as the genre absurd is based on matching totally non-matching phenomena together and to merge topics into something what was never seen and never heard before. What an amusing way of informal (adult!) learning.

⁸ Sándor STRIKER: Historic Experiences as Decision-influencing Factors of Strategies Concerning Participation in Adult Education in Hungary, *Lecture at the FORIM Meeting, Linz, February 24-25, 2010*

Authors of literature and drama are very good in describing informal learning – and mostly, to much of our good luck, informal adult learning. As a matter of fact, most of world literature and other story-telling is about informal adult learning, and most of mankind's famous tragedies are stories about learning by doing, or rather learning by having done something. It would be far too trivial and cheap to begin with the *Odyssey*, as Odysseus himself has become the embodied professional knowledge-hunter since the age of Enlightenment, and, as a matter of fact, he has known too much to begin with. But his late traveler successors as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver* definitely learned a lot from their everyday – even if somewhat extreme everyday – experiences. Most of the heroes of Jules Verne learn by traveling (under the sea or on the way to the Moon, among others), not to speak about Voltaire's *Candide*.

The above suggestion, that *a definite pattern of informal adult learning is to get to another, earlier unknown geographical place* (3) is strengthened by the historical life and experiences of journeymen – guild wanderers and protestants scholars traveled (from Hungary as well) widely in 17. Century Europe, publishing wonderful books about their experiences, as the excellent *Europica Varietas* (SZEPSI CSOMBOR, M., 1620) or a compilation of knowledge published in Hungarian in Utrecht (!), the *Magyar Encyclopedia* (APÁCZAI CSERE, J., 1653). The combination of travels and informal learning made a similarly deep and long running impact on the Hungarian and Danish societies by the young Count István Széchenyi and Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig, respectively, both of them visiting England and returning home with new knowledge and fresh ideas between the period 1815–1831.

Yet similarly informal learning processes were described by Stendhal in his *The Red and the Black* (1830) and Mark Twain in his *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), but in these stories the heroes' mobility proceeded within their own society up and down, just as the hero of the movie *The Shawshank Redemption* (dir. by Frank Darabont, 1994). Learning ins and outs of a new life brings about new knowledge and revelations to the heroes of these stories, which they would never have gained without the change of their lives. One could quote a whole series of similar stories, which are most of all also centered about the morals and responsibilities⁹ of new lifestyle, so we would propose the second pattern of informal adult learning – which occurs *if one gets to another, earlier unknown social place*. (4)

Still, the above two patterns bear two more factors in common. Both of them can be depicted as *cross cultural encounters*, (5) where informal learning processes are sparked by differences of national cultures or cultures of *differing social strata* ('class culture' as a Marxist approach would have put it), or as sociologist would put it, because of *geographical or social mobility*.

The sixth catalyst of learning novelties in life may occur by *meeting, talking and (inter)acting with people*. (6) Family members, friends and acquaintances may ignite tremendous learning processes and results. Even if meeting them regularly or more or less regularly, personal interactions, joint activities and exchanges of thoughts and ideas represent a potentially immense resource of informal learning

⁹ *The Prince and the Pauper* is seemingly about children, but the moral conflicts and responsibilities they have to go through put them into adult learning situations.

in adulthood as well. Asking questions to others, as noted above, is one of the basic and most unnoticed ways of 'organizing' informal learning situations. When we look onto the stage, we got to realize, that most Shakespearean tragedies develop their plots via informal learning, by participating, doing and asking – in a fatally inappropriate order and manner from the point of view of the heroes and heroines. This leads us to the risky enterprise of engaging ourselves with authorities – *to do business with social institutions i.e. to take part in society* through interactions with representative individuals of the 'establishment' as administrators and officers. There is a continuous interplay between an adult individual and the institutions of the society, again day by day, week by week which can be a routine, but new and new situations may also occur all of which the individual is to cope with and is likely or may learn from. New situations and conflicts may arise by using public transportation or driving one's car to work, doing everyday business at your workplace, in shops, banks, post offices or getting in contact with organizations and authorities via the telephone or through the net. These all can be repetitive, but may bring about good or bad surprises and conclusions, which one has to comprehend and sort out in himself/herself consciously or unconsciously.

We should of course, consider conscious, *on purposely executed and potentially self educational acts* (7) as rather crucial initiatives in the sphere of informal adult learning. Explorers and scientists setting forth for the unknown are keen on learning novelties, just as much as any brave person who opens a book, or visits a theatre, an opera, concert or sits down for a movie etc. – which latter activities are depicted in the earlier quoted EC definition as 'leisure'. In some languages this self education can be expressed with a specific word, as '*Bildung*' in German and '*művelődés*' in Hungarian¹⁰.

Finally, one should not forget *personal growth of the individual*, (8) ageing and illnesses as sources of informal learning. *Changes may happen within the personality* of the individual, leading to self-realizations, contributing to the growth of knowledge – in this case about one's own personality – just as external experiences enrich and widen our scope of knowledge.

INFORMAL ADULT LEARNING IN A PARTICULAR SOCIETY

WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

In the previous chapter we proposed, that sensing novelty and difference is likely to induce informal learning processes. It is, on the other hand, well known, that children growing up in low-stimulus environment develop slower – and reach a lower level of responsibility.

¹⁰ Sándor STRIKER: *A felnőttoktatás, mint kulturális válasz Európában*. (Adult Education as a Cultural Response in Europe) In: Éva SZABOLCS, ed. (2010): *Neveléstudomány – reflexió – innováció*, Gondolat

Yet low-stimulus environment may have its adult casualties as well. Referring to world literature again, we recall some examples of low-stimulated lives, as that of Oblomov, the 19th century hero of I. A. Goncsarov hardly moves around even within his own house through the 550 odd pages novel, or of those shepherds of Zsigmond Móricz, the early 20th century Hungarian novelist in his masterpiece short story *The Barbarians*, who limit their words and expressions to the lowest possible level in the endless *puszta*. The latter end up murdering a fellow-shepherd and his son and dog, with the same apathy as Meursault had committed a murder in Albert Camus' *The Stranger*. These stories were set in rather different environment, but the lack of motivation and monotony made room to the lack of responsibility, indicating that low-stimulus environment is a threat to adults as well – even if most of the times not to the extremes of these literary examples. Having been grown up in an over-controlled paternalistic East-European reality, we considered the above quoted stories endless repetitions as a word rather similar to ours. While, on the other hand, we felt, that some others lived their lives in vibrant cities and faced new challenges day by day, as some lucky citizens of the Western world.

We are to consider, that we human beings live amidst circumstances and conditions of various nature, all furnished by our societies. We were told that our school studies, formal education intended to prepare and enable us to integrate ourselves into social life and to meet everyday expectations – nevertheless we were not quite prepared, that we were to face notions and strategies of others and of all kinds when expected. We were told, we were adults, but *most of the time we were not taken as adults*.

In a paternalistic society we were to see and feel that we were educated at every walk of life. Maybe this made us sensitive to realize, that there were – and still are – informal adult learning providers and even hidden informal adult educators, who from time to time, come out from their official camouflage of a policeman, a green-grocer, a butcher or some hotel receptionist and turn into dedicated and somewhat authoritarian educators.

So we find ourselves time by time in *all kinds of spheres of life-wide learning*. When one grows up in a given society, which may be called a given reality or a culture as well, one usually takes it for granted, that the world is like this. “The last thing the fish notices, is water” – as the English saying goes. Yet school years do not fully prepare us for that reality – and than there are those eight chances, listed above, which duly induce informal adult learning.

SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR INFORMAL LIFE-WIDE ADULT LEARNING

WHO ARE THEY?

An amazing variety of social institutions surround us, which originally were designed and formulated to satisfy our individual biological needs as well as our social needs, as described and formulated by the functionalist cultural anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski¹¹.

Earlier we quoted the concept of life-wide learning in case of school students (see Figure 2.). Here below, even if in a sketchy and rather arbitrary way we try to enlist places, venues, occasions and opportunities in social life, where any of the eight types of informal adult learning may occur. The below list is far from being exhaustive, and yet it is fairly long – and if one goes through it in a silent manner of meditative consideration, one is to admit, that most of us have taken part in informal adult learning sessions at nearly each and every spot of this life-wide curriculum below. Under the first two entries *the hidden informal adult educators* are also enlisted, just as well as a few of the most popular topics (issues) of our real life spontaneous learning 'courses'.

Transportation:

- places: public transportation vehicles, bus stops, stations, roads, highways, roundabouts and traffic lamps, fast lanes (for overtaking or for slow traffic), parking places
- people: traffic managers (drivers, conductors, security personnel), mechanic engineers, designers
- issues: road engineering, management and information, quality, motorway price (tolls), parking prices, highway code, warnings (civil wreaths and memorials)

Built world:

- places: public venues and buildings, roads, pathways, underpass, bridges, railway stations, tram- and bus stations, airports
- people: architects, civil engineers, town/city planners
- issues: security-insecurity, accessibility, rationality-sensibility, pragmatism, emotional and aesthetic pleasure, symbolic messages – Puritanism, wealth, power, communion, alienation, atmosphere

The services sector:

- Public sector
 - Public administration
 - Schools (for parents)
 - Post Office
 - Health care, hospitals, clinics
 - Arts and culture

¹¹ MALINOWSKI, B. (1972): Argonauts of the Western Pacific. In: Baloma, Gondolat

- Private sector
 - health care, hospitals, clinics
 - banks
 - retailers (shops)
 - restaurants
 - hotels
 - tourist agents
 - services
 - arts and culture

Administrative provisions:

- Birth, marriage, death certificates (costs)
- Public information services (access)

Legal frameworks:

- Political provisions
 - Local elections
 - National elections
 - Referenda
- Legal system
 - Civil code
 - Criminal code
 - Constitutional frameworks
 - Court system
 - Civil rights
 - (freedom of speech, gathering, organizing)
 - Alcohol and drug policies
 - Arms and weapon policies
- Tax system
- Labor rights

Welfare provisions:

- Family, child care allowances
- Social benefit
- Unemployment schemes
- Pensions

Communication and traffic frameworks

- Highway code
- Telephone communication regulations and control

Family

- Child and women's' rights (abuse)
- Gender issues

Friends and acquaintances

Meeting places

Media and Internet

Broadcasting provisions

Legal and financial frameworks

Control and the loss of control

PATTERNS OF INFORMAL ADULT LEARNING – DEMOCRACY,
PARTICIPATION VS. PATERNALISM

Finally, we arrived to the main theme of our topic, a rather incumbent one, we would say. It originates in the mid 1970ies, when a young student from Oxford, U.K. arrived to Hungary to do his fieldwork in social anthropology. First he enrolled to learn the language at the Faculty of Liberal Arts (BTK) of ELTE, that is where we met for the first time. Chris Hann spent consecutive periods in Tázlár, then returned to write his PhD, by then at the Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Later he executed fieldwork in Poland, Turkey and China. Presently Prof. Hann is the Director of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle. During the same period I finished my studies at the ELTE, spent a year in the U.K and returned to Hungary taking up a variety of jobs. All through the time we maintained our contact on football pitches, athletic tracks and through irregular correspondence. It is this correspondence which has given the germ of the present paper.

TRAFFIC AND DEMOCRACY

Our correspondence was seized and read by the Hungarian boarder officers at the Hungarian-Czechoslovak boarder in 1982 as Chris Hann headed for Poland in his right hand drive Lada. The boarder officer then warned him to terminate his correspondence with me, as in his opinion I was "not a good person". The reason the officer did not like my letters was a short comparative analysis of road management in Hungary and in the U.K., falling under our present combination of informal adult learning via geographic mobility and cross-cultural encounter in the sphere of 'Transportation' above.

In that letter I explained, that Hungary, with the notion of modernizing her traffic-management system, just introduced a whole series of traffic lamps all over the country. In contrast to that, in the U.K. I experienced a different principle: a countrywide use of roundabouts. In my view, the roundabouts were self-regulatory systems, where the drivers were to decide themselves about yielding and driving, while I labeled the traffic light system as paternalistic, where the drives were given a regulatory tool, which lifted their responsibility. I considered roundabouts to be more democratic, thus characterizing the difference between the two countries. A tragicomic event strengthened my argumentation: a few weeks prior to this analysis a howling ambulance car and an also howling police car hit each other

heavily in a brand new traffic light aided crossing in the southern town of Békéscsaba, Hungary. They both claimed priority as the traffic light was out of order.

It is this very example which has given me the idea that *democracy begins at the level of arranging down to earth social institutions in non-paternalistic ways*. The last three roundabouts in Budapest were abolished by the mid 1970ies. But the phenomenon seems to work as an indicator: I was delighted to see as traveling on Road No5 of Hungary that all high-risk crossings were replaced with roundabouts by 2009!

URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Millions of us live in urban neighborhoods. We are concerned about the crowd, the growing crime, alienation and many of us try to flee, as town centers have become overrun by glass and steel monsters. In many place this means human being are *persona non grata* in these areas. Security personnel makes sure one does not wish to enter a brand new downtown building of that kind, built on the spot of his/her former favorite restaurant. In the following page we can see the old and the new Kálvin Place in the heart of Budapest.



Figure 3. Kálvin Place, 1910 (Postcard)



Figure 4. Kálvin Place, 2010¹²

Urban development, however, is not everywhere against inclusion and participation. In New York City urban planning policies aim at inducing public life since the early 60ies.

“The 1961 Zoning Resolution was a product of its time. It coordinated use and bulk regulations, incorporated parking *requirements and emphasized the creation of open space. It introduced incentive zoning by adding a bonus of extra floor space to encourage developers of office buildings and apartment towers to incorporate plazas into their projects.* In the city’s business districts, it accommodated a new type of high-rise office building with large, open floors of a consistent size.”¹³

¹² <http://www.testcar.hu/hu/news/091027-ujra-atjarhato-budapest-kalvint-ter-auto-m4-metro.html>

¹³ With the special permission of the New York City Department of City Planning, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/zone/zonehis.shtml#1961>

The Trump Tower is one of the well-known examples of the combination of a skyscraper and of public space.



Figure 5. The Trump Tower, NYC¹⁴



Figure 6. The Trump Tower, Ground Floor, First Floor¹⁵

Looking at Figure 6, we can see the result of the NYC urban policies. One can help, it seems *participation* by providing inclusive human spaces. We may formulate, that human space is socio-political space: society is materialized as an addition in human space: the three dimensions are extended with a fourth and fifth dimension: *time and social content*.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Finally we would give an example of non-material institutions. Active citizenship is a growing issue in the EU, and the author of the present paper has been invited to the University of Mikkeli, Finland for a weeklong training in this topic. We designed a test on public trust for the 300 Finnish graduate students. Regarding the question on trust in occupations the lowest value came out for politicians. Yet it was astonishing to see, that over *95 percent of the 300 Mikkeli students participated both at the local and at the nationwide elections*. Informal questioning of our own students at the Andragogy BA courses came well under 20 percent at last year's general elections.

¹⁴ http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/North_America/United_States/Northeast/New_York/Manhattan/photo259631.htm

¹⁵ <http://www.daagis.net/foto2.htm>

CONCLUSIONS

We would not go further in illustrating, that social institutions – symbolic and actual social space – can be designed and managed by societies in quite different ways. By designing and managing social institutions and spaces we design patterns of informal lessons, and, similarly, when others design social institutions and spaces, we are given patterns of informal learning. These patterns are informal adult learning situations, which arise anyway, and citizens may learn of equal opportunities, fairness, freedom of choice by their own experience, thus they would take responsibilities. On the other hand they may experience paternalistic (arbitrary) handling, where they have no independent choices and decisions, and they feel they are either lucky or unlucky, and they have to be 'clever' to overcome these situations against the others. These latter ones become less active as they feel to be subjects to superimposed guardians.

In terms of growth and ageing informal learning – which includes life-wide learning – seems to have a re-occurring nature within life-long learning, in periods we would put into three phases as follows:

- Learning by moving/growing – childhood (socialization)
- Learning by learning – school-going age (formal learning)
- Learning by doing – adulthood (taking social responsibilities)

The present paper suggests, that in social life we have the opportunity as well as the responsibility to observe the circumstances and patterns of informal adult learning we create and form along those aforementioned eight types of informal learning situations for each other, and that we inevitably learn from these patterns and from each other in all walks of life, developing our personalities as a reflection to these conditions built by ourselves.

REFERENCES

- CEDEFOP (2009): *European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal education*. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4054_en.pdf (Retrieved June 10, 2011)
- European Commission (2011): DG Education and Culture. http://ec.europa.eu/education/life-long-learning-policy/doc52_en.htm (Retrieved June 10, 2011)
- GEAR, J.–MCINTOSH, A.–SQUIRES, G. (1994): *Informal Learning in the Professions*. University of Hull: School of Education, Hull.
- LIVINGSTONE, D. (1999): Exploring the icebergs of adult learning: findings of the first Canadian survey of informal learning practices, *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 3: 49–72.
- LIVINGSTONE, D. W. (2001): Adults' Informal Learning: Definitions, Findings, Gaps and Future Research, *WALL Working Paper No.21*, <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/2735/2/21adultsinformallearning.pdf> (Retrieved June 12, 2011)
- MALINOWSKI, B. (1972): *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. In: Baloma: Gondolat.

New York City Department of City Planning.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/zone/zonehis.shtml#1961> (Retrieved June 13, 2011)

POLANYI, M. (1966): *The Tacit Dimension*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.

SCHUGURENSKY, D.–MYERS, J. P.: *Informal Civic Learning Through Engagement in Local Democracy: The Case of the Seniors' Task Force of Healthy City Toronto*.

http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/legacy/research/edu20/home.html?cms_page=edu20/home.html (Retrieved June 12, 2011)

STEPHEN, Y. W. YIP: *Life-Wide Learning: Extending, Enriching, Enabling*. With the special permission of use by EDB, Hong Kong.

http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/.../2.8.4lw_3e.do (Retrieved June 12, 2012)

STRIKER, S. (2010): A felnőttoktatás mint kulturális válasz Európában. In: SZABOLCS, É. (ed.): *Neveléstudomány–reflexió–innováció*. Budapest: Gondolat. 52–70.

STRIKER, S. (2010): *Historic Experiences as Decision-influencing Factors of Strategies Concerning Participation in Adult Education in Hungary*. Lecture at FORIM Meeting, Linz, February 24–25, 2010.

TOUGH, A. (1971): *The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Practice in Adult Learning*. Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.