
Gender and adult education in the era of social and cultural changes: (new) risks and challenges

First Call for Papers

Conference of the ESREA Research Network on

Gender and Adult Education

Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, University of Algarve, Portugal,

15th to 17th July 2021

Introduction

In the era of globalization, a significant number of countries in the world experience similar social and cultural phenomena at three basic levels: macro-social and cultural changes, changes in individual identities and shifts in the area of socialization and education. Bauman¹ emphasizes that globalization both divides and unites, leading to different living conditions for **entire populations**. In postmodernity, freedom of movement and mobility as a factor shaping social divisions become the highest value. According to the author, the progressing spatial segregation, separation and exclusion are a part of the globalization process. As a consequence, social inequalities and conflicts increase, also on the basis of nationality or race, as well as migration crises appear. In addition to the globality of migrations, extremely important trends are the intensification, diversification of migration movements due to their source, feminization and politicization.

People are increasingly experiencing cultural differences. Despite the processes of levelling life opportunities of people from different social groups in democratic societies, social antagonisms still exist, which inhibit the dialogue and development of their members. Using a gender perspective of analyses, men and women sometimes experience different challenges which are not new due to its patriarchal roots but may appear with distinct configurations and with weak visibility.

Postmodern theorists emphasize that the process of change is characterized, on the one hand by a progressive weakening of traditional social bonds and coercion, and on the other hand by an increase in the space of personal freedom. The desire for autonomy is a basic life experience nowadays. Human biographies become 'self-reflective', as Beck² argues, transformed from biographies designated by society into biographies **created by individuals**. Such a change requires people to acquire the ability to think about themselves in the categories of creators of their own lives: planning, adapting to change, initiative, determination, flexibility and resistance to frustration. Contemporary people are forced to constantly make choices and make decisions independently; they must lead their own independent lives, freeing themselves from granted family ties, referring to new rules. However, the 'biography of choice' may turn out to be a 'biography of risk', because behind the facade of success there may be the danger of failure, for which, by taking control of their own life, people will have to take full responsibility.

¹ Z. Bauman (1998). *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. New York: Columbia University Press.

² U. Beck (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

An integral part of globalization as well as social and cultural changes is the growing importance of mass media and pop culture. A **socialization and inculturation shift** are observed, which means the loss of educational influence by the family, school and other traditional socialization agencies to mass culture (mass media, advertisements, fashion). Identity is shaped mainly by popular culture and the ideology of consumption, and to a lesser extent by national and state values. The media become the main source of individual's life experiences. Transferring a large part of social activity to the Internet and to the media creates a risk of being influenced by dominating discourses and manipulation. A big threat to the development of contemporary individual is 'post-truth' (a conceptual category declared in 2016 by *Oxford Dictionaries* as the international word of the year), which means the phenomenon relating to circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than emotional appeals³.

Changes on these three levels are a big challenge for adult education, in which there is a shift from the high importance of formal education towards the growing importance of non-formal and informal education, independent and incidental learning, often unorganized and unsystematic⁴.

The globalization trends and neoliberalist values seem to counteract the intellectual and political commitments of feminism which appeals to a collective desire of changing society, according to the interests of all women and all men, rather than fostering individual competition, meritocracy or many other principles that may weaken solidarity, interdependence and the sense of living in a common world. Following this, we agree with Funk⁵, that it is urgent to discuss "which policies are the best feminist policies, what issues and forms of democracy need to be emphasized, what compromises are needed in the fight for gender justice and against neoliberalism". The field of adult education shouldn't ignore such a discussion and theory and research may offer valuable tools for male and female adults to face (new) risks and challenges that may arise from current trouble times.

Questions that arise and which we want to deal with during the conference concern the following issues:

- How, in the face of social and cultural changes of the present day, do women and men function in the family, on the labour market, in local communities, peer/friendly groups, and how can education help them understand and adapt to these changes as well as develop their 'biography of choice'?
- How does adult education in its three types meet the needs and educational expectations of contemporary women and men who are affected by migration crisis, religious conflicts, social inequalities, radical movements, post-truth politics and fake news?
- In what spaces of women and men's lives is the context of the above-mentioned social and cultural changes revealed, and how does gender differentiate the life strategies and educational choices of women and men as a response to the challenges of contemporary world?
- How (and if) (new) risks and challenges of current times affect gender social order, gender roles and norms and which are the implications of these potential changes for adult education practices and research?

³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-37995600>

⁴ J. Ostrouch-Kaminska & C. C. Vieira (2015). *Private World(s). Gender and Informal Learning of Adults*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. Link: <https://brill.com/view/title/37392>

⁵ N. Funk (2013). Contra Fraser on Feminism and Neoliberalism, *Hypatia*, 28 (1), p. 194.

Call for papers

The abstract should be maximum 500 words long and include a title and 4 keywords. Please send a separate file with the author(s) name(s), institutional affiliation and contact details, indicating which authors are going to be present at the conference.

All abstracts should be submitted by email to aalmeida@ualg.pt (António Fragoso) and svaladas@ualg.pt (Sandra Valadas) by 15 March 2021. Acceptance of papers will be confirmed by 30th March 2021.

Conference Fees

- ESREA members: 120 €
- Non-ESREA members: 170 €
- PhD Students: 50 €

Conference fee includes: conference materials, lunches, coffee-breaks, a light dinner (15th October) and the book of the conference.

Conference Book: Authors will be invited to submit their texts to become a part of a book, which will be edited after the conference via a double peer reviewed process.

Payment Method

Payment details will be available in the second call for papers and in the conference website.

ESREA Bursaries

ESREA offers up to three bursaries of up to 300 € each for PhD students attending the conference, provided they contribute with a paper. To be eligible to apply, students need to be ESREA members (individual or institutional membership). PhD students should declare their willingness to apply when sending the final version of paper. In this case, the email should be addressed to aalmeida@ualg.pt / svaladas@ualg.pt, but also to Joanna Ostrouch-Kamińska (joanna.ostrouch@uwm.edu.pl) and Cristina C. Vieira (vieira@fpce.uc.pt).

Students are to use the bursary money in expenses related to this conference (accommodation, flight, etc.) up to the limit of 300 €. ESREA will refund these expenses against the presentation of receipts.

Important dates

Dead-line	Action	Additional Comments
15 March 2021	Submission of abstracts	Send to aalmeida@ualg.pt (António Fragoso) and svaladas@ualg.pt (Sandra Valadas)
30 March 2021	Acceptance of abstracts confirmed	
28 May 2021	Registration	Registration via the conference web page
15-17 July 2021	Conference	
30 September 2021	Submission of chapters to Book	Further instructions will be given during the conference

Registration

Please look for the registration form in the webpage of the conference (website address available in the second call for papers)

Scientific Committee

Joanna Ostrouch-Kamińska (University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland)

Cristina Vieira (University of Coimbra, Portugal)

António Fragoso (University of Algarve, Portugal)

Sandra Valadas (University of Algarve, Portugal)

Barbara Merrill (University of Warwick, UK)

Maja Maksimovic (University of Belgrade, Serbia)

Organising Committee

Liliana Paulos, Luana Muchacho, Andreia Oliveira, Bruno Sousa, Sandra Valadas, António Fragoso (University of Algarve)

About ESREA

ESREA is a European scientific society. It was established in 1991 to provide a European-wide forum for all researchers engaged in research on adult education and learning and to promote and disseminate theoretical and empirical research in the field. The European Society for Research on the Education of Adults promotes and disseminates theoretical and empirical research on the education of adults and adult learning in Europe through research networks, conferences and publications.

ESREA provides an important space for the (re)definition of adult education and learning in relation to research, theory, policy and practice to be reflected upon and discussed. A significant part of the periodic scientific debates is made through the meetings organised by ESREA research networks. ESREA also organised a triennial conference – the next will be in 2019, September – and runs the European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of the Adults (RELA - <https://www.rela.ep.liu.se/>). To learn more about ESREA, please follow the link: <https://www.esrea.org/>

The ESREA Research Network – Gender and Adult Education

This network aims to offer an opportunity for researchers interested in adult education and gender topics from all over Europe to enhance their understanding and their reflections within an international perspective. The network performs a crucial role in giving visibility and developing intellectual debates on the role of gender in adult education. Reports of research are discussed in terms of their theoretical aspects such as gendered learning, gender in higher education, gendered biographies, masculinities-femininities, gender in adult training, gender and informal learning, but also in terms of their philosophical and methodological dimensions. The network meets every two years.

The first two conferences of the Network were held in Bochum (Germany, 1999) and Geneva (Switzerland, 2001). The third meeting took place in Wroclaw (Poland, 2004) as an ESREA post-conference seminar, and next ones were organized in Geneva (Switzerland, 2005), Olsztyn (Poland, 2007), Hull (Great Britain, 2009), Montpellier (France, 2011), Coimbra (Portugal, 2013), Belgrade (2015), and Koblenz (2017). As the results of those meetings and discussions six books were published:

- Dybbroe, B., & Ollagnier, E. (Eds.) (2003). *Challenging gender in lifelong learning: European perspectives*. Copenhagen: Roskilde University Press.
- Ostrouch, J., & Ollagnier, E. (Eds.) (2008). *Researching Gender in Adult Learning*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Publishing;
- Ostrouch-Kamińska, J., Fontanini, C., & Gaynard, S. (Eds.) (2012). *Considering Gender in Adult Learning and in Academia: (In)Visible Act*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Naukowe DSW.
- Ostrouch-Kamińska, J., & Vieira, C. C. (Eds.) (2015). *Private World(s). Gender and Informal Learning of Adults*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Maksimović, M., Ostrouch-Kamińska, J., Popović, K., & Bulajić, A. (Eds.) (2016). *Contemporary Issues and Perspectives on Gender Research in Adult Education*, Belgrade: IPA-ESREA-AES.
- Endepohls-Ulpe, M. & Ostrouch-Kamińska, J. (Eds.) (2019). *Gender – Diversity – Intersectionality (New) Perspectives in Adult Education*. German: Waxmann. ISBN 978-3-8309-3883-5.

The University of Algarve

The University of Algarve is a young Portuguese public Higher Education Institution located in the southern region of Portugal, the Algarve, having three *campi* in Faro and one *campus* in Portimão. With about 8.000 students, including over 1.600 graduate students, the University of Algarve has teaching and research as its core activities in different scientific areas: science and technology, management and economics, natural sciences, social sciences, health, medicine and biomedicine. The University of Algarve operates 55 undergraduate and 97 postgraduate courses (72 master's and 25 doctoral programmes), with about 700 permanent teaching and research staff who developed a significant number of research projects. Among its faculty and alumni activities, the University of Algarve has well-established research centres in several fields such as marine sciences, biomedicine, electronics, chemistry, arts and communication and social sciences.

Research Centre on Adult Education and Community Intervention - CEAD

Created in 2020 and financed by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), this is the first Portuguese research centre dedicated to this field. CEAD activities will focus: *i*) the processes of innovation and adult education research both in the European and Portuguese context; *ii*) the processes of communicating and disseminating our findings, both within the scientific community and society; *iii*) building closer relationships with the civil society institutions that act in adult education, in Portugal. It is very important for us to create an environment adequate for the less experienced researchers to integrate new networks and have opportunities to go forward in their professional careers. E-mail: cead@ualg.pt