

VOL. 16_ISSUE 1_2020

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACTION RESEARCH



Verlag Barbara Budrich

ISSN 1861-1303

IJAR

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACTION RESEARCH

Volume 16, 2020

ISSN: 1861-1303 | ISSN Online: 1861-9916

Editors

Olav Eikeland (OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway)

Richard Ennals (Kingston University, London, UK)

Werner Fricke (Institute for Regional Cooperation, Wieren, Germany)

Miren Larrea (Orkestra, Basque Institute of Competitiveness, Spain)

Øyvind Pålshaugen (Work Research Institute, Oslo, Norway)

Emil Sobottka (Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (Pucrs), Porto Alegre, Brazil)

Danilo Streck (editor-in-chief, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, São Leopoldo, Brazil)

Editorial Committee

Dr. Tuoño Alasoini (Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation, Helsinki, Finland)

Prof. Oguz Babüroglu (Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey)

Prof. Davydd J. Greenwood (Cornell University, New York, USA)

Prof. Bjørn Gustavsen (Work Research Institute, Oslo, Norway)

Prof. Marianne Kristiansen (Aalborg University, Denmark)

To submit relevant articles, please contact

Dr. Danilo R. Streck

Rua Pastor Rodolfo Saenger, 144, Bairro Jardim América, 93035-110 São Leopoldo-RS, Brazil

dstreck@unisinos.br

International Advisory Committee

Prof. Bjørn Asheim (University of Stavanger, Norway)

Prof. Jean M. Bartunek (Boston College, USA)

Prof. Alfonso Torres Carillo (Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Bogotá, Colombia)

Prof. John Forester (Cornell University, New York, USA)

Prof. Francesco Garibaldi (University of Bologna, Italy)

Prof. Kenneth J. Gergen (Swarthmore College, USA)

Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Hans Joas (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany)

Thomas McCarthy (Northwestern University, Evanston/Chicago, USA)

Prof. Indira J. Parikh (Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India)

Prof. John Puckett (University of Pennsylvania, USA)

Robert Putnam (Action Design LLC, Newton, USA)

Prof. Maria Ozanira da Silva e Silva (Universidade Federal do Maranhão, Brazil)

Prof. Michel Thiollent (Universidade do Grande Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

© Verlag Barbara Budrich GmbH, Opladen, Berlin, Toronto

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written permission of Barbara Budrich Publishers. Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages. You must not circulate this journal in any other binding or cover and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Publisher

Verlag Barbara Budrich GmbH, Stauffenbergstr. 7, D-51379 Leverkusen, Germany

ph +49 (0)2171.79491.50 – fx +49 (0)2171.79491.69 – info@budrich.de

www.budrich.eu – www.budrich-journals.com

Subscription

IJAR is published three times per annum. Subscription rates are per annum and include VAT.

All prices and rates as well as all issues (archives), downloads (PDF) and links to our online shop can be found here:

<https://ijar.budrich-journals.com>

Jacket illustration by Bettina Lehfeldt, Kleinmachnow, Germany – www.lehfeldtgraphic.de

Printed in Europe on acid-free paper by paper & tinta, Warsaw

Contents

Editorial	2
<i>Miren Estensoro and Danilo Streck</i>	
 Bridging between Action Research Communities: a Pathway to Connectivity	5
<i>Patricia Canto-Farachala and Miren Estensoro</i>	
 Another social research is possible: from the collaboration between researchers and social movements	23
<i>Alfonso Torres Carrillo</i>	
 Workplace Innovation Programmes: bridging research and policymaking	40
<i>Egoitz Pomares</i>	
 Systematisation of Experiences: New paths to academic work in universities	62
<i>Oscar Jara Holliday</i>	
 Action research and the problem of the single case	75
<i>Bjørn Gustavsen (with Introduction by Richard Ennals)</i>	

Editorial

This special issue is intended as a contribution to the theme “Bridging in Action Research” to be discussed in the *V Symposium of the International Journal of Action Research* to be hosted by Orkestra, Basque Institute of Competitiveness at Deusto University, in San Sebastian (Spain), on 1st and 2nd October, 2020. The theme is inspired by the concept of Zubigintza, which is the name of the action research laboratory in Orkestra. In the Basque language, it means “building bridges”.

Needless to say, building bridges is a tremendous challenge at a time of walls and fences that divide communities and countries; of ideological polarisations that separate the “good” and the “bad”; of prejudices that harm mostly the ones that lack resources for defending themselves. Building bridges is a particular challenge for action research, which is committed to produce knowledge with people in order to promote changes in their lives, organisations and communities. It is a research practice driven by values of democratic participation and social justice.

The five articles presented in this special issue deal with different types of bridges, with different agents that participate in building them, and with different social, political and cultural contexts. The contributions from Europe and Latin America provide an interesting panorama of possibilities for action research or other participatory research methodologies as important tools for connecting and engaging people and institutions in producing transformative knowledge.

Patricia Canto-Farachala and Miren Estensoro propose bridging between different action research communities as a pathway to connectivity. Bridging is defined as a dialogue that takes place in spaces that bring together different action research communities, where connectivity can occur. Connectivity, in this sense, becomes a criterion for external validity of action research that focuses on the workability of new knowledge in other contexts. Based on comparative case studies, the authors present and discuss the potential of connectivity: as distinct from transferability, enhancing mutual qualification of work in two action research communities: one based in Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness, a research institute in the Basque Country (Spain) and the other in Praxis, a capacity-building research institute in Rafaela (Argentina). The authors argue that one step in the way of maximising action research potential to address the complex global challenges of our time is to strengthen ties among different action research communities.

The second article, by Alfonso Torres Carrillo, analyses the relationship between higher education institutions, researchers, and social movements in Colombia based on two experiences. The first one is the study with peasant movements from the Atlantic Coast led by Orlando Fals Borda in the 1970s and which originated Participatory Action Research. The second is a recent project conducted by a research group at the *Universidad Pedagógica Nacional* focused on the systematisation of practices with popular organisations. According to the author there is a growing trend of collaboration between academia and social movements, sometimes fomented through the formalisation of the relationship between researchers and social organisations with the creation of observatories and networks. The article shows us that this kind of bridging is not an automatic process, but it is developed through decades within the conflictual Colombian society.

Another context of bridging is presented by Egoitz Pomares, who in his article reviews the concept of the Workplace Innovation Programmes as a public policy tool supported by research. The article analyses different approaches and strategies for policymaking, aiming at better understanding of how programmes operate. The premise is that programmes have undergone a transformation through changes in the design and implementation methods, and thus there is the need for frameworks for the identification of criteria that favour a better understanding of how they operate. The authors identifies how programmes can be useful bridges to connect, through action research in working life, a great variety of knowledge in favour of working life reform.

Oscar Jara Holliday presents *sistematización de experiencias* as a proposal for the production of knowledge about and based on educational, organisational and social and community practices. In this article he argues that *sistematización de experiencias* of University Extension can help strengthen the transforming commitment of the university work, and contribute to the production of academic knowledge fed by the wealth of economic, social, political and cultural reality in which the University is inserted. Based on the practice with the University of Costa Rica and others, there are presented concrete steps to develop *sistematización de experiencias* within the university. Jara points out that through *sistematización de experiencias* paths have been opened to achieve the always wanted inter or transdisciplinarity in academic work, and also the articulation of the dimensions of researching, teaching and extension. In other words, a complex set of bridge building processes are mobilised in this process.

The fifth article is a reprint of Bjørn Gustavsen's seminal article "Action research and the problem of the single case". The main argument is that the idea is not to replace the single case with a number of cases but to create or support social movements, i.e., a series of events that are linked to each other, and where the meaning and construction of each event is part of a broader stream of events, and not a self-sufficient element in an aggregate. In the Introduction to the paper, Richard Ennals reminds us that for Gustavsen national programmes were "waves", intended to stimulate social movements and bring about sustainable change; and that the action researcher functions as an "active particle", whether in a project or a programme.

There are bridges, as Richard Ennals provocatively reminds us when introducing Gustavsen's article, which were there all the time, and that it is up to us to use them. But as we saw in the papers in this issue, building bridges can be demanding work. Either having been

there or as projects, we are in need of bridges that connect us among ourselves as researchers and peoples, but at the same time we need bridges that connect us to a more just future, socially and environmentally. Action research, as the articles have shown, has much to contribute.

Finally, in the name of the team of editors of the *International Journal of Action Research*, we thank the contributors to this issue and invite the readers to join forces in building bridges.

Miren Estensoro
Danilo R. Streck
Co-editors of this special issue

Bridging between Action Research Communities: A Pathway to Connectivity

Patricia Canto-Farachala and Miren Estensoro

Abstract

The dialogic essence of Action Research (AR) poses a challenge of scope when attempting to achieve large-scale change. One way of addressing said challenge is through connectivity, an approach to the external validity of action research that focuses on the workability of new knowledge in other contexts. In this paper we propose bridging between different action research (AR) communities as a pathway to connectivity. We identify the conditions that facilitate connectivity in bridging spaces between different AR communities, and show that change can ripple beyond the group where AR takes place, maintaining its contextual nature. Our research method is comparative case studies based on semi-structured interviews with two AR communities: one in Europe and the other in Latin America.

Keywords: action research, connectivity, validity, bridging, action research communities

Los espacios de encuentro entre diferentes comunidades de investigación acción pueden ser un camino hacia la conectividad

Resumen

La naturaleza dialógica de la Investigación Acción (IA) supone un desafío cuando se trata de lograr un cambio a gran escala. Una forma de abordar dicho desafío es a través de la conectividad, un enfoque de la validez externa de la IA orientado a la viabilidad, en la práctica, de conocimiento nuevo en otros contextos. En este documento proponemos el concepto de espacio de encuentro entre diferentes comunidades de IA como un camino hacia la conectividad. Identificamos las condiciones que facilitan la conectividad en dichos espacios de encuentro entre diferentes comunidades de IA y mostramos que el cambio puede extenderse más allá del grupo donde tiene lugar el proceso de IA, manteniendo su naturaleza contextual. Nuestro método de investigación consiste en estudios de caso comparativos basados en entrevistas semiestructuradas a dos comunidades de IA: una en Europa y la otra en América Latina.

Palabras clave: investigación acción, conectividad, validez, espacio de encuentro, comunidades de investigación acción

1. Introduction

In the current era of Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 lies an opportunity for transformative change that calls for relational, collaborative learning processes with experiments to provoke future learning (Bradbury, H., Waddell, S., O'Brien, K., Apgar, M., Teehankee, B., & Fazey, I., 2019). Indeed, action research is well placed to contribute to address some of the world's most pressing challenges. First, because the aim of action research is not to examine reality, but to change it (Nicholas & Hathcoat, 2014) and, second, because action research has an intrinsic transformational pedagogical dimension (Streck, 2014).

However, in order to play a transformative role at a wider scale, action research faces a challenge of scope. Said challenge is directly linked to its dialogical essence which takes place in small groups. The work carried out by Gustavsen (1992; 1996; 2003; 2014) on working life in Scandinavia and by Burns (2007; 2014) who proposes learning architectures able to involve many people in interlocking inquiry processes, are examples of approaches that try to address this challenge.

In this paper we approach the issue from a different perspective. We start with the concept of connectivity, proposed by Karlsen & Larrea (2014) as a measure of external validity of action research. Through connectivity, researchers engage with researchers and practitioners who did not participate in the context of application where the knowledge was created, in order to enhance the workability of said knowledge in other contexts. It therefore extends the learning process beyond the group in which the action research process took place.

Specifically, we propose bridging between different AR communities as a pathway to connectivity. We define bridging as a dialogue that takes place in spaces that bring together different AR communities, where connectivity can occur. We argue however, that connectivity does not occur automatically, but is dependent on several conditions. Our research question is therefore: What conditions facilitate connectivity in bridging between different AR communities?

In order to identify what those conditions are, we analyse the bridging spaces that exist between the AR communities working in two different research institutes: Orkestra-Basque Country (Spain) and Praxis-Rafaela (Argentina). In so doing, we illustrate how connectivity as a measure of external validity occurs in practice, and how it can help action research to play a transformative role at a wider scale.

The paper is divided into 6 sections. Following this introduction, the second section presents a review of the discussion in the literature on validity and connectivity in AR. The third section explains the research method followed; namely comparative case studies based on semi-structured interviews with the two different AR communities that share bridging spaces. The fourth section describes the cases and their different bridging spaces. The fifth section discusses the case, and identifies the conditions that facilitate connectivity in bridging spaces. The sixth section concludes the paper with final reflections.

2. Bridging between AR communities as a pathway to connectivity

The concept of validity, together with reliability and generalisation are the backbone of the scientific method. The three concepts – which Kvale (1995) calls the scientific holy trinity –, were developed in traditional quantitative research and fit well with physical experiments. However, social systems are characterised by greater uncertainty and unpredictability, and different repetitions of an action research study are unlikely to throw up identical results (Dick, 2014). Nonetheless, all research, irrespective of its epistemological or ontological assumptions, is expected to adequately depict what was researched, and action research (AR) has developed different approaches to doing so.

Pragmatic AR for instance, focuses on the relevance of the research outcome for practitioners (Dick, 2014). Indeed, Greenwood & Levin (2007) identify two main criteria for validity in action research. First, workability, that needs to show that the action research process resulted in a solution to the problem it addressed. Second, credibility, which can be internal and external. Internal credibility needs to determine whether participants in the process connect with the story being told about the process, or the conceptual frameworks that emerge from it. This can be done in workshops where researchers share their systematised lessons from the process with participants.

External credibility, on the other hand, needs to determine whether those who did not participate in the process consider that both the process and the results are credible. In academia, this is normally done by peers in conferences and in the processes that precede the publication of papers, books and book chapters. An alternative to these moments in time interactions among researchers can be found in the concept of connectivity (See Table 1).

Table 1. Validity in AR for territorial development

	Internal (for participants in the context of application where the concept or framework was developed)	External (for others, either researchers or practitioners, who did not participate in the context of application where the concept or framework was developed)
It makes sense	Internal credibility	External credibility/transferability
It has been applied in reflection processes in concrete actions	Workability	Connectivity

Source: Adapted from Karlsen & Larrea (2014, p. 179)

Connectivity is a dialogical approach to the transferability of research results, and is concerned with the workability of new concepts and frameworks that emerge from AR processes in other contexts (Karlsen & Larrea, 2014). Transferability is, an influential concept in the social sciences developed by Lincoln & Guba (1985) that claims that due to the specific nature of qualitative research, generalisability is the responsibility of those researchers and practitioners who decide to use the concepts and frameworks that emerge in one context, in a different one.

The main difference between transferability and connectivity is that the former is based on one-way communication, and the latter on dialogue. While transferability requires very

little effort on the part of researchers to reach a larger number of readers (i.e. distributing more printed or digital copies of books and reports) connectivity requires their direct engagement with others. That is why connectivity cannot substitute transferability, only complement it (Karlsen & Larrea, 2014).

The concept of connectivity broadens AR's focus, which has mostly addressed interaction between action researchers and stakeholders, to include interaction between action researchers themselves (Canto-Farachala & Larrea, 2020). It is therefore a proposal to validate new knowledge in practice with peers, following the dialogical principles of AR. As mentioned earlier, we argue that connectivity can bring AR's transformative role beyond the group to a wider scale, and we propose bridging between different AR communities as a pathway to connectivity.

In the context of this paper, we define bridging as a dialogue that takes place in spaces that bring together different AR communities. We argue that bridging does not automatically lead to connectivity, since making the concepts and frameworks developed in one context workable in another context, depends on certain conditions. Indeed, power relations, illustrated, for instance, in the prevalence of Northern epistemologies over Southern epistemologies in academia (de Sousa Santos, 2015), or conflict and competition among AR communities may act against connectivity.

3. Research method

The research method is what researchers do to address their research question (Coghlan & Gaya, 2014). In this paper the method used is comparative case studies. In contrast to single case studies in which interest is in the case itself, comparative case studies focus on a phenomenon of which the case is an example (Thomas, 2011). The choice of case studies should be suitable to answer the research question (Yin, 2009) and when doing comparative case studies prior knowledge by the researcher is important: "the key to this research would be to drill deeper, to find out more and undertake more searching and analysis of the culture of the two environments" (Thomas, 2011, p. 141).

In this paper the unit of analysis are two different AR communities in which bridging occurs. As explained earlier, our objective is to identify the conditions that facilitate connectivity in bridging spaces between different AR communities. One of the AR communities is based in Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness, a research institute in the Basque Country (Spain) created with the mission of doing change-oriented research in its territory. The other AR community is based in Praxis, a capacity-building research institute in Argentina, created to improve the development of its territory, Rafaela. We (the authors) are part of the AR community based in Orkestra and since bridging occurs between our community and the AR community in Praxis, we have prior knowledge of both cases. We also have a close connection to them and access to key participants, which is another criterion cited in the literature for the choice of case studies (Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2009).

As a method for data collection we triangulated semi-structured interviews, secondary data and our own experience. We held a total of 14 interviews. The interview calendar and the list of secondary data used are found in Annex I and II. The larger number of interviews

in Praxis, compared to the number of interviews in Orkestra is explained by two facts. First, the Praxis AR community is larger. Second, the Orkestra AR community was cut shorter by leaving us, the authors out.

Before holding the interviews, we identified the conditions that facilitate connectivity in bridging spaces between different AR communities. This exercise was based on our experience as part of the AR community in Orkestra and interacting with the AR community in Praxis. Said conditions were shared during the interviews. We later adjusted them to incorporate the views of the interviewees.

The interview design followed Kvale (1996) who states that interviews can be seen as a social construction in which the interview and the data analysis are part of the same process of knowledge production and not as a method for extracting data from interviewees. In other words: as “a conversation where the data arise in an interpersonal relationship, coauthored and coproduced by the interviewer” (Kvale, 1994, p. 156). The semi-structured interviews developed along a list of issues prepared beforehand (Thomas, 2011) and they were conducted with a flexible approach, changing the order or the wording of the questions to adapt them to the answers received. All the interviews were taped upon consent granted by the interviewees. We went back to audios and the notes taken when we analysed the interviews.

The interviews developed along the following sequence. First, we explained the objective of the interview and the research question. We then introduced the concept of connectivity in terms of the validity discussion in AR and then the concept of bridging between different AR communities as a pathway to connectivity. We then asked interviewees: (1) to identify bridging spaces in which they had participated; (2) to think of evidence of connectivity in said spaces, and (3) to reflect on the conditions that facilitate or inhibit connectivity in spaces in which bridging occurs. Before ending the interview, we shared the conditions that we had identified based on our own experience in bridging spaces between both communities. We asked interviewees if they made sense, and if there was anything they would add, eliminate or change.

As a way of analysing the interviews we followed a thematic content analysis (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013). In our case, the analysis involved 4 main steps: (i) reading the whole interview to get a sense of the whole; (ii) searching for themes with broader patterns of meaning; (iii) defining and naming themes; and (iv) the write-up, creating a coherent narrative with includes quotes from the interviewees.

4. The cases: Orkestra and Praxis

4.1. AR communities in Orkestra and Praxis

Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness is a research institute based in the University of Deusto, which is rooted in the Basque Country (Spain). The University was founded by the Jesuits in 1886 and has two campuses, one in Bilbao and the other in San Sebastian. Orkestra was created as a university development unit in 2006, so its status is different from traditional university departments. Its board of directors is made up of university authorities, but also public (city, provincial and regional governments) and private (firms) actors.

At the time of writing this paper (2019), the Institute was made up of 38 professionals, 19 of them PhDs.

Orkestra has the stated mission of strengthening the Basque Country's competitive advantages in order to achieve higher levels of socioeconomic growth that improve the quality of life of its citizens. This change-oriented research approach that includes interaction with other territorial agents was conceptualised as "transformative research".

The process of defining a shared meaning of what the Institute would understand by transformative research, was not free from tensions (Larrea, 2019; Canto-Farachala, 2019). There was a division between those who believed that action research could help to achieve the Institute's mission, and others that worried that traditional quantitative research would be displaced by less rigorous qualitative research (Karlsen & Larrea, 2014; Larrea, 2019). Gradually, action research settled in as one more among the different approaches to transformative research in Orkestra, linked to specific projects (Karlsen & Larrea, 2014; Larrea, 2019).

At the time of writing, the AR community in Orkestra was composed of 6 researchers (1 PhD student, 5 PhD researchers) and one communication professional working as a research assistant. All work in AR projects financed mainly by public authorities (regional, provincial or city governments). Said AR projects co-generate new knowledge that addresses specific challenges related to policy making.

The Institute of Social and Technological Research for Territorial Development-Praxis) was founded in 2014. Its roots can be found in the Masters' Degree in Territorial Development (MDTD), created by the Universidad Tecnológica Nacional (UTN), Facultad Regional Rafaela (Argentina) in alliance with the local government. The MDTD was launched in 2010 and since then has trained more than 120 students. Most of them work in different institutions and organisations in Rafaela and its surrounding region. Through case studies that involved other territorial actors, research for policy analysis, and participation in spaces for strategic reflection, the Masters' degree fostered a closer relation between university and territory (Praxis, 2019).

Praxis was created four years after the MDTD, in order to reap the knowledge that was being produced through case studies, dissertations and participation in reflection spaces with other territorial actors in the benefit of territorial development in Rafaela. Its main objective is to build a space to develop academic reflection jointly with other territorial actors, more specifically: to reflect on complexity and territories and to generate knowledge for change based on interaction with the territory and its institutions.

Praxis celebrated its 5th anniversary in 2019, and has since built a growing network of like-minded institutions: Red de Desarrollo Territorial para América Latina (Red DETE), ConectaDEL (Programa FOMIN para la Formación en DT en América Latina) and Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness.

The AR community in Praxis is composed, in 2019, by 17 researchers (2 PhD researchers, 1 PhD student and 14 MPhils in Territorial Development) and 1 staff member. Two researchers (a PhD and an MPhil) and the person working as staff are financed 100% by the UTN-Rafaela. The three of them are involved in managing both the MDTD and Praxis. The rest are financed through specific projects with the City Council, Development Agencies and other territorial actors.

In 2010, Orkestra organised a seminar on innovative and competitive territories in the Basque Country. The researcher that leads Praxis today participated in that seminar and met 3 of the researchers working in Orkestra's AR community. This seminar turned out to be the first bridging space between both AR communities.

4.2. Bridging spaces between Orkestra and Praxis

This section describes the main bridging spaces between Orkestra and Praxis, and provides data from the interviews that show some of the results of bridging in those spaces and evidence of connectivity. Out of the different spaces in which bridging between the two AR communities has taken place, we chose the four most relevant ones to analyse in detail: (i) shared publications; (ii) research stays; (iii) participation in AR agoras; and (iv) virtual spaces. Other bridging spaces that also exist such as emails, one-to-one skype meetings, meetings in workshops or conferences or informal interactions are not considered. Annex 3 presents a summary of the main bridging spaces described below.

4.2.1. Shared publications

Shared publications are spaces that bring together academic results from the AR processes developed by the two communities, though not exclusively since they are also open to contributions from other action researchers. The first joint publication was a book chapter (Costamagna & Larrea, 2015) that brought into one single approach, the one followed by Orkestra (Action Research) and the one followed by Praxis (The Pedagogical Approach).

This was followed by a joint book collection on Territorial Development developed by the two institutes. The book collection was born as an open access collection. Its objective is to make knowledge on international experiences of AR processes that develop with territorial actors, available to as wide an array of practitioners and researchers as possible. At the time of writing, 5 volumes of the series had been published (see Annex III).

During the interview, one of the authors reflected on the book *Facilitative Actors for Territorial Development* (Costamagna & Larrea, 2019) which is part of the book collection Territorial Development, in the following terms:

*"The book on facilitative actors helped us to articulate a shared discourse; we do not think exactly the same, we have differences, it is the result of a dialogue between us but each of us has a different way of looking at things...it was a negotiation between the two of us"*¹

Evidence of connectivity from this bridging space can be found in the use of the facilitative actor concept (Costamagna & Larrea, 2019) in AR processes facilitated by researchers belonging to both communities. One of the interviewees mentioned in this regard:

"I took the book and started to train facilitators...in San Vicente [Argentina] I bring different concepts from the book to the workshops and the actors reflect on those concepts in terms of their practice"

Another influential publication in both communities is the book *Territorial Development and Action Research. Innovation through Dialogue* (Karlsen & Larrea 2014), published in

1 Quotes are excerpts from the interviews. When this is not the case, it is noted. Some interviews took place in Spanish and others in Basque. All quotes are our own translations from Spanish or Basque to English.

Spanish in 2015, as part of the book collection Territorial Development. A researcher from Praxis who is currently undergoing his PhD process, reflected that reading the book changed the way he understood research:

“I’ve never been a Mode 1 researcher...I don’t even want to be one...but reading the book I discovered that I could be a researcher in a different way...a role for academia to ‘develop’ the territory, not just to ‘tell’ the territory”.

4.2.2. Research visits

The objective of research visits is for visiting researchers to deepen their knowledge on issues that the other community is working on. Research visits are financed by both institutes. Between 2012 and 2019 there have been a total of 6 research stays: 3 for each community. The main topics that the visiting researchers have addressed are the following: Analysis of the Argentinian training offer in territorial development; systematization of AR processes; communication within AR processes; facilitation of AR processes; virtual learning spaces; and communicating research outputs from AR processes.

Research visits function as a training space, and they are also where face-to-face interaction among researchers from both communities takes place. Some of the interviewees said that research visits have been one of the most important spaces for connectivity. This occurs not only for the researcher who is visiting the other community, but also for those who interact with the visiting researcher.

Evidences of connectivity are found in changes in how researchers systematise or communicate AR processes. In the words of one of the interviewees:

“From my visit to Orkestra I brought two concepts that transformed my own practice: systematisation and facilitators. I changed the way I systematise my processes because I understood that doing it on an ongoing basis, and not at the end, like I used to, helped to bring about transformation...”

Moreover, through dialogue, visiting researchers increase their awareness of their specific approach to how they work: One of the interviewees explained:

“My visit to Rafaela transformed how I was understanding my own approach to systematisation...it helped me to conceptualise my own approach and to build my own discourse”

4.2.3. Participation in AR agoras

The two AR communities develop research processes with local stakeholders. In this paper we refer to them as agoras, which can take the form of workshops or training. They are bridging spaces because researchers from one AR community can participate in agoras of the other AR community. Participation in agoras involves *in situ* connectivity because researchers share their own concepts and frameworks dialogically with the local stakeholders and other participating researchers.

An interviewee from Orkestra teaching in the MDTD in Praxis explained in this regard:

“The Masters’ degree is a strategy for transformation...a territorial development strategy...a strategy to form cadres for the City Council and other institutions and not a mere product offered by a university”

An interviewee from Praxis who is also a policymaker in the City Council in Rafaela reflected in terms of his dissertation for the MDTD:

“I was not a researcher, I come from practice. Listening to Miren Larrea in the Masters’ courses I learned that we could also generate knowledge from our practice, and I thought: This is for me! My dissertation became an action research process in the university, where I became a facilitator bridging the University and the City Council”

In the words of a policymaker from the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa (Basque Country):

“Pablo Costamagna has contributed a systemic approach to co-operation among territorial agents and among different administrative levels; he integrates macro and micro approaches, which are often presented as opposed...”²

These examples evidence how connectivity occurs *in situ* when researchers from one AR communities participate in AR agoras of the other AR community, directly interacting with territorial actors.

4.2.4. Virtual spaces

Virtual spaces are meant to foster learning and knowledge sharing between both communities, although they are also open to other researchers and practitioners who do not necessarily participate in any of the two AR communities.

At the time of writing, two virtual spaces had been created. The first one was available online during 2015 and was based on the book chapter by Costamagna & Larrea (2015) mentioned earlier, that bridged the two different approaches followed by Praxis and Orkestra. The other one was made available online in 2018 and is ongoing. It is based on the book by Costamagna & Larrea (2018) on facilitative actors for territorial development, also previously discussed.

In both cases, dialogue develops in written threads and has facilitated connectivity, because participants have been able to bring the concepts and frameworks from the two publications on which the virtual spaces were built, to their own practice.

One of the interviewees from Orkestra reflected on this issue as follows:

“The discussion on researchers’ invisibility made me reflect on my own invisibility in the processes in which I was working”

Another expressed the following when addressing the virtual space based on the book on facilitative actors during the interview:

“I get the impression that there are many things in the debates that could become a new version of the book that was originally written by Miren and Pablo...but this time by members of the two communities”

Many of the interviewees agreed, however, that virtual spaces were not the best bridging spaces for connectivity, because they can never replace the power or face-to-face dialogue. Moreover, written communication inhibits dialogue. According to one of the interviewees:

“Written dialogue does not foster debate; everybody tends to agree and conflict is never made explicit”

2 Orkestra has developed a long-term AR process (10 years) with the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa. The quote is from the policymaker who has participated in the process since the beginning. He is not a researcher in Orkestra but is very familiar with Praxis and the bridging spaces between Orkestra and Praxis. He was specifically asked to reflect on the contribution by researchers from Praxis to the AR process.

This section described the main bridging spaces between Orkestra and Praxis, providing data from the interviews that show some of the results of bridging in those spaces as well as evidence of connectivity. The following section answers the research question by identifying the conditions that facilitate connectivity in bridging spaces, based on the case described in this section.

5. Discussion: What conditions facilitate connectivity in bridging spaces between AR communities?

This section answers our research question: What conditions facilitate connectivity in bridging spaces between different AR communities? Figure 1 shows an analytical framework that presents the conditions that facilitate connectivity in bridging spaces between AR communities. The Figure is followed by a description of each condition. It should be noted that the framework is not a check-list, and some conditions may overlap since the borders between them are not clear-cut. Moreover, the absence of these conditions, for instance, not having shared challenges or a facilitative researcher in would hamper connectivity.

Figure 1: Conditions that facilitate connectivity in bridging spaces between different AR communities



Source. Authors' own elaboration

5.1. Epistemological approach and conceptual frameworks

When analysing bridging between different AR communities, we first need to remember that AR communities work with approaches aligned with interpretivist, constructivist epistemological paradigms (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Without a shared understanding of how knowledge is produced, the challenge of making concepts and frameworks that emerge from AR processes workable in other contexts would not make sense. That is why the basis of the analytical framework is having a shared epistemological approach. One of the interviewees reflected in this regard:

“Sharing a conceptual framework based on building with others...we have that in the Pedagogical Approach, in Action Research and in the idea of networks...they are all about dialogue and co-construction”

Overall, AR challenges the claim prevalent in positivistic approaches to knowledge production that assert that research must remain objective and value-free and favors instead, an explicitly political, socially engaged and democratic practice (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire, 2003). So, for other interviewees having shared methodologies and conceptual frameworks was equally important. One of them reflected on this as follows:

“When I heard Miren talk about Paulo Freire in the AR context I felt very happy... the first step to connectivity is having a shared conceptual framework...because notwithstanding the contextual distance between countries like my own and the Basque Country...discovering that we work with the same authors and approaches to territorial development is a very important bond...it is a common identity that helps us find each other”

Furthermore, action researchers do not aspire to examine reality, but to change it (Nicholas & Hathcoat, 2014; Brydon-Miller et al. 2003) and they test the validity of their research in action as explained in section 2 of this paper. One of the interviewees reflected:

“It is more about wanting to change things and how you understand research...if your objective is to change things, and you understand that in order to do so you have to change as well, then you facilitate connectivity”

One of the lead researchers also argued:

“We wanted to change the world through research...AR’s explicitly political approach is something that we both share...someone who shares your way of thinking and does not try to take you anywhere else but helps you to deepen your understanding...”

5.2. Facilitative researchers

Facilitative researchers are those who, within bridging spaces in which they interact with other action researchers (workshops, conferences, meetings), proactively work to extend the relationship and what they are learning to their own action research community. Through their role, connectivity reaches the rest of the community. One of the interviewees said:

“In our case it has been the cornerstone of our connection...if their relationship [the lead action researchers of both communities] did not exist, ours with the other community wouldn’t exist either”

The relationship between facilitative researchers, rests on a personal connection but serendipity also plays its part. The lead researcher of one of the communities explained:

“We met by chance in that seminar...we talked for a few minutes... there was a personal connection...when I later received an email I responded and realised that our connection had potential...but there was no previous analysis of such potential”

However, it is important to note that their commitment to bridge both communities, rests also on their capability to build AR communities in their respective institutes. Bridging is understood by facilitative researchers as a strategy for transformation and development on their corresponding AR communities.

One of the lead researchers stated:

"We have used this connection to build the team...it is about being proactive in the connection so that it becomes a strategy for the change sought by AR...something that contributes to that change"

The potential that bridging carries for the future can lead facilitative researchers to proactively identify other researchers that can benefit from the relationship to build a team that strengthens the capacity of their work when changing their own territories. The selection of topics and researchers participating in research visits in Praxis and Orkestra are examples of this. This case also shows that facilitative researchers are usually either senior researchers, or have a certain hierarchical position that allows them to harness resources in this regard.

5.3. Shared challenges

Another important condition in the analytical framework is the existence of shared challenges. Connectivity can happen in bridging spaces when shared challenges are identified, and researchers feel that they can find a solution to these challenges. Indeed, researchers feel stimulated when they meet other researchers who have experiences and knowledge on areas in which they are facing specific challenges in their own AR processes. One of the interviewees expressed the following:

"We find in them what we need... it is about finding complementary knowledge to shared problems even if the context is different"

Another interviewee reflected in this regard:

"Having shared challenges is very important [to make the most of the research visit] because it speaks to something that we seldom mention: the political horizon...and I don't mean political parties, I mean the political horizon in terms of transformation...to improve people's wellbeing...to make the world a better place"

Having shared challenges is also about reciprocity. Reciprocity suggests that connectivity can happen in bridging spaces when each community recognizes each other as a significant community, providing each other legitimacy and respect. We interpret reciprocity as based on complementarity. One interviewee expressed the following:

"The connection adds value to what we are doing...you need to feel comfortable and recognised in the relationship"

In contrast, one of the interviewees from Rafaela reflected that connectivity had not happened with her, because the person with whom she shared a bridging space as a visiting researcher in Orkestra played different role:

"Connectivity is enhanced when those engaged in a bridging space share similar roles"

And, in reference to the virtual spaces another interviewee said:

"I feel free to participate...it has to do with trust as well...I am not afraid to make mistakes..."

5.4. Institutional conditions

The institutional environment of the different AR communities is another condition that can facilitate or inhibit connectivity within bridging contexts. Bridging can facilitate connectivity when both AR communities work with an agreement that offers a formal framework or the availability of resources (time and money). These resources can foster the creation of bridging spaces and activities within them that can in turn lead to connectivity.

Indeed, having a formal agreement and resources can be a major boost for connectivity, because dependence on external resources or on the motivation of individual researchers only, is reduced. The latter, although necessary, is not always enough. Moreover, the need for economic resources is even more critical when there is an important physical distance between the AR communities, as is the case of the two communities analysed in this paper.

One of the researchers stated the following when reflecting on this condition for connectivity in bridging spaces:

“If we were not so far away there would be a greater connection and we would be able to organise more research stays...if there are no specific resources for this then connectivity may not occur so readily”

Beyond these tangible conditions, softer elements such as team or networking culture are also important. The team culture is closely related to the existence of the AR community. Likewise, the networking culture of the institutes that these researchers belong to and their mission and motivation to share knowledge in order to facilitate transformation in their territories facilitate bridging spaces:

“The organisational culture is important in opening up to a new connection and that any new connection does not remain only as an event between two researchers”

Another important element here is having the support of the university in which each institute is situated and in the territory itself:

“Having the university’s endorsement, the territory’s endorsement [policymakers] is critical, because it determines what you can do and what you can’t do...”

5.5. Cultural and social values

Institutional conditions are framed within the context of the territory where they are located. The networking culture of AR communities is often pushed by what Lorentzen (2009) defines as societal proximity, and refers to the social systems and common institutional spaces that facilitate knowledge exchange and linkages among actors. Language is another cultural element included in these institutional spaces that facilitate connectivity through bridging between different AR communities.

One of the interviewees said:

“The institutional culture of our institutes affect how we function as an AR community and our institutional culture is affected by culture on our own society”

The Basque Country and Basque people have been described as a community characterised by a collective way of doing, related to their rooted sense of self-government (Porter, Ketels and Valdaliso, 2012). In the case of Rafaela, it is also characterised by a strong drive to public-private collaboration (Costamagna, 2017). Both share an economic structure

based on industry and an endogenous and systemic approach within their corresponding industrial development processes. These are evidences of shared elements in both social systems that facilitate, their own networking culture and also bridging between the two and their different contexts.

One of the interviewees explained:

“The ‘asado’ culture or knowing that if a policymaker is late for a meeting it does not mean that he or she is not giving priority to the project...these are elements that we share and even if they might seem anecdotic, they facilitate connectivity”

6. Final reflections

This paper focused on a specific type of bridging: bridging between different AR communities. Its contribution is that it proposes bridging between different AR communities as a pathway to connectivity in AR. Connectivity is a measure of external validity of AR that validates new knowledge in practice with peers, following the dialogical essence of AR. It is therefore an opportunity to extend the learning process and AR’s transformation potential beyond the group in which action research took place. We propose an analytical framework that brings together the conditions that need to be present for connectivity to occur in bridging spaces between different AR communities.

In what follows we discuss three issues that emerge from our analysis of the interviews, that invite further reflection.

- (I) The backbone of connectivity is having a shared epistemological approach and common conceptual frameworks. However, sharing the will to change the world through research is not only about one methodology or the other, it is also about shared personal values: a political position in the world. The personal relationship between action researchers is therefore very important and it can normally develop at its fullest through face-to-face dialogue. Bridging spaces that privilege face-to-face dialogue are more likely to facilitate connectivity than virtual spaces.
- (II) A question that emerges is whether connectivity is after all a question of serendipity. It could be the case if bridging between different AR communities started from serendipity. The cases analysed in this paper show that bridging two communities can start by meeting by chance in an academic space. There was no previous analysis regarding the potential for connectivity between both communities. However, for bridging to lead to connectivity, other conditions need to be present: having a shared understanding of how knowledge is produced and shared conceptual frameworks; shared challenges; cultural and social values; facilitative researchers; and the institutional conditions that can back up the development of bridging spaces.
- (III) The two AR communities analysed in this paper are located in different continents and this brings to the surface the debate on transborder and interregional connectivity. Since AR processes are custom made to the reality of the territories in which they develop, bridging spaces that encourage connectivity need to also consider context. The conditions identified in this paper are precisely conditions that contextualise bridging. Bridging on its own, without considering context, is unlikely to facilitate connectivity.

We began this paper by reflecting on ARs transformation potential in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals, and on its challenge of scope when attempting to foster large scale change. Writing this paper confirmed our hunch that connectivity, through bridging spaces between different AR communities can make change ripple beyond the groups where action research takes place, maintaining its contextual nature. So, one step in the way of maximizing AR's potential to address the complex global challenges of our time is to strengthen ties among different AR research communities. We need to work more, collaborate more in available bridging spaces, change them if they do not work and create new ones where they do not exist.

References

- Bradbury, H., Waddell, S., O'Brien, K., Apgar, M., Teehankee, B., & Fazey, I. (2019). A call to Action Research for Transformations: The times demand it. *Action Research*, 17(1), 3-10. doi: 10.1177/1476750319829633
- Brydon-Miller, M., Greenwood, D., & Maguire, P. (2003). Why action research? *Action Research*, 1(1), 9-28. doi: 10.1177/14767503030011002
- Burns, D. (2007). Systemic action research: A strategy for whole system change Policy Press.
- Burns, D. (2014). Systemic action research: Changing system dynamics to support sustainable change. *Action Research*, 12(1), 3-18, doi: 10.1177/ 1476750313513910
- Canto-Farachala, P. (2019). Research Institutes as Change Agents in Territorial Development. An Analytical Framework on Responsible Research Communication. (doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from: <https://cutt.ly/grt12A6>
- Canto-Farachala, P. & Larrea, M. (2020). Rethinking the communication of action research: Can we make it dialogic? *Action Research Advance* online publication: doi: 10.1177/1476750320905896
- Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T. (2010). *Doing action research in your own organization* (3rd ed.). Padstow: Cornwall: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Costamagna, P. (2015). Política y formación en el desarrollo territorial: Aportes al enfoque pedagógico ya la investigación acción en casos de estudio en Argentina, Perú y País Vasco. Bilbao: Publicaciones Universidad de Deusto.
- Costamagna, P. & Larrea, M. (2015). El enfoque pedagógico y la Investigación Acción para el Desarrollo Territorial. En. Costamagna, P., Pérez-Rozzi, S. *Enfoque, estrategias e información para el desarrollo territorial*. ConectaDEL.
- Costamagna, P. & Larrea, M. (2018). Actores facilitadores del desarrollo territorial. Bilbao: Publicaciones Deusto
- de Sousa Santos, B. (2015). Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide. Oxon: Routledge.
- Dick, B. (2014). Validity. In D. Coghlan, M. Brydon-Miller (Eds.) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Action Research*. London: SAGE
- Greenwood, D. J. & Levin, M. (2007). Introduction to action research: Social research for social change. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Gustavsen, B. (1992). Dialogue and development: Theory of communication, action research and the restructuring of working life Thesis Publishers.
- Gustavsen, B. (1996). Action research, democratic dialogue, and the issue of "critical mass" in change. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(1), 90-103. doi: 10.1177/ 107780049600200113
- Gustavsen, B. (2014). Third person action research. *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research* (pp. 782-784). London: SAGE.

- Gustavsen, B. (2003). New forms of knowledge production and the role of action research. *Action Research*, 1(2), 153-1640. doi: 10.1177/ 14767503030012003
- Karlsen & Larrea (2014). Territorial Development for Action Research. Innovation through Dialogue. Franham: Gower
- Kvale, S. (1995) The social construction of validity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(1), 19-40. doi: 10.1177/107780049500100103
- Larrea, M. (2019). Changing universities through action research: The dilemma of scope in pluralistic environments. *Action Research* 17(3), 400-416. doi: 10.1177/1476750318757851
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills (California): Sage.
- Lorentzen, A. (2009). Las redes de conocimiento en el espacio. Reflexiones de una geógrafa sobre la literatura de los sistemas regionales de innovación. *Ekonomiaz* 70(1), 170-183.
- Nicholas, & Hathcoat. (2014). Ontology. In M. Brydon-Miller., & D. Coghlan (Eds.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research* (pp. 570-572). London: Sage.
- Porter, M., Ketels, C. & Valdaliso, J.M. (2012). *El País Vasco: Estrategia para el Desarrollo Económico*. Case study for Microeconomics of Competitiveness course. Harvard Business School.
- Praxis (2019). *Praxis, 5 años construyendo comunidades de aprendizaje*. Memoria de, Praxis, <http://mdt.frra.utn.edu.ar/web/>
- Streck, D. R. (2014). Knowledge and transformative social action: the encounter of selected traditions of participatory (action) research. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 12(4), 457-473. doi: 10.1080/14767724.2014.901907
- Thomas, G. (2011). How to do your case study. A guide for students & researchers. London: Sage.
- Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing & health sciences*, 15(3), 398-405. doi: 10.1111/nhs.12048
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Annex I. Interview Calendar

Name	AR Community	Position	Date of interview
Pablo Costamagna	Praxis	PhD Senior researcher	11-11-2019
Laura Lencioni	Praxis	Researcher	11-11-2019
Eva Menardi	Praxis	Communication staff	11-11-2019
Eleonora Spinelli	Praxis	Researcher	12-11-2019
Diego Peiretti	Praxis	Researcher/City Council	12-11-2019
Mauricio Menardi	Praxis	Researcher	13-11-2019
Cecilia Gutiérrez	Praxis	Researcher	13-11-2019
Marcelo Ortenzi	Praxis	Researcher	13-11-2019
Samuel Delbon	Praxis	Researcher/City Council	14-11-2019
Ainhoa Arrona	Orkestra	PhD researcher	14-11-2019
Miren Larrea	Orkestra	PhD Senior researcher	14-11-2019
Maite Reizabal	Orkestra	Communication staff	15-11-2019
Romina Rébola	Praxis	Researcher	15-11-2019
Mijal Saz	Praxis	Researcher	15-11-2019

Annex II. List of secondary data

- ConectaDEL (2015). Memoria del Foro Virtual Enfoque Pedagógico e Investigación Acción para el Desarrollo Territorial (EPIA) (mimeo).
- Costamagna, P. (2019). Construcción de capacidades individuales en la investigación acción para el desarrollo territorial desde el enfoque pedagógico (mimeo).
- Personas Facilitadoras del Desarrollo Territorial (virtual platform that communicates the book Facilitative Actors of Territorial Development):
<https://dgroups.org/groups/perfad>

Annex III: Bridging spaces between Orkestra and Praxis

Spaces	Number	Date
Shared Publications		
– Book chapters	1	Book chapter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Costamagna, P. Larrea, M. (2015). El enfoque pedagógico y la Investigación Acción para el Desarrollo Territorial. En: Costamagna, P., Pérez-Rozzi, S. <i>Enfoque, estrategias e información para el desarrollo territorial. ConectaDEL.</i>
– Series on Territorial Development	5	Joint Series on Territorial Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Karlsen J. Larrea, M. (2015). Desarrollo Territorial e Investigación Acción. Innovación a través del Diálogo. Bilbao: Publicaciones Deusto – Costamagna, P. (2015). <i>Política y formación en el desarrollo territorial.</i> Bilbao: Publicaciones Universidad de Deusto – Costamagna, P., Larrea, M. (2017). <i>Actores facilitadores del desarrollo territorial.</i> Bilbao: Publicaciones Deusto – (2018) Atores facilitadores do desenvolvimento territorial Uma aproximação a partir da construção social – (2018) Facilitative Actors of Territorial Development. A Social Construction-Based Approach
Research Stays	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Albuquerque, F. (2018). <i>Conceptos básicos de economía. En busca de un enfoque ético, social y ambiental.</i> Bilbao: Publicaciones Deusto – Andretich, G. (coord.) (2019). <i>Transitar el territorio. Reflexiones desde el proceso de formación en Desarrollo Territorial.</i> Bilbao: Publicaciones Deusto – February-October 2012 – October 2015 – September 2016 – March 2017 – April 2017 – November 2019
Participation in AR agoras:		2010-Ongoing
– Session in the MDTD	8	
– Participation in meetings with policymakers	1-2	during
	34 visits	
Virtual spaces:		
– Virtual EPIA Forum	-1	– 31 August-6 October 2015
– Virtual Platform for Facilitative Actors for Territorial Development	-1	– October 2017-Ongoing

About the authors

Patricia Canto-Farachala (Corresponding author): Her research explores transdisciplinary approaches to academic publishing and communication and its implications for the role that universities play in territorial development. Most of her experience as an action researcher has involved facilitating learning processes among action researchers in physical and virtual environments.

Miren Estensoro: Her work focuses mainly on the facilitation of action research processes with policy makers in research area such as local economic development, territorial governance and multi-level coordination of territorial development policies. Some of the main actors with whom she works are the Bilbao City Council, the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa and the European Commission.

Authors' addresses:

Patricia Canto-Farachala

Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness, University of Deusto, Mundaiz, 50, 20012 San Sebastian, Spain

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9194-1583>

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/patricia-canto-farachala-a9b4a74/>

Email address: pcanto@orkestra.deusto.es

Twitter: @PatriCanto

Miren Estensoro

Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness, University of Deusto, Mundaiz, 50, 20012 San Sebastián, Spain

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4464-3118>

LinkedIn: <https://es.linkedin.com/in/miren-estensoro-garcia-55840468>

Email address: mestenso@orkestra.deusto.es

Twitter: @MirenEstensoro

Another social research is possible

From the collaboration between researchers and social movements

Alfonso Torres Carrillo¹

Abstract

The article presents an overview of the relationships between higher education institutions, researchers, and social movements in Colombia. Based on a periodisation of the different modes of alignments or gaps between these 3 social actors, the study focuses on two significant experiences of collaborative research between researchers and social movements. First, an experience with peasant movements from the Atlantic Coast led by Orlando Fals Borda from *La Rosca* Foundation in the 1970s, and which originated Participatory Action Research. Then, a project conducted by the *Subjects and New Narratives in Research and Teaching of the Social Sciences* research group at the *Universidad Pedagógica Nacional* focused on the systematisation of practices with popular organisations and their inputs to the field of critical research. Finally, a balance of the current situation of joint research between social movements and collectives of researchers linked to higher education institutions is presented.

Keywords: Knowledge production, university, social movements, participatory research, systematization.

Otra investigación social es posible. Desde la colaboración entre investigadores y movimientos sociales

Resumen: El artículo presenta una mirada de conjunto sobre las relaciones entre universidades, investigadores y movimientos sociales en Colombia. A partir de una periodización de los diferentes modos de articulación o distanciamiento entre estos 3 actores sociales, el estudio se detiene en dos experiencias significativas de investigación colaborativa entre investigadores y movimientos sociales: la liderada por Orlando Fals Borda desde la Fundación La Rosca en la década de 1970 con movimientos campesinos de la Costa Atlántica y que dio origen a la Investigación Acción Participativa, y la llevada a cabo por el grupo de investigación *Sujetos y nuevas narrativas en investigación y enseñanza de las ciencias sociales* de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional en torno a la sistematización de prácticas con organizaciones populares. Finalmente, se plantean algunos

1 Translation made by Camilo Torres Barragán

desafíos acerca de la investigación conjunta entre movimientos sociales y colectivos de investigadores vinculados a universidades.

Palabras clave: Producción de conocimiento, universidad, movimientos sociales, investigación participativa, sistematización.

Introduction

The production of knowledge on social movements has been associated with what has been done by specialists in higher education institutions and research centres; inquiries carried out with or by its own protagonists has been less frequent. In Colombia, there has been a tradition of participatory research, initiated half a century ago, which gave rise to what is referred to as Participatory Research and other collaborative methodologies such as Collective recovery of history and Systematisation of experiences.

In this historical research trajectory with social organisations, the role of the Higher Education Institution has varied. Colombian higher education: heir to colonial higher education, has barely had a relationship with civil society movements. The accelerated capitalist modernisation that took place during the second half of the 20th century, triggered social conflicts in the rural areas and the city; it also brought about the establishment of the social sciences in the country. However, institutional obstacles and the radicalisation of the political environment limited the possibility for researchers to interact with these processes; this led some of them to leave the higher education institution to conduct their research and also to build the first participatory methodologies.

Since the 1980s, the most significant research on social movements was conducted by Non-Governmental Organisations; only in the next decade, were these topics gradually incorporated into higher education institutions. This “late” interest coincided with changes in the country’s social movements; together with the struggles led by peasants and wage workers, others became visible, led by urban inhabitants, women, youth, indigenous peoples, and the LGBTI population. At the beginning of the new century, the Colombian social overview evidenced the consolidation of these movements, as well as their interest in conducting their own research, proposing another type of relationship with researchers and higher education institutions: establishing agreements to jointly develop research projects.

This article presents a joint overview of the links between higher education institutions, researchers, and social movements, focusing on two significant moments in these relationships. The first one refers to the work of Orlando Fals Borda and *La Rosca* Foundation in the 1970s, and the second one, to some collaborative research experiences conducted by the *Subjects and New Narratives in Research and Teaching of the Social Sciences* research group of the *Universidad Pedagógica Nacional* during the first decade of the 21st century. Building on those research experiences, a set of methodological criteria for the collaborative production of knowledge between professional researchers and social movements is presented.

1. A higher education institution turning its back on society

A characteristic feature of Latin American higher education institutions at the beginning of the 20th century was their fixation on the colonial higher education model, centred on academic and professional education in classical fields such as philosophy, theology, medicine, law, natural sciences, and the emerging engineering careers, with little or no dialogue with national and local realities. In the case of Colombia, the higher education condition was more precarious because of the legacy of the so-called regeneration: scarce autonomy and confessional and with no relationship whatsoever with nascent social movements.

The higher education student movement that began in Córdoba (Argentina) in 1918 had among its main criticisms the higher education institution, its cloister, and its lack of knowledge of national realities, particularly those of popular sectors. In its *Liminar Manifesto*, the higher education students questioned the cloistered higher education institution, and proposed a higher education institution open to social issues and committed to the less fortunate. To this end, they proposed extensionism, understood as projecting academic knowledge toward the understanding of and overcoming social issues.

In Colombia, this reformist wave has been adopted by higher education students, forming a movement questioning the absence of research and scientific education. Between 1920 and 1924, the student-led higher education reform movement was strengthened, but its fruits would only be seen a decade later with the reforms promoted by President López. The only experience in Colombia based on an extensionist perspective was the one developed by the young student Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, who, inspired by the movement in Córdoba, created together with other students from *Universidad Nacional*, a *Higher Education Center for Cultural Propaganda*, from which they developed educational activities with workers in poor neighborhoods in Bogotá and other cities, as well as with peasants in areas near the capital (Torres, 1992, p 18).

The so-called “Revolution on the March”, led by President Alfonso López Pumarejo, introduced some changes favourable to higher education: established the Organic Law of the Higher Education Institution (1935); created *Escuela Normal Superior* (1936); strengthened *Universidad Nacional*; acknowledged a higher education institution’s autonomy and academic freedom (Soto, 2005, p. 123). However, this liberalisation of Colombian higher education policy did not mean progress in linking its schools and education programs to the social dynamics of the time.

This process was interrupted by a transcendental event in the country’s history: the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán on April 9 1948, and the popular uprising that ensued. As a result of this event, the persecution of his followers and the political violence scourging Colombian rural areas until 1964 intensified. Although the arrival of the Conservative Party to government in 1945 had already begun to reverse some of the progressive measures in higher education policy and promoted the expansion of private higher education institutions, as of that moment, the Catholic Church and the government strengthened the conservative nature of higher education, which was perpetuated during the military dictatorship of Rojas Pinilla (1953-1957).

As expected, during this period higher education institutions did not make progress in addressing social reality. However, their students did, who, since 1954, protested against

the military regime, contributing to its fall, and the establishment of the so-called National Front in 1958². This agreement between the political elites represented a monopoly on public power and state institutions, which meant the exclusion of left-wing parties. This led to the progressive radicalisation of the political opposition, giving rise to, or supporting, the emergence of anti-system guerrillas.

On the other hand, the institutional closure of the National Front also ignored the expansion and pluralisation of social movements in rural areas and the city. Indeed, this period coincided with the accelerated forced migration of peasants to the cities, urban growth, industrialization, and modernisation processes; old conflicts in rural areas and the city were worsening, and other new ones associated with capitalist expansion were emerging. Thus, between the mid-1970s and throughout the following decade, peasant struggles grew, indigenous peoples generated their own organisations and demands, the student movement radicalised, city inhabitants mobilized around their right to the city, and even some sectors from the Catholic Church joined in these struggles and social movements.

On the other hand, in Colombia, as in Latin America, there were also some significant changes within the political left, associated with dynamics at the international level: tensions between the USSR and communist China, which gave rise to political parties and movements and Maoist guerrillas, as well as the Cuban revolutionary experience, which inspired the birth of Guevarista guerrillas, such as the National Liberation Army. In addition, as a response to the State's frustrated attempt at elimination, a peasant movement gave rise to a guerrilla group with a communist affiliation: The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC.

2. Initial approaches between Higher Education Institution and Social Conflicts

Also, in 1961, the country's first sociology department was created at *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*. Its first director was Orlando Fals Borda, who had just arrived from the United States from completing his postgraduate studies in sociology,³ and who was also part of the teams that drafted the Agrarian Reform and Community Action laws, reformist policies aimed at containing the conflict within the rural areas and the urban periphery. The first team of faculty professors also included the priest Camilo Torres and Dr. María Cristina Salazar: the only individuals with degrees in the discipline, as well as other researchers such as anthropologists Virginia Gutiérrez, Roberto Pineda, and lawyer Eduardo Umaña Luna.

This team of social scientists conducted the first collective research on an issue relevant to the country: the study on violence in Colombia, which took advantage of a file compiled by the priest Germán Guzmán Campos (Campos, Fals y Umaña, 1962). The study, in addition to providing a detailed description of violence, incorporated a sociological, anthropological, and legal analysis of the phenomenon, revealing the responsibility of the political and economic

2 Covenant between the liberal and conservative parties to alternate in government between 1958 and 1974, as well as to distribute among themselves all of the public offices. Said agreement was justified to avert the violence that had worsened since April 9, 1948, leaving more than 300,000 casualties.

3 He did his undergraduate studies in literature and music at the University of Dubuque in Iowa, his master's degree in sociology at the University of Minnesota and his doctorate in sociology at the University of Florida.

elites in the conflict, who benefited from the illegal appropriation of land. Its publication in 1962 generated controversy and rejection among the institutionalism, which disqualified its authors as “communists” amid the Cold War.

This fact was key for these social researchers to progressively distance themselves from the reformist project with which they had so far identified. The case of the priest Camilo Torres Restrepo is the most renowned: faced with institutional pressures and his identification with the armed revolution, he joined the ELN guerrillas in 1965, dying in combat at the beginning of the following year. For their part, Orlando Fals Borda and Cristina Salazar decided to continue their intellectual commitment and research work outside of the Higher Education Institution: “The administrative and curricular rigidity of higher education institutions, as well as the gap between research and renovation, did not allow for initiatives of this type” (Cataño, 1986, p. 19). With the retirement of these outstanding researchers, the School of Sociology was left in the hands of conventional academics who oriented education toward the study of the classics and disregarded current pressing issues.

3. Militant Research with Social Movements

It is in this critical context, at the social and political level, that the first methodological proposal for participatory social research aligned to social movements arises, managed by a collective of Colombian social scientists, led by Orlando Fals Borda. In a broader context of dialogue with other Latin American researchers who dissented with reformist developmentalism, Fals Borda (1970) questioned the colonialist nature of how the social sciences were imposed on Latin America; he also proposed the need for a liberation sociology that would respond authentically to the region’s historical specificity and to his own needs.

This new social science, committed to social struggles, demanded a decolonising and militant methodology that acknowledged popular knowledge and involved communities and their social organisations as subjects of knowledge, promoting the dialogue of knowledge and raising awareness among individuals. Thus, at the end of 1970, together with other researchers, they created *La Rosca* Foundation⁴ for research and social action; this entity was committed to assisting popular organisations and movements, particularly peasant and indigenous ones, in several locations in the country.

Thus, for example, Salazar and Fals Borda moved to the Atlantic Coast of Colombia to establish partnerships with the National Association of Peasant Users (ANUC), a peasant organisation that led the struggle for land. With that organisation, they agreed on educational and research support regarding the history of their struggles, particularly in the department of Córdoba. As a result, they began to reconstruct the struggles experienced in the region, training teams to interview old and new leaders, contextualise the experiences within the framework of the country’s history, produce informational materials, and “systematically return” the research results to the social bases. To this end, they resorted to creative ways such as the production of comic books, pamphlets and films, songwriting and plays (Fals Borda, 1994, p. 38 y 39).

4 “Rosca” is a Colombian colloquial expression denoting the closed and exclusive groups of the political and economic elites. Here it was used in an ironic sense.

This novel way of doing research and politics, initially referred to as “study-action” was severely criticised. On the one hand, from the higher education realm, where professors and researchers did not consider this participative and militant methodology “scientific”; on the other hand, from the left-wing parties that saw these participative processes as an “ideological deviation” without the tutelage of a vanguard party. There were so many tensions and threats that Fals Borda had to leave the region in 1975. Similar processes also occurred in other areas of the country such as Cauca, where *La Rosca* had supported the nascent Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca.

Faced with the need to assess the political and research experience and submit it to discussion by other social scientists, who, at the same time, had generated methodologies of a militant and participative nature, Fals Borda began to organise, from 1976, a World Symposium of alternative social scientists, which finally took place in Cartagena in 1977. This event was very significant in building a current of critical research, as well as for the public presentation of what later would be the Participatory Action Research. Indeed, in said event, Fals presented the paper “For praxis: the issue of how to research to transform it”, where he bases the nascent methodology, resorting to heterodox Marxist theorists such as Gramsci and Lukács, and he describes and reflects on the strategies and techniques created during the experience carried out with the ANUC.

In the 1980s, Fals extended that paper into a book, and began to refer to the new methodology as Participatory Action Research. During these years, he also produced other texts, developing the epistemic references and methodological criteria which underpinned and guided it. As a comparative analysis, the main features of this experience of alignment between social research and social movements “outside of the higher education institution” are summarised below (Fals, 1997; Torres, 2010; Herrera, 2018):

1. Its “own science” in the service of popular classes. Based on the criticism of intellectual colonialism, they insisted on the “authenticity” of the social sciences in the Latin American context, as well as on the commitment of researchers, assumed in Gramscian terms as “organic intellectuals”, to popular causes and popular class organisations.
2. Non-dogmatic adoption of Marxism: This group of researchers adopted Marxism as a working method, in its theoretical and practical aspects, distancing themselves from the parties and groups that assumed it dogmatically as an ideology. This allowed them to resort to different authors of said critical tradition, particularly heterodox ones such as Gramsci and Lukács; this allowed them to adjust and recreate some relevant categories to regional and national realities.
3. Alignment between theory and practice: closely related to the foregoing, the concern about the combination between study, knowledge, and reality transforming action was solved by adopting the category of *praxis* proposed by a young Marx, and revisited by Gramsci as the singularity of Marxism when he referred to it as the *philosophy of praxis*; in a similar sense, Fals will speak of a *sociology of praxis*, in tune with the *pedagogy of praxis*, proposed by Freire⁵.

5 In his subsequent reflections, Fals Borda also incorporated the Aristotelian category of *phronesis*, to argue that the transforming action must be prudent.

4. Participation in knowledge production. Perhaps the most original contribution of this research proposal was to seek to overcome the dichotomy between the research subject and research object, intrinsic to classical science. By acknowledging organisations and social bases as political and knowledge subjects, a transition is made to a subject-subject relationship enabling co-operative research.
5. Dialogue between popular knowledge and scientific knowledge. From Freire he will also incorporate the idea of *dialogue* but understood as a *dialogue of knowledge* to refer to the needed confluence between specialised knowledge coming from the social sciences with popular knowledge (which he referred to as *popular science*) and the knowledge generated from the social struggles themselves.
6. Rescue history and local and regional cultures. The contextual and mobilizing nature of research led this team of researchers to promptly acknowledge the importance of social history and local cultures, not only as a necessary object of inquiry, but also as perspectives based on which to address and understand peasants' resistance and struggles. Thus, Fals proposed that participatory research cannot be done without "historical recovery".
7. Use of simple and friendly techniques. Within their concern to democratise social research methodologies, Fals Borda and his team carried out the simple use of research techniques, such as mini-surveys and interviews; however, no epistemological or political criticism was made on these techniques, which were generated based on assumptions and parameters of hegemonic social science.
8. Communication between social researchers, leaders, and social bases. Faced with the differences between academic and popular language, which prevented communication between researchers and social collectives, this research proposal insisted on the production of educational materials: textbooks and pamphlets, as well as audiovisual pieces such as comics, films, musical and theatre compositions. In his book, *Historia Doble de la Costa* [Double History of the Coast], Fals Borda innovated academic writing by incorporating two communication channels: one analytical and the other narrative.

Following the socialisation of these epistemological and methodological approaches at the Cartagena Congress in 1977, Participatory Action Research began its path of dissemination, appropriation, and adjustment throughout the world (Herrera, 2018, p. 90). On the one hand, among social movements and organisations, who saw in it a strategy for knowledge production consistent with their political meanings; on the other hand, among social researchers and non-governmental organisations, who saw in this emerging methodology a research potential to assist social, educational, and cultural processes with which they interacted; but it was also assumed and "co-opted" by international development agencies that used it as an efficient tool to produce information on popular issues and populations, "object" of their policies.

4. Researching Social Movements based on Civil Associations

On September 14, the same year that the Congress of Cartagena was held, the First national civic strike took place in Colombia, symbolising the rise of the period's social struggles and

became a milestone for the beginning of the stage that would follow. Indeed, following a call by the trade union to a day of action, inhabitants of poor neighbourhoods of the cities took to the streets to protest for several days. The governments were not indifferent to this popular upsurge and overflow; in the context of the military dictatorships in most of the continent's countries, a repressive policy was unleashed in Colombia that involved mass arrests, torture, forced disappearances, and the persecution of social movements.

This scenario evidenced that beyond the classic trade unions and peasant organisations, other dissident social actors had been progressively developing in the cities, which until now had been invisible to social activists and analysts. It also showed that, regarding growing human rights violations, social organisations and practices were emerging to protect them and report the abuses that were being committed.

Just as these initiatives emerged from civil society, interest in researching them arose in the nations. Non-governmental organisations supported multiple local experiences around urban issues, work with and among women and youth, often inspired by education and communication, liberation theology, art and culture, and alternative law (Torres, 2007).

Throughout the 1980s, while the academic social sciences were consolidating their disciplining and cloister, it was these centres that undertook the task of producing knowledge and critical thinking about and based on social struggles, movements, and organisations. Institutions such as the Centre for Research and Popular Education (CINEP), the Forum for Colombia Foundation, the Educational Dimension Association, the Institute for Popular Promotion (CPC), the Region Corporation, and the Latin American Institute for an Alternative Society and Laws (ILSA)⁶. These organisations are the ones that undertook relevant issues such as violence and social struggles; as an example, in 1985, some of them published a joint book on the Colombian labour movement, the result of a Seminar held in Medellín that same year.

Although some researchers maintained their links with their higher education institutions, the knowledge production closest to social demands and dynamics was conducted with these civil organisations. In this context, it is noteworthy to mention the work on workers' struggles (Archila, 1986, 1987 y 1989), civic movements and urban struggles (Santana, 1982, 1983 y 1989; Giraldo 1985 y 1987; González, 1984), as well as the work of the professor M. Medina (1984) on urban protest in Colombia. On the other hand, from *Dimensión Educativa* (1985, 1988, and 1990), contributions were made regarding the use of participatory methodologies in social research, such as IAP and the collective recovery of history. On the other hand, it is important to mention the testimonial research work carried out by Arturo Álape and Alfredo Molano on the Bogotazo, violence, peasant and urban struggles, which, without being participatory, made visible the view and voice of its actors.

In any case, from civil organisations based on popular education, participatory research methodologies were generated as the collective recovery of history. Some grassroots organisations and teacher collectives began to request support in creating neighbourhood and local stories with the purpose of getting to know the populations they worked with better, as an entry strategy to them, or to develop curricular proposals around shared stories of social struggles. Entities such as *Dimensión Educativa*, CLEBA, and the IPC developed designs

6 It was also the journals of these organisations that addressed contemporary problems and communicated relevant research.

to make these stories, resorting to the contributions of participatory research, oral history, and “history from below” created within the historiographic field. Thus, stories of popular neighbourhoods and organizations, as well as methodological texts, were produced in Bogotá, Medellín, and other cities (Cendales, Peresson, & Torres, 1990).

During the second half of the 1980s there were some timid and marginal approaches by the higher education sphere to social issues and alternative research methodologies. This did not happen in the Schools and departments of the social sciences, but rather in spaces considered as “marginal” or “plebeian” within institutional hierarchies, such as Extension programs, community internships, as well as in “practical” professional programs such as social work, education, and nursing. The more disciplined schools generally remained immune to reality and these modes of engaged research; rather, they sought to discredit them for their lack of science and neutrality⁷.

During the 1990s and the following decade, this trend continued, with some variations, associated with significant changes in the context. Indeed, the negotiation processes between some guerrilla organisations (FARC, M-19, EPL) and the government, the subsequent signing of peace agreements with the latter two; the constitutional process that gave rise to a New Political Constitution (1991), and; the multiplication of social struggles and movements positioned issues such as violence, peace, democracy and citizenship, as well as urban, environmental, ethnic, women’s, and peace struggles on the public agenda.

These significant historical changes challenged higher education institutions and state research centres to undertake their responsibility of accountability: together with the already mentioned Non-Governmental Organizations, for some of the contemporary social issues but maintaining their social research methodologies from their disciplinary fields, generally resorting to quantitative and qualitative techniques. Regarding social movements, there was a proliferation of studies, some of them conducted by students’ dissertations, which contrasts with previous periods. The most discussed topics were: civic and urban (García, 1996; Torres, 1993; Novoa, 2009), peasant (Salgado y Prada, 2000; Ramírez, 2001), women (Lamus, 2010; Luna y Villarreal, 2011), indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian struggles (González, 2006; Pardo, 2001), and struggles for peace (García, 2006). Some global comparative analysis of the social struggles in Colombia were also conducted (Múnera, 1998; Archila y Pardo, 2001; Archila, 2003; Archila y otros, 2002).

5. Research between social organisations and the University

At the beginning of the XXI century, new research approaches emerged replicating the tradition created by Participatory Action Research (PAR) in a new phase of social movement consolidation that included indigenous people, women, environmentalists, rural workers, Afro-Colombians and LGBTI+ people, as well as urban working class young and cultural organizations. These participatory research approaches are consolidated by the co-operation between academic research groups and social organisations across the country; however, due to

7 With some exceptions, in terms of studies on peasant and student struggles (Fajardo, 1984; Bejarano, 1983; Jaramillo, 1988; García, 1990).

its richness in sources, this work focuses on the research group *Subjects and new narratives in social science research*, based at the National Pedagogic University in Bogotá.

From the last decade of the XX century, researchers that had made their careers within NGOs, started joining public universities, and were joined by activists that start their bachelors and postgrads in social Sciences. Their previous and new experiences conveyed into the universities via the creation of new seminars, courses and programs focused in community and other collective organisational processes. For instance, the leader and founder of the research group we are analysing, had a trajectory within Popular Education and had a background as researcher of the history of social urban struggle in Bogotá and the collective construction of memory with the Educative Dimension Association (Torres, 1993; Torres, 2014). In Colombia, Popular Education has been introduced as a pedagogic perspective inspired by Paulo Freire's ideas, which advocates the leadership of people in the understanding and transformations of unfair realities, through pedagogic experiences based on dialogue, participation and collective production of knowledge.

Correspondingly, in the Pedagogic University, a program in Community Education has been formed since 1985, connecting the academic work to community organisations in order to do joint projects on adult learning and cultural activities in Bogotá's working-class districts. Students produce small but significant process of participatory research, neighbourhood and community projects history, and contextualised curriculum design.

After forming the research group in the year 2000, researchers and community leaders decided to start the two-year project "Popular organisations, local identities and citizenship in Bogotá", which represented a thematic, methodological and conceptual milestone for the process. Thematically, one of the first questions guiding the project was about the longevity of the popular organisations that conformed it, as many of them could be traced back to the 1970's and were still active and relevant within the popular social movement. In terms of methodology, the project allowed to test an innovative and participative methodology: the systematisation of experiences. This meant that every step in the research process was the result of a collective agreement between researchers and members of the popular organisations. This dialogue showed that participatory research promotes self-learning and critical thought in popular organisations and enhances their ability to have agency in wider social transformations.

During that research a new research question emerged: what is pedagogic about social organisations? Two organisations that had participated in the original project (CPC and La Coordinadora) and a new one (Fundación Kerigma), teamed with the research group to analyse the educational and pedagogic dimensions of social organisations. As a result of this research, three dimensions of the pedagogic knowledge were recognized within social organisations: educational discourses and pedagogical work criteria, formation as pedagogic knowledge in organisations, and daily life as a formative scenario (Torres, Mendoza and Barragán, 2006).

From this research experience, a new interest in exploring educative processes that promoted critical thinking within the wider social movement in Colombia emerged. Consequently, some members of the research group conducted a project between 2005 and 2006 focusing on that matter: social movements, education and critical thinking formation. In this project, they teamed up with the *Red de Organizaciones de Educadoras Comunitarias*,

an association that gathers different organisations of community educators, which in Colombia are traditionally women. As a result of the research, it was concluded that these women collective had been creating a critic-interpretative community, which produced their own set of values, criteria and strategies to promote critical thinking among their members.

Later on, in the years 2011 and 2012, the group worked on the project “Education in Latin American social movements”, which aimed to analyse the educative dimension of some of the social movements in Latin America, understanding that these are spaces where pedagogic and emancipatory knowledges can thrive and have a high constituency potential. In order to achieve this, the group cooperated with the Autonomous Indigenous Intercultural University in Colombia, the Amauta Indigenous University in Ecuador, the Popular Secondary School Association in Argentina, and the Rural Workers Confederation’s leadership school in Brazil (CONTAG) (Torres, 2005).

This project widened the geographical scope of the research group, and at the same time validated participatory research methodologies and forged an alliance with other universities and research groups like the Popular Educators and Researchers Cooperative at the University of Buenos Aires and the aforementioned CONTAG. Building on that experience, between 2013 and 2014 the group’s attention turned back to the local level with the project “Formation of subjectivities, communal senses and politic alternatives in organizational processes”, aimed at understanding the concepts of alternative and political subjectivities and ideas of community in 3 community organisations (Aguilera, González and Torres, 2015).

As part of this process, and in alliance with other academic and social organisations, the research group has published books and articles aiming to synthesise the principles, criteria and methodologic strategies used so far (Aguilera, González and Torres, 2012; Torres, 2010; Torres, 2014; Barragán y Torres, 2017). A balance on the methodologic conclusions of that process is done in the following lines, and is divided in two parts: first, a definition of the principles and criteria behind this particular way of understanding and doing research; and second, a description of particular times and collective decision-making during the research process.

Based on the experience of these past years and on the work of Falkembach and Torres (2015) and Torres (1996), these are some of the main criteria for our way of understanding and doing research with social organisations, keeping in mind that this is a process of constant change and learning:

1. Maintaining a critical distance from institutionalised research modes in the scientific world, acknowledging their subordination to hegemonic powers (imperial, capitalist, modern colonial, etc.) and disdain for other forms of knowledge. Likewise, the limits of positivism are questioned to give an account of the intersubjective and cultural character of popular educational practices.
2. Assuming it to be both critical and emancipatory. It reveals situations, contexts, and structures of oppression and injustice while promoting the transformation of individuals and collectives into autonomous subjects capable of confronting adverse circumstances and ending the relationships that perpetuate oppressive schema. This liberating option is identified with values, willpower, and projects that involve new meanings of the organisation of collective life that form alternatives to capitalism; in other words, the concept that “other worlds are possible.”

3. Understanding Popular Education as qualitative research into a set of approaches, methodologies, strategies, and techniques that recognise the place of the cultural and the intersubjective, both in social phenomena and in social research processes. In fact, there is no social practice, educational or investigative, outside culture nor external to the symbolic interaction of the meanings and effects of individuals.
4. Linking it to emancipatory organisational processes and collective actions. Political and cultural emancipation is recognised as social action programmed by forces that resist the system of oppression, and research practices are the result of agreements with collectives, organizations, and social movements that decide to implement them as a means to try and strengthen their options and actions.
5. Not subordinating it to the institutional logic of disciplinary research. Instead of academic caprice or fashion, it is the nature of their feelings that motivates subjects and the problems that concern them which determine knowledge production. It is their interest in emancipation and their drive to understand, with the purpose of transforming unique social processes and practices, that dictates the approaches which cross institutional, epistemological, and methodological boundaries. Popular Education research is almost always situated between the academic and social worlds, blending knowledge production and political action.
6. Promoting group and organisation participation in research process decisions. This allows them to define and agree to the “why” and “what” behind the research; what will be researched and how; what the results will be; and what to do with them. In almost all cases, a research team that is responsible for data collection, analysis and interpretation, and results’ write-up is formed. Participative research promotes democratic relationships between the different categories of researcher subjects.
7. Ensuring that it drives formation of knowledge collectives. This research is identified with participatory focuses, so the knowledge subjects it involves are “common” people who are members of organisational processes and with whom agreements can be reached to carry out research and participate in teams. To activate participation, conditions and processes are generated to form collectives, using each project’s methodological approach, strategies, and techniques.
8. Critically relating it to theory. Since the historicity and uniqueness of social processes is emphasised, initial work with the protagonists focuses on understanding the elements, factors, and meanings that structure the study problems and how the subjects categorize and interpret these realities. Once reasons and meanings are identified, the relevant conceptual references are uncovered, to more deeply understand the initial findings. In this way, critical use of theoretical structures is made, provoking dialectic between comprehension of the specific and interpretation within wider frameworks.
9. Recognising the plurality of subjects and promoting a “dialogue of knowledge.” In recognising that the multiplicity of dimensions and senses within social processes cannot be encompassed inside a single rationality and cultural system, this research attempts to attain a consensus in ways of thinking, interpreting, and narrating reality; this is almost always a confrontational process.
10. Incorporating different forms and cultural practices that the communities have in order to produce and communicate their knowledge. From its origins, the research inspired

by Popular Education incorporated the arts and the popular music, humour, and celebration and decision-making events (assemblies, committees); this enabled meanings and popular worldviews to be not only objects but research perspectives.

11. Favours construction of life-ways from the uniqueness of the examined practices. Our researches propose capturing in words the meanings and feelings manifested in lived experience, transformed into an object of knowledge and action. Analysing social practices and identifying the socio-historic conditions they create is a means of linking the ways subjects talk about “what happens” to their practices and seeing how these mark and transform them.
12. Assuming methodology to be a flexible practice. As a way of counteracting the instrumental rationality of institutionalised research, this perspective treats methodologies as constructions to be adopted critically and creatively. The research adapts to and creates strategies and procedures according to the unique meanings, subjects, and questions of each project.
13. Assuming research within Popular Education is a reflexive practice. As long as the subjects’ researchers are recognised as carriers of culture and subjectivity, it becomes necessary to subject a permanent critical judgment to each of the moments and decisions of any research process.

Now, in terms of the particular times and collective decision-making during our research process, the following is a methodologic route which, with possible variations depending on the case, is followed by researchers working with social organisations:

1. Collective project definition. We reached agreements on the research questions, justification and methodology, and a work plan created to delineate activities, responsibilities, resources and times.
2. Investigation of main research problems. This was done by defining, reconstructing and analysing some of the main significant events of each sub-topic. This was not a linear reconstruction of movement’s historic events and processes, but production of agreed upon stories regarding key events. Analysis of these stories produced inputs for further interpretation.
3. Moments of analysis. We first analysed achievements, challenges and lessons learned, and then socialised and discussed these issues in subsequent meetings.
4. Results synthesis. We produced a written text from the set of topics, events and reconstructed processes, including analyses by event and topic, conclusions and recommendations. Within the reconstruction process, these texts were discussed and amended, then assembled into a whole. This in turn was read various times by group members and a supportive researcher who helped to edit for style.
5. Socialisation of the research findings and conclusions did not end with the book. A video was produced in active collaboration with students from the Universidad, and community activities were carried out to socialize and discuss the study results with members of the organisations.

6. Current trends: social movements that do research

After this short history of the recent relationship between research and social movements in Colombia, we present a description of the state of that relationship now and in the past decade. First, social mobilisation keeps growing and also keeps widening its motivations: aside with traditional civil rights, working-class and rural claims, new topics like the defence of traditional territories and ecosystems against transnational extractivism, the claim for a dialogued end of the civil war in Colombia and the requirement of protection for social leaders being systematically killed. Additionally, there's been a revival of both the student and teachers organised movement against austerity and neoliberal policies against public education (Cruz, 2017).

Related to these different forms of collective action, research produced from academia and NGOs keeps growing, with a great increase in MA and PhD dissertations addressing education and social movements. In this research, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been used, although there has been a greater emphasis on highlighting the social movement participants' voice through interviews and focus groups (Archila and González, 2010).

There has been some innovation in this past decade. One has been the formalisation of the relationship between researchers and social organisations with the creation of observatories and networks in which activists are often producing research themselves (Dussan, 2017; Red Popular de Mujeres de La Sabana, 2019). In those cases, research strategies have tended to be of a dialectic and co-operative nature, with the inclusion of innovative communication and outreach strategies like walking tours, photographic exhibitions and other visual and narrative expressions.

These innovations announce a growing trend, where social movements are at the centre of research process, having greater agency and leading the alliance with academic and non-academic research groups and networks. Additionally, the most established organisations have permanent suborganizations committed to the production and dissemination of knowledge, which, in their own terms, contact established researchers and institutions. This research produced "from below" and with more horizontal relationships between academia, NGOs and social movements, has also promoted the renewal of the epistemological and methodological principles in participatory research. Along with the traditional sources of Marxism and Participatory Action Research, post and de-colonial as well as community-centred feminist perspectives have enriched the range of theoretical scopes available. Similarly, new methodologies like social cartography, word *mingas*, tours through the territory and visual narratives have complemented the already diverse set of strategies used so far.

Above all, we consider that the growing collaboration between universities, NGOs, researchers and social movement brings benefit for all the participants, as, on the one hand, it renews universities main functions (formation, education, outreach); and on the other, it helps widening researchers' methodological, theoretical and epistemological references. Consequently, it promotes the empowerment of the social movement through the production and socialisation of knowledge by and for itself.

Conclusions

After this panoramic view of the relationship between universities, researchers and social movements in Colombia we can see how, in a mostly conservative institutional context, a set of avant-garde takes on the production of knowledge have been developed beyond the epistemological and methodologic principles of conventional research. Additionally, these novel ways of researching have permeated academia, not “through the front door”, but through the cracks generated by specific projects of university extension, community practices and non-disciplinary education programs.

In contrast, we have also seen how this emancipatory and politically engaged research, which actively involves regular people and organisations in the production of knowledge, can sometimes be appropriated by international organisations and governments and be put at the service of their political agenda. Therefore, research involving social movements is currently a field in constant construction, where new research methods, techniques and strategies emerge; many of them inspired by the accumulated principles, criteria and standards of participatory methodologies.

Bibliografía

- A.V. (1985). *La investigación sobre movimiento obrero en Colombia*. Medellín, IPC – CEIS – Dimensión Educativa, CINEP y ENS.
- Aguilera A., González M. I. y Torres A. (2012), “Investigar subjetividades y formación de sujetos con organizaciones y movimientos sociales”, en: Claudia Piedrahita y otros, *Acercamientos metodológicos a la subjetivación política: debates latinoamericanos*, Buenos Aires, CLACSO –UD
- (2014). *Reinventando la comunidad y la política*, Bogotá, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
- Archila, M. (1986). “Aquí nadie es forastero. Testimonios sobre la formación de una cultura radical”. *Controversia* 133 – 134, Bogotá, CINEP
- (1987). “Barranquilla y río: una historia social de sus trabajadores”. *Controversia* 142, Bogotá, CINEP
- (1989). “Ni amos ni siervos. Memoria obrera de Bogotá y Medellín”. *Controversia* 156 – 157, Bogotá, CINEP
- (2003). *Idas y venidas, vueltas y revueltas. Protestas sociales en Colombia 1958 – 1990*, Bogotá, CINEP – ICANH
- Archila M. y González N. (2010). *Movimiento indígena caucano: historia y política*, Bogotá, USTA
- Archila M. y Pardo M. (2001). *Movimientos sociales y democracia en Colombia*. Bogotá, ICANH
- Archila y otros (2002). *25 años de luchas sociales en Colombia 1975 – 2000*, Bogotá, CINEP
- (2018). *Cuando la copa se rebasa. Luchas sociales en Colombia 1975 – 2105*, Bogotá, CINEP
- Avendaño M., Barragán D., González M. I., Mendoza N., Torres A., Vargas A., y Vallejo M. (2003). *Organizaciones populares, identidades locales y ciudadanía en Bogotá*. Bogotá, UPN – COLCIENCIAS
- AVESOL (2013). *Avesol: 36 años de resistencia popular en el suroriente bogotano*. Bogotá, ARFO
- Barragán, D. (2017). *Procesos formativos de la Consejería Mujer, Familia y Generación de la Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia, producción de subjetividades femeninas emancipadoras y reelaboración de proyectos alternativos*. Tesis para optar por el título de Doctora en Educación. Bogotá, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
- Barragán, D., Mendoza, N. y Torres, A. (2006). “Aquí todo es educativo”, *Folios* # 23, Bogotá, Facultad de Humanidades, UPN.

- Barragán, D. y Torres, A. (2017). *La sistematización como investigación interpretativa crítica*, Bogotá, El Búho - Síntesis
- Cataño, G. y otros (1987). *Ciencia y compromiso. En torno a la obra de Orlando Fals Borda*, Bogotá, Asociación colombiana de sociología
- Cruz, Edwin (2017). *Caminando la palabra. Movilizaciones sociales en Colombia (2010 -2016)*, Bogotá, Ediciones Desde Abajo
- Dussán, Miller (2017). *El Quimbo. Extractivismo, despojo, ecocidio y resistencia*, Bogotá, Planeta Paz - ASOQUIMBO
- Fals Borda, O. (1970). *Ciencia propia y colonialismo intelectual*, Bogotá, Punta de Lanza
- (1994). *Por la praxis. El problema de cómo investigar la realidad para transformarla*, Bogotá, Tercer Mundo editores
- Fals Borda O., Guzmán Campos, G. y Umaña Luna, E. (1962). *La violencia en Colombia*, Bogotá, Universidad Nacional de Colombia
- Falkembach E. y Torres A. (2015). “Systematization of Experiences: A Practice of Participatory Research from Latin America”, Barbury H., *The Sage Handbook of qualitative research*, London, Sage
- García, M. (1997). “Descentralización y movilización popular en Bogotá”, en: García, M. y Zamudio J. V. *Descentralización en Bogotá bajo La lupa (1992 – 1996)*, Bogotá, CINEP
- García-Durán, M. (2006). *Movimiento por la paz en Colombia*. Bogotá, CINEP
- González, C. (2006). *Resistencia indígena. Alternativa en medio del conflicto colombiano*. Bogotá, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
- Gramsci, A. (1985). *Antología*, México, Siglo XXI editores
- Herrera, N. (2018). *Saber colectivo y educación popular. Tentativas sobre Orlando Fals Borda*. Buenos Aires, El Colectivo – Ediciones desde abajo
- Lemus, D. (2010). *De la subversión a la inclusión: movimientos de mujeres de la segunda ola en Colombia (1975 – 2005)*, Bogotá, ICANH
- Lukács, G. (1975). *Historia y conciencia de clase*, Barcelona, Ediciones Grijalbo
- Luna L. y Villarreal N. (2011). *Movimientos de mujeres y participación política en Colombia del siglo XX al siglo XX*, Bogotá, Editorial Gente Nueva
- Medina, M. (1984). *La protesta urbana en Colombia*, Bogotá, Editorial Aurora
- Múnera, L. (1998). *Rupturas y continuidades. Poder y movimiento popular en Colombia 1968 -1988*, Bogotá, IEPRI –Universidad Nacional de Colombia
- Novoa E. (2009). *Trayectorias geopolíticas en Colombia*, Bogotá, Universidad Nacional de Colombia
- Pardo M. (2001). *Acción colectiva y etnicidad*, Bogotá, ICANH
- Parra, E. (1983). *La investigación acción en la Costa Atlántica. Evaluación de la Rosca 1972 – 1974*, Cali, FUNCOP
- Ramírez, M. C. (2001). *Entre el estado y la guerrilla: identidad y ciudadanía en el movimiento de campesinos cocaleros del Putumayo*, Bogotá, ICANH
- Red popular de mujeres de la sabana (2019). *La economía del cuidado como práctica y discurso político de mujeres populares* (2 volúmenes), Bogotá, Fundación Rosa Luxemburgo
- Salgado C. y Prada E. (2000). *Campesinado y protesta social en Colombia*, Bogotá, CINEP
- Santana, P. y otros (1982). “El paro cívico 1981”, *Controversia* 101, Bogotá, CINEP
- (1983). “Desarrollo regional y paros cívicos en Colombia”. *Controversia* 107-108, Bogotá, CINEP
- (1989). *Los movimientos sociales en Colombia*, Bogotá, Ediciones Foro
- Soto, D. (2005). “Aproximación histórica a la historia del movimiento estudiantil en Colombia”, *Revista Historia de la educación latinoamericana*, Vol. 7, Tunja, UPTC
- Torres, A. (1993). *La ciudad en la sombra. Barrios y luchas populares en Bogotá (1958 -1977)*, Bogotá, CINEP

- (1994). Jorge Eliécer Gaitán y la educación popular, Quito, CEDECO
- (2007). *Identidad y política de la acción colectiva*. Bogotá, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
- (2008). “Investigar en los márgenes de las Ciencias Sociales”, en: *Folios* # 27, Bogotá, Revista de la Facultad de Humanidades. UPN. doi: 10.17227/01234870.27folios51.62
- (2010). “Generating knowledge in popular education: from participatory research to systematization of experiences”, in *International journal of Action Research*, Vol. 6, # 2 – 3, Mering, Germany doi: 10.1688/1861-9916_IJAR_2010_02-03_Torres
- (2014). “Producción de conocimiento desde la investigación crítica”, *Nómaditas* # 40. Instituto de Estudios Sociales Contemporáneos – Universidad Central
- (2015). *Educación popular y movimientos sociales en América Latina*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Biblos

About the autor

Social educator and researcher, Ph.D. in Latin American Studies at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Professor at la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (Colombia).

Author' address

Alfonso Torres Carrillo
Carrera 57 # 53 - 50 Ap 5 - 536
Balcones de Pablo VI, Bogotá, DC
alfonsitorres@gmail.com
Phone: 57 3107740608

Workplace Innovation Programmes: bridging research and policymaking

Egoitz Pomares¹

Abstract

The article reviews the concept of Workplace Innovation Programmes as public policy tools supported by research. Pursuing a socio-political perspective the text explores programme-level issues. To do this, conceptual definitions are reviewed and the programme's main features, discussed using an analytical model designed by previous researchers. In this sense, programmes underpinned by research as a tool for public policies are presented as mechanisms to link different levels and actors in matters related to productivity and the quality of working life. The article reviews different approaches and strategies for policymaking, aiming at better understand how programmes operate. For this purpose previous European experiences are used. The rationale of this article must be found in a explorative and learning-oriented context to better design and implement programme-based public policies and the use of action-research for policy learning. This is of particular interest in the local context of Gipuzkoa (Basque Country, Spain) where this kind of approach has become of relevance in the policymaking.

Key words: programmes; working life reform; policy learning; actionable knowledge.

Programas de innovación en contextos de trabajo: vinculando la investigación y la formulación de políticas públicas

Resumen

El artículo examina el concepto de los programas de innovación en los contextos de trabajo como instrumentos de política pública asistidos por la investigación. Desde una perspectiva sociopolítica el texto explora cuestiones relacionadas con el diseño e implementación de los mismos. Para ello se revisan las definiciones conceptuales y se analizan las principales características de los programas empleando un modelo analítico diseñado por la investigación acción. En este sentido, los programas sustentados en la investigación como herramienta de políticas públicas se presentan como mecanismos para vincular diferentes niveles y actores en temas relacionados con la productividad y la calidad de la vida laboral. En el artículo se examinan diferentes enfoques y estrategias para la formulación de

1 The author is grateful to the two IJAR reviewers for their comments, as well as to Frank Pot and Richard Ennals for their support on an earlier draft of this article.

políticas, con el fin de comprender mejor el funcionamiento de los programas. Para ello el artículo se apoya en determinadas experiencias europeas. Por todo ello, la fundamentación de este artículo debe encontrarse en un contexto exploratorio y orientado al aprendizaje en diseño de políticas públicas y el uso de la investigación-acción para el aprendizaje político. Lo anterior resulta de particular interés en el contexto local de Gipuzkoa (País Vasco, España), donde este tipo de enfoques ha adquirido relevancia en la formulación de políticas públicas.

Palabras clave: programas; reforma de la vida laboral; aprendizaje político; conocimiento práctico.

1. Background

“A good programme is a programme that phases itself fruitfully into ongoing processes, helps improve on them for a period of time, and then waves farewell to processes that continue to gain in momentum, speed, and quality”

Gustavsen, Finne & Oscarsson, 2001, p. 9.

In Europe, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a series of international seminars and conferences were organised around initiatives and activities focused on working life reform known as programmes. In this context back in 1989, an international conference on action research in relation to new ways of organising work was held in Sweden. In 1991, with the collaboration of institutions and universities from the Netherlands, the action research network itself promoted a second conference with the aim of developing new ideas. Under the title “Action Research and the Future of Work” the meeting was used to discuss matters related to the future of work, the development of new methodologies of action research associated with work and industrial relations, the exchange of trans-national experiences, the strengthening of a collaboration network, and the development of international research programmes. The organisation and contents presented and discussed contain many of the proposals and progress made by researchers, with a strong emphasis on aspects linked to organisational changes. The third conference was held in 1993, in Finland, under the title “Active Society with Action Research” and was hosted by the Ministry of Labour and the Finnish Labour Relations Association. The content of this conference was used for the presentation of several assessment reports and other studies on the experiences of implemented programmes and their links to action research. In general, the idea of addressing development programmes was the main focus. The materials are included in the book “National Action Research Programmes in the 1990’s” edited by Kaupinnen & Lahtonen (1994). Recently, after 25 years, these matters related to the future of work and action research have been re-launched in Norway. In 2018, “Coping with the Future: Business, Work and Science in the Age of Digitalisation and Sustainability” was organised with the aim of bringing together separate discourses that concern the future of work (Johnsen, 2018). The materials are accessible in the “International Journal of Action Research” (2018, Vol. 14-2/3) and the “European Journal of Workplace Innovation” (2018, Vol. 4-1). This will be followed by a symposium held in 2020 in the Basque Country (Spain), focused on the support provided by action research for the design and preparation of public policies and organised by Orkestra, the Basque Institute of Competitiveness.

In one way or another, the conferences and meetings mentioned show, in addition to the fact that there is an action research network, the need to identify bridges between research and social challenges for the design and implementation of public policies. From a European perspective as indicated by Pot, Totterdill and Dhondt (2017) this issues gained a recognition with the Commission's Green Paper "Partnership for a new organisation of work" and the policy document "Modernising the organisation of work – a positive approach to change" (See Ennals, 1998). Another good example of networking can be found in the European Workplace Innovation Network (EUWIN), created under request of the European Commission (2013-2017), to exchange good practices and stablish alliances of employers, trade unions, governments, knowledge agents and research organisations. As pointed by Dhondt, Totterdill and Van Hootgem (2019, p. 37) "the European Commission wanted to spread the idea that innovation in companies not only was the result of R&D investments but needed to be supported by the work practices in companies too!". Nowadays EUWIN remains functioning as a loosely coupled network to support any action at the EU-level on the topic.

2. Context

Many of the efforts made in favour of adopting new forms of work organisation have been expressed in the shape of activities organised jointly by public institutions, actors from the labour market and research. From among the different experiences developed during the last half century, we can identify some where action research has played a role. I am referring, specifically, to initiatives that have been described on several occasions (Gustavsen, Hansson & Qvale, 2008). First it was the LOM (Leadership, Organisation and Management) programme in Sweden (1985-90) organised by the Work Environment Fund in cooperation with agents from the labour market (Gustavsen, 1992; Naschold et al., 1993). This programme offered financial support to many interventions in companies and organisations by providing tax reinvestment schemes in jobs at national level (Gustavsen et al., 1996). Then came the Enterprise Development 2000 programme (1994–2000) organised by the Norwegian Work Research Institute, a programme with a regional focus and deployment that was supported by the labour market parties (employers and trade unions), involving both researchers and other development actors (Gustavsen et al., 1998; Levin [Ed.], 2002). Value Creation 2010 is a third example, a programme developed between 2001-2007 also in Norway (Gustavsen, 2001, 2008). These Nordic experiences are proof of the interest in creating development coalitions (Ennals & Gustavsen, 1999) through action research (Gustavsen, 2007b, 2011; Pålshaugen, 2014; Greenwood [Ed.], 1999). To these three references, with widespread recognition in the action research community due to their use of research methodology, I should add the Humanization of Work/Work and Technology programme and the Finnish National Workplace Development Programme. Both experiences were respectively launched by governments of Germany (Fricke, 1997, 2000, 2011) and Finland (Alasoini, 1997, 2004, 2014, 2015). It should be mentioned that all the programmes indicated have been developed based on national agreements, and that these actions have been integrated into broad institutional frameworks.

The choice of the above-mentioned programmes is justified by the logic of extracting local experiences, which in generic terms can help to understand the programmes as a bridge to reform working life in Europe. In countries such as Norway and Sweden, experiments related to industrial democracy or the redesign of job positions date back to 1960. In other countries such as Finland, the Government's role and the centralised nature of the innovation and development policies has been a feature since 1990. Although most of these experiences are circumscribed to what has been called the Scandinavian model, the lessons from this experience favour a continuity or line of development from which it is possible to draw and adopt conclusions. This is why the approach used in this article seeks to support itself with cases that make it possible to explain and understand the progress of these programmes over the course of 50 years. This in turn entails an analysis of the European approach to work organisation (Ennals & Gustavsen, 1999) and Programme Theory (Alasoini, 2016).

3. The emergence and evolution of the Programmes

Despite certain common trends, the evolution and development of working life in Europe has been different as regards approaches, designs and institutional arrangements (Gustavsen et al., 2001; Alasoini, 2009b, 2016; Naschold, 1993). In recent history, the interest shown by governments and the actors of the labour market in the search for new forms of work organisation have varied depending on the period and country in question.

The first *experiments* by K. Lewin focused on the replacement of Taylorism with autonomous forms of work organisation. Using field experiments as a starting point, a series of activities emerged in European industrialised countries in the form of programmes. This emergence must be understood within the context of the debate on industrial democracy that arose around 1960 as a result of the problems associated with the crisis of Taylorism, Fordism and the mass production model. These activities have been developed under concepts that include the humanisation of work, industrial democracy, developmental work, leadership, organisation and co-determination, value creation and organisational development. Since then and up until today, certain European countries, led by the Nordic countries and Germany, have implemented programmes to develop work organisation and promote workplace innovation. From among the studies carried out (Naschold, 1993, 1994; Business Decisions Limited, 2000; Gustavsen et al., 2001; Brödner & Latniak, 2003; Alasoini, 2009; Alasoini et al., 2005; Totterdill et al., 2009; Eeckelaert et al., 2012), it can be concluded that the number of initiatives of this type continues to be limited (Alasoini, Ramstad & Totterdill, 2017). With similar effects, the European community policy (Kesseling, Blasy & Scopetta, 2014) in this field has been described as fragmented (Ennals & Gustavsen, 1999; Ennals, 2002; Pot, Totterdill & Dhondt, 2016; Totterdill et al., 2009).

Public intervention, whether it is at European, national or local level, resembles a kaleidoscope (Van Beinum, 1993). An example of this can be found in the variety of ways that the programmes are launched and financed (Pot, 2011). In certain cases such as in Sweden, Finland, Germany, France and Scotland the government or governmental agencies have played a key role. In other cases, in countries such as Norway, Denmark, Ireland and

the Netherlands, programme governance has been carried out by the labour market actors. In cases such as Emilia-Romagna (Italy), North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany) and the Basque Country (Spain) it is the regional actors and institutions who promote or have promoted the programmes.

During their long history, learning from the programmes has been a subject of interest and analysis. Specifically, in aspects linked to the capacity for diffusion of new forms of work organisation and the social legitimacy of such interventions (Naschold et al., 1993; Oehlke, 2001; Levin, 2002; Pålshaugen, 2009, 2014; Gustavsen, 2008; Riegler, 2008; Arnkil, 2008; Zettel, 2010; Alasoini, 2016). While the problems of diffusion refer to the difficulty of using the knowledge gained from individual projects in a larger number of organisations and interest groups, social legitimacy refers to the ability of the programmes to generate positive effects that transcend them and the justification in terms of public intervention (Alasoini, 2018). For certain sensitivities, work organisation is a private matter between a company and its employees. In order for programmes financed with public resources to maintain their legitimacy, it is necessary that the effects generated in working life are inclusive and based on learning that is sustainable in the long term (Alasoini, 1999, pp.4-5; 2016, p. 52).

It is precisely the relationship between public action, on the one hand, and the development processes in working life on the other, which are the starting point to consider the programmes as bridges. This article aims to explore these matters in more depth, with a particular focus on learning process and the learning subjects of the programmes. However, due to the institutional differences between the countries and regions that implement these policies, learning between programmes remains as a complex task (Riegler, 2008; Pålshaugen, 2009; Alasoini, 2009). This article pursues a socio-political perspective and focuses on programme-level aspects. By reviewing analytical models² generated by previous action-research, my motivation and interest looks towards the description and analysis of the activities and policies used to promote participation in the shape of programmes.

This is of particular importance for Gipuzkoa, a province of the Basque Country (Spain), where policies in favour of workers' participation have a particular root. Being the cradle of co-operativism, the territory of Gipuzkoa has implemented programmes for the promotion of workers participation (Pomares, Luna & Unceta, 2016; Pomares, 2018; 2019). Designed as policy instruments for the implementation and development of organisational human-centred models, workplace innovation programmes are framed within a broader context such as innovation. An example of how action research can facilitate a better design and implementation of programmes can be found in Gipuzkoa Workplace Innovation; a 5 year action research project, which addressing programme level issues. Through the 2014-2019 action research has been conducted in collaboration with the European Workplace Innovation Network (EUWIN), which provides a scene to learn from other EU level programme experiences. Additionally, action research also has its path in the Territory of

2 These models have been developed and disseminated in the action research community at the conferences mentioned above (Kauppinen & Lahtonen, 1994), in assessment reports (Naschold, 1993; 1994), in research and co-operation projects (Alasoini et al., 2005; Zettel, 2010) and in other publications and articles (Alasoini, 2009b; 2016).

Gipuzkoa; Fagor's experience, edited by Greenwood and Santos (1992), and other more recent projects, such as Gipuzkoa Sarean (Karlsen & Larrea, 2014, 2016), account for this.

4. The conceptualisation of the Programmes

“Programmes operate at a different level than stand-alone workplace development projects do”
Alasoini, 2016, p. 40.

The actions aimed at reforming working life can be launched from different angles that range from business initiatives that include the process of change and development, to other more broader ones that take the shape of programmes. As mentioned at the start of this article, in some countries, the *public* takes the shape of an agent of change in working life (Gustavsen et al., 1996). In Europe, the need to establish policies and mechanisms focused on growth and progress has determined the interest of policymakers in adopting formulas in favour of working life quality and the improvement of productivity (Pot et al., 2016). However, the political response throughout Europe has been unequal (Oeij, Rus & Pot, 2017 [Eds.]; Pot et al., 2017).

Given that the programmes reflect the contemporary changes that take place in the social and economic dimensions (Fricke, 2003) and depend on the context they operate in, they can take a variety of forms (Gustavsen, 2008, p. 16). As regards innovation policies, public action can be carried out by using a diverse range of political instruments (Borrás & Edquist, 2013). Relationships based on regulation typically consist of a group of legal links between a company and an agency or public institution.

In relation to work organisation, at the more general level, we can refer to hard and soft forms of regulation. While the first concept refers to legislation and other binding regulations such as collective agreements or other more or less binding regulations applied broadly, soft regulation indicates a persuasive and non-binding political intervention. Both types, hard and soft regulation, can be divided into direct and indirect forms of intervention (Alasoini, 2011, 2016; Alasoini, Ramstad & Totterdill, 2017).

“A soft approach can be a useful policy option, especially in situations where the objects for change (companies) are heterogeneous; processes leading to desired changes (workplace innovations) can take different shapes and means used in the promotion of changes (the introduction of new organizational and management practices) are of a sensitive nature” (Alasoini, 2011, p. 29)

Soft instruments are distinguished from the others due to their voluntary and non-coercive nature, where public and private stakeholders establish forms of cooperation that are not strongly hierarchical and where there is a mutual exchange of information (Borrás & Edquist, 2013). Many of the alternative experiences to traditional regulations have emerged from the programmes (Ennals & Gustavsen, 1999, p. 71). It can therefore be stated that programmes are a form of regulation widely used to facilitate workplace innovation that range from general frameworks of policies and recommendations, or the provision of training and information frameworks on good practices, to more direct forms such as the provision of advice and consultancy services, comparative evaluation tools, financing lines, sub-

sidies or tax incentives for companies and organisations (Alasoini, 2008; 2009; Alasoini et al., 2005).

Programmes, unlike projects, are more complex in nature and have a larger scope and timescale (Naschold, 1994). In general, programmes have been understood as temporary organisations (Turner & Müller, 2003), temporary systems (Miles, 1964; Packendorff, 1995) and as fixed-term institutionalised activities (Alasoini, 2008). In the literature of management and change, programmes are understood as mechanisms that simultaneously manage, based on a series of pre-planned activities, a series of action-oriented projects (Ferns, 1991, Gray, 1997; Pellegrini, 2002). Conceptualised as a phenomenon of a nature qualitatively different to projects, programmes have been understood as vehicles for strategic implementation and organisational renewal (Pellegrini, 1997); in a traditional sense, programmes have been characterised as support tools for the management of a portfolio of interrelated projects focused on achieving goals that are unachievable via the management of individual projects (Reiss, 1996; Pellegrini, 1997).

However, although the above definitions and approaches may provide a generic conceptualisation of the term, in the case of programmes created for dealing with complex objects such as the reform of working life, programmes as a public policy tool have further particular features. While some programmes operate as simple administrative or financial umbrellas, or as tools for financing projects (Alasoini, 2008, p. 67) others establish a common foundation in the creation of a framework shared by the actors involved (Gustavsen, 1994, p. 15). In coherence with the above, based on the idea that a programme consists of a group of related activities and projects that includes a variety of stakeholders (Brulin & Svensson, 2012), Alasoini (2008; 2016) establishes the existence of three characteristic aspects:

- A shared framework that applies to several organisations simultaneously guides the development.
- The management and the staff of the participating organisations, and other major stakeholder groups such as policymakers, social partners, researchers, consultants and other external experts to the organisation in question agree on the content of the framework.
- The involved organisations engage in an exchange of information, interaction and co-operation.

According to Gustavsen (2008, p. 16) “a programme aims at making enterprise level actors initiate changes and offers support to processes that emerge if the local parties decide to make real the intention of the programme. Beyond this, programmes can be of many forms”. With these basic aspects, the programmes can acquire different forms and strategies depending on criteria such as the size of the target group, the nature of the participation, the level of expert knowledge and the role of research, among others (Alasoini, 2005; Gustavsen, 2008). Public programmes designed to promote organisational change and innovation are generally run with the management and staff actively working alongside a group of researchers. A feature that is central to the approach of these policies is that they complement other policy frameworks (Lorenz, 2013) such as those related to employment, maintaining working skills, lifelong learning and working life quality (Alasoini, 1999, pp. 2-3).

5. Objectives of the Programmes: strategies for bridging micro and macro levels

Developing a policy aimed at promoting innovation in work organisation starts off with particular aspects such as the objectives it pursues, the implementation methods and the publicity of the results (Alasoini, 1999, p. 4-5). The main objective of a policy for workplace development must be found in the simultaneous improvement of productivity levels and the legitimate interests of the actors involved. As regards the implementation methods, the actors involved have, at least in principle, the chance to participate in the planning and implementation of activities to be developed within the programme. And lastly, the publicity of the results derived from the adoption of new forms of organisation received with public support require publicity.

Each programme has a defined role and function (Alasoini, 2008). Programmes based on public action respond to different motivations and objectives, and their analysis can be carried out in light of 4 dimensions (Alasoini, 2004): the objectives of the public policy, the objectives of the programme, the generative results and the results at the workplace level. Firstly, the public policy objectives describe the types of social phenomena that an intervention in the form of a programme must have an impact on. In general, the objectives at this level are defined in the mission declaration of a programme. Secondly, the goals at programme level are described as the activities promoted, by means of the available resources, in order to achieve the targets indicated in the objectives of the public policy. Thirdly, the objectives and generative results refer to the ways in which the results and the experiences obtained in individual projects benefit other workplaces, stakeholders or the general public. The objective focuses on the dissemination of new forms, practices and methods of work organisation that leads to new ideas or applications in the contexts where it is applied. Finally, programmes also have objectives at the workplace level that include objectives related to immediate improvements in the activities directed by the project and their sustainability. The objective at job level is to facilitate the adoption of sustainable production models through the action.

As has been stated, another feature of the programmes is related to the type of objectives that they pursue: the production of workplace innovations (WPI). As suggested by Pot, Totterdill & Dhondt (2016, p. 15), the term “describes the participatory and inclusive nature of innovations that embed workplace practices grounded in continuing reflection, learning and improvements in the way in which organisations manage their employees, organise work and deploy technologies”. Referring to a wider context Totterdill & Fricke (2004, p. 3) stress that:

“Critically, workplace innovation should be seen as the product of a complex process of learning grounded in, for example, vertical and horizontal interaction within firms, networking between firms (industry associations, supply chain relationships, etc.), public policy, vocational training, industrial relations, the financial system, and so on”

In terms of the programme, the objectives have a twofold dimension. Naschold and Alasoini stress this aspect. For example, Naschold (1994, p. 121) suggests that the main objective of the programmes “is not only to bring about improvements at the micro level, but also to induce spin-off and linkage effects leading to improvements in social welfare and productivity at macro-level”. Similarly, Alasoini argues that,

“Programmes do not basically aim (only) at micro-level (company- or organization-level) changes. Clearly distinguishable positive externalities, which appear at best as cumulative innovations, can be considered minimum targets of any programme. Cumulative innovations can in turn lead to changes among a larger number of work organizations or, at most, to macro-level changes” (Alasoini, 2016, p. 34).

According to both authors, establishing objectives for programmes covers two main dimensions: productivity/well-being and micro/macro levels. According to Alasoini, the conditions that make the above possible result from the conjunction of two criteria or strategies. Firstly, the programme strategies must include elements that help to simultaneously improve productivity and the quality of working life at both micro (at the company or organisation level) and macro (public policy sphere where it is implemented) levels. Secondly, these strategies must include elements that facilitate building bridges between the micro and macro levels (Alasoini, 2016, p. 99).

6. Evolution in the design of the Programmes

The design of the programmes has varied during recent decades. Gustavsen (2006) organises this evolution into three sequential phases that he calls demonstration, diffusion and generativity programmes. The first generation of programmes is based on the idea of identifying new forms of work organisation through the description and discussion in terms of research of *star cases*, for their subsequent demonstration of results to a broader group of actors. Due to the problems associated with a limited capacity for the transfer and adaptation of the solutions identified, the demonstration programmes acquire mechanisms for the promotion of learning-based forms of work organisation. During a second phase, by means of *diffusion programmes*, new initiatives are introduced with a focus on aspects such as information, education and training. During a third phase, generative programmes emerge, whose main objective lies in their ability to support transitions towards the adoption of learning-focused forms of work organisation.

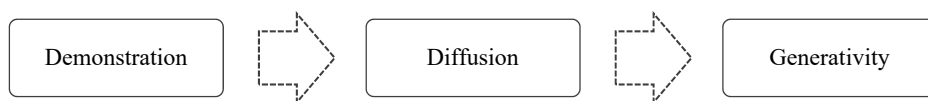


Figure 1: Programme design transition. Source: Gustavsen, 2006.

While in the first programmes efforts focused on a group of exemplary case studies, subsequent initiatives have focused on aspects related to how to achieve far-reaching changes and sufficient critical mass. To the extent that *star cases* tended to disappear, horizontal interaction and cooperation between companies replaced the way in which organisations conceived change (Gustavsen, 2007a). The difficulties that the first programmes encountered with the diffusion of the results led to the need to increase the mass of participants and encourage them to establish networks between them. During the ensuing decades, the networks started to be considered as learning tools instead of simply being the channel for disseminating information (Ennals & Gustavsen 1999; Gustavsen et al., 2001; Alasoini, 2018a,

2018b). The strategies for improving the capacity to produce generative results are linked to the development of the efficiency of the programme's information diffusion channels. Instead of limiting participation to a few demonstrative projects, alternative programme strategies include a high number of workplaces, R&D institutes and other stakeholders with permanent, long-term interaction. This strategy represents an alternative approach based on interactive or recurrent innovative logic, as opposed to a linear model based on sequential events (Gustavsen, Hart & Hofmaier, 1991; Alasoini, 2018b).

7. From best practices to learning-oriented models

Programmes have undergone a transformation through changes in the design and implementation methods. Starting from institutional differences, learning from previous programmes and experiences is an issue that, although complex, requires frameworks for the identification of criteria that favour a better understanding of how programmes operate. These can be addressed through existing analytical frameworks.

Based on Naschold's³ (1993, 1994) model of *good practices*, which has been used for the analysis of the strategies used by the programmes, and the subsequent conceptual and methodological development carried out by Alasoini⁴ (2009, 2016, see also Alasoini et al., 2005), in this section the six dimensions that make up this analytical framework are presented. The characteristics described below are six: the political context, learning orientation, participation, horizontal networking, infrastructure and the programme's resources.

Table 1: Six dimensions for understanding programmes

Dimension	Explanation
Policy context	Describes the strategic justification, identifies major players, sets the territorial scope and the research or development focus of a programme.
Learning	Identifies the sources for learning and its orientation.
Participation	Analyses the focus of the activities, the influence of participants in the development activities and their inclusiveness in terms of gender and ageing issues.
Horizontal networking	Explores how strongly activities are connected to each other among workplaces, projects and organisations.
Infrastructure	Identifies how research and training are included in programme activities and the diversity level of the expertise provided by R&D (public and private) infrastructure supporting the development.
Aims and resources	Describes tangible and intangible resources provided by the programme

Resource: Alasoini, 2009

- 3 The model was presented at the conference held in Helsinki (Finland) in 1993 "Active Society with Action Research" and is documented in a volume published by Kaupinnen & Lahtonen (1994) "National Action Research Programmes in the 1990's". The model can also be consulted in "Constructing the New Industrial Society" edited by Naschold et al., 1993.
- 4 The revision carried out by Alasoini is within the framework of the Work In Net Project (Zettel, 2010). This model provides a revision of the content and methodology proposed by Naschold. The model, which over the years has been updated several times, can be consulted in several publications (Alasoini et al. 2005; Alasoini, 2009, 2016).

These six dimensions encourage a better understanding of the critical factors for the improvement of the planning and implementation of the programme:

The strategic justification and the political context of the programme enable an analysis of the reasons or justifications for the strategies adopted. This analysis is carried out based on the understanding of whether the focus of the programme is at a national or regional level, and on the focus of the programme towards research and/or, if applicable, development, and the role of the main actors. The scope of action of a programme is essentially determined by the nature of the public body or institution that drives and promotes the activity and the territorial space in which it is implemented. In this sense, while certain programmes may be at a European or national level, the regional perspective has become relevant (Fricke & Totterdill [Eds.], 2004; Gustavsen, 2006; Gustavsen et al., 2001; Gustavsen, 2007b; Levin, 2002; Qvale, 2008). Alongside the scope of action, the strategies of the programmes may be based on supporting the development of operations or be directly or indirectly supported by research activities (use of data, research strategies and methods...). According to Naschold (1994, p. 111) the strategic justification of programmes must lie in macro aspects related to the industrial policy. In the absence of this link and of adequate ties to the development goals of organisations, programmes can turn out to be interventions that react to problems caused by new technologies, production models or management methods. However, Alasoini (2016, p. 51) argues that more than the subordination of the strategic justification of the programmes to the industrial policy, it is about broadening the foundations of the policy through innovation. In order for the programmes to support new emerging structures it is necessary for there to be an integration of the workplace innovation policy within the scope of the industrial policy (Alasoini, 2009). For this reason, along with the participation of the actors of the industrial system, the inclusion of agents from the industrial relations and from R&D system complements this justification. On the one hand, the participation of actors from the industrial relations system reinforces the social legitimacy of the actions, strengthening the link between the improvement in productivity and the quality of working life, while the inclusion of R&D agents equips the programmes with the capacity to provide new solutions based directly or indirectly on research (Alasoini, 2016; p. 116).

The learning-based orientation of programmes enables an analysis of the reference frameworks of a programme. In general, by focus we understand the way in which programmes support companies and workplaces in the adaptation to change (Alasoini, 2005). The strategies and reference frameworks used by the programmes can vary according to three levels, international, national or regional. Although all programmes are local configurations, instead of identifying a single model or reference framework, the programmes can learn from other programmes and initiatives developed in other contexts (Alasoini, 2009). In this sense, the learning-focus of a programme is understood as “the readiness of programme implementers to monitor developments elsewhere with an open mind and adopt the ideas for local reinvention” (Alasoini, 2016, p. 117). This is why the oversight and monitoring of the programmes can include external reference frameworks in combination with own or local frameworks.

Participation, as a third dimension, directs attention to aspects that determine the way in which the objectives and the development operations designed and implemented in a programme are defined. Programmes can differ in their instrumentation offering design or

process-based solutions. Naschold (1993) argues that instead of the design solutions traditionally provided by external people, programmes should include the actors at the workplace level. Thus, the goal of the programmes must be a type of intervention that combines the design and guidance of the process of change along with broad participation in the workplace. This dimension analyses the strategies used by the programmes in relation to the influence and level of participation of the workers and workplaces on the content of the programmes and the activities or projects developed. In this sense the preference is that the division between the design and guidance of the process must be balanced. The mobilisation of the actors in the workplace in the identification of the objectives of the programmes and projects also includes the perspective of social inclusion, with a particular focus on matters such as the gender perspective or age (Alasoini, 2009, 2016).

The fourth principle is *that the development strategy must be backed and guided by a solid and advanced infrastructure* that includes a stock of knowledge and a sufficient number of experts. One of the most recognised effects of the programmes is related to the creation of local infrastructures; the private and institutional relationships promoted by the programmes can become structures for the search of new development opportunities. The infrastructure is understood as the development of a productive cooperation between actors and systems (Gustavsen, 1998) and refers both to public national/regional centres and private ones that support the innovation of organisations (Naschold, 1993). Public sources include universities, public research institutes, polytechnics, education and training institutes (Ramstad, 2009), while private centres include workplaces, development agencies, R&D organisations and professional associations (Alasoini, 2009b: 623). The infrastructure is analysed by means of the role that the programme plays in the educational activities and developments as an instrument to strengthen the fabric based on expert knowledge (Alasoini, 2016: p. 64).

The fifth characteristic of the model is *the creation of horizontal networks that favour the diffusion of information and the creation of new knowledge*, instead of independent development projects. Networks and other types of relationships between organisations are of critical importance in contexts of development (Gustavsen, 1998; Ennals & Gustavsen, 1999), to the point of being considered "the Achilles' heel of programmes" (Alasoini, 2016, p. 71). This dimension analyses the type of horizontal connection of the actors at a project or workplace level. As the programmes are used for building a bridge between the strategic objectives of the organisations involved and the objectives of the programme itself, this dimension becomes particularly relevant. Networking can take place in many different ways (Alasoini et al., 2005, p. 40); within the projects, through cooperation between projects, through organising interactive debate forums, training sessions or seminars or the supply of documentary material for the diffusion of information (e.g. publications, online information records of cases of good practices). Although the opportunities for learning derived from horizontal networking-focused activities are important in terms of sustainability, their potential is dependent on the diversity and amplitude of the participants insofar as they favour the generation and diffusion of knowledge (Alasoini, 2009a: 161; Andersson, 2006). Networks are considered an alternative to markets and hierarchies, therefore they are of particular importance for productive structures dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (Naschold, 1994, p. 137). Networking can operate not only in terms of exchanges of infor-

mation between participants in the project, but also as an intermediate-level structure that facilitates further exchanges of information, both inside and outside the programme (Alasoini, 2011, pp. 36-37).

The sixth dimension refers to *the adaptation of the programme's resources to the objective and purposes*. It is possible that the programmes have limited effectiveness if the resources are not fully used over time (Naschold, 1993; Alasoini, 2016; Qvale, 1994). Thus, the volume and composition of the resources are highly relevant to achieve the programme's objectives (Naschold, 1994, p. 112). Aspects such as the financial budget, the number and experience of the staff in the programme and the time structure are decisive as tangible elements. However, in the case of development programmes, intangible aspects such as the visions, guiding principles, concepts for the development of the programmes, and the latter's ability to use different strategies or networks for diffusion are fundamental (Alasoini, 2016, pp. 117-118). These matters, in particular those related to the skills and level of knowledge of the staff in the programme, the commitment and the learning skills, have a positive influence on the results.

The six-dimension model described above frames how programme design and implementation could facilitate, through action research, a learning-oriented form of cooperation, collaboration and interaction. The next section explores the link between action research and programmes in a context of action research.

8. Programmes as vehicles for research and development

“A programme is an umbrella organization, which links a number of R&D efforts to each other that is taken to mean explicitly organised efforts aiming at intervening in workplace processes”
Gustavsen, 2006, p. 320.

Although approaches to working life assisted and supported by research have had a long and complex evolution (Gustavsen, 2007a), it is debatable whether the reform of working life and the adoption of new forms of work organisation in Europe is programmatic in nature and is assisted by research. Programmatic approaches are known in development literature, where change is understood as an iterative process. The development of working life based on programmes refers to the existence of a shared framework, the content of which has been agreed upon, and whose process is based on an exchange of information and experience based on cooperation and interaction.

Programmes are also tools for the development of work contexts. Research is a type of public resource, which can play a relevant role in the development processes addressed by programmes (Ennals & Gustavsen, pp. 173-176). The assistance of research has been justified by the complexity of adopting new forms of work organisation (Gustavsen, 2006, pp. 322-324). In this sense, research-based approaches aim to produce new knowledge that is applicable in the design of solutions or processes of change (Alasoini, 2005, pp. 43-46). The role of research at a programme level can be represented according to the following aspects:

- The programme uses theoretical models supported by research or experiences that make it possible to identify objects and the way they relate to each other.
- Research questions are proposed in the form of hypotheses on the theoretical and practical foundation for critical examination. These hypotheses can be adapted throughout the process.
- Depending on the critical examination, the research draws conclusions for the preparation of (identified) theoretical models or the reasoning behind them (Alasoini, 2006, p. 45).

Development supported by research at a programme level is usually established in light of three criteria. However, this approach varies from one case to another. The three criteria for research-based development are, first, that local projects are focused on creating models, methods or tools with a broader scope than the original application; second, that the implementation of the project requires research methods and strategies; and third, that the scientific assessments are included as an integral part of the project (Alasoini, 1999, p. 6). Practical examples prove that the role of research covers functions such as the creation of reference frameworks in alternative organisational relationships and that it helps to create, prove and use methodologies and forms of work according to the requirements of the process (Ennals & Gustavsen, 1999, p. 175).

The contribution of research to the reform of working life has acquired different forms (Gustavsen, 1992), where action research plays an important role. An example of this are the studies carried out using different approaches and research strategies (van Eijnatten, 1993; Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Svensson, Ellström & Brulin, 2007; Svensson et al., 2007; Engeström, 2005; Alasoini, 2016). Action research (AR) (Greenwood & Lewin, 2007) is a co-generative form of research; i.e., a strategy for social research developed in collaboration between a researcher and the owners of a problem. In a general sense we could say that AR covers different traditions that range from action science (Argyris, Putnam & Smith, 1987), participatory action research (Whyte [Ed.], 1991), participatory research (Fals Borfa, 2000), socio-technical systems theory (van Eijnatten, 1993) and democratic dialogue (Gustavsen, 1992). The differences of these traditions are identifiable, to a large extent, in the way that the research is carried out. As a result we can talk about different strategies (Pålshaugen, 2014) where dialogue acquires particular relevance in the identification of the research questions (Greenwood, 1989, Alasoini, 1999; Pålshaugen, 2009). When providing an answer to these questions, action research has been structured around three questions:

- How to create democratic relations to the field subjects – as a method of research
- How to create new scientific knowledge from constructive social science research processes
- How to create innovative structures aiming at the continuation of participative design and change processes beyond the limited range of projects and programmes (Fricke, 1994, p. 55)

Although it does not correspond to this article to explore these questions in more depth, it does, in turn, seek to position action research in relation to the programmes for reforming working life. In general terms, we can appreciate that “action research in working life is

presumed to be useful to various groups of actors, both within the enterprises and within organisations that are somehow devoted to working life development, reforms and politics” (Pålshaugen, 2009; p. 232). In line with this reflection, the goals of AR are twofold: on the one hand, the use of scientific knowledge in practical development and change processes and, on the other, the generation of new knowledge for the research community that is useful for the actors involved in the development and change process (Pålshaugen, 2009: p. 236-242).

Historically, action research in working life has focused its efforts on changing individual organisations (or even parts of a single organisation), in detriment of the inter-organisational level. In this sense, with the exception of the Scandinavian experiences, action research literature has barely explored the specific aspects of large-scale change (Alasoini, 2016). The reasons can be found in the fact that in this tradition the use of field experiments has exerted strong control, to the extent that much of the history of action research has been limited to projects (Gustavsen, 1998). Next section reflects on how programmes can be useful bridges to connect, through action research in working life, a great variety of knowledge in favour of working life reform.

9. Bridging Programme Learning and Policy Learning

“A programme seeks actors and processes to exert influence on”
Naschold, 1993, p. 43.

Generating changes in work organisation requires developing new practices and narratives in cooperation with a community of stakeholders. Work organisation is a matter that transcends the local framework and which depends on a wider context (Gustavsen, 2007b, p. 651). Public programmes or initiatives require public rationales; they must establish objectives that correspond to the external challenges and the local realities. Here the aim is that a programme has a systemic impact, which involves a deep understanding of the programme's learnings (Ennals, Johnsen, & Normann, 2012).

Action research is mainly concerned with the development of knowledge (Johnsen et al., 2009); in this sense it could be argued that it establishes a context for learning (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). However, this learning process can become complex as it increases the number of participants and its scope in the field (Martin, 2008). The challenge is focused on guiding the learning process through the different levels of actors, which can create tensions between top-down and bottom-up approaches (Ennals, Johnsen & Normann, 2012).

In general, three actor systems are identified (Naschold, 1994, p. 111): the industrial policy, the industrial relations system and the research and development system. In this framework, programmes represent a collective agency (Alasoini, 2016). As can be seen in the table, the actors that form part of the programmes acquire different roles; i.e., they are circumscribed in different domains of different policies

Table 2: System, actors and role in the development Programmes.

System	Actors	Role
Industrial policy	Public administration, labour market organisations, the scientific community	Establishing the general framework for directing the activities
Industrial relations	Collective organisations at company or supra-company level	Social legitimisation of the activities
Research and Development	R&D units of private companies and of the public innovation system	Support from research and development activities

Source: Naschold, 1993; Alasoini, 2016.

A common feature of programmes comes from the creation of new levels of collaboration between local actors and governments, developing different institutional arrangements that mediate between the different roles and interests of the participants. A partnership can be seen as an example that is strategic in nature at system level; a partnership represents a form of organisational cooperation. The concept of development coalitions, extensively discussed by Ennals & Gustavsen (1999), operates in a similar sense. This is why the role that support structures formed by researchers, workers, works council representatives, management, programme managers and policymakers play is so critical (Riegler, 2008). In AR, knowledge is built and co-generated locally through a reflective process between researchers and professionals (Greenwood & Levin, 2007).

In this case, the learning subjects are the participants of the programme and those responsible for formulating public policies (Alasoini, 2016, pp. 83-84). In this context, the concept of a programme, both in theory and in practice, is of particular interest. Although they operate in different contexts, programmes can be used as resources for other subjects that are carrying out similar practical processes (Pålshaugen, 2009). In this sense, good practices should be understood as generative ideas instead of ready-made objects, which allows the general knowledge of specific programmes to be regenerated as something useful for others subjects (Alasoini, 2006; 2008; Arnkil, 2008, Pålshaugen, 2009). However, experience shows that the *good practices* created by these projects have been poorly extended (Qvale, 2002, Arnkil, 2004; Brulin & Svensson, 2012; Fricke, 2003; Riegler, 2008; Gustavsen, 2008).

In terms of learning, the ideal effects produced are programme learning and policy learning; while the former refers to the learning that takes place *within* the programme during its implementation, the second, policy learning, refers to the knowledge and learning that extends to the design of new generation programmes (Alasoini, 2016, p. 110). This is why it is decisive, during both the design and implementation phases, to establish mechanisms that enable the learning subjects to identify sources, resources and actions aimed at learning from the exterior. The conditions of possibility for this type of learning, according to Alasoini (2008, pp. 65-67), are based on the capacity of the programmes to act as development systems. However, and as pointed out by Riegler (2008, p. 110), the learning resulting from public initiative development programmes has a condition of possibility of generating an impact when there is the existence of strong participative structures supplemented as innovative and open cultures.

10. Concluding remarks

In “Building Better Programmes: Learning Networks in the Promotion of Workplace Innovation” Alasoini (2008) suggests a taxonomy of the principles, elements, methods and types of projects to be used by programmes in order to achieve the objectives described in this article.. Based on the model, programmes as a production and development system are susceptible of generating learning (at programme level and from public policies) about design, planning and implementation. However, except in European countries and regions with active policies for the promotion of new forms of work organisation, the presence of these programmes seems to be limited (Kesselring et al., 2014; Alasoini et al., 2017). Some of the reasons may be found in the limitations of current policy frameworks (Brödner & Latniak, 2002; Business Decisions Limited, 2002; Totterdill, Dhondt & Milsome, 2002; Totterdill, 2015; Ennals, 2002).

In the digital age, where traditional forms of employment and work are undergoing a profound transformation, the future of programmes involves broadening the scope of traditional industrial policies and opening up innovation policies to related fields such as workplace innovation (Alasoini, 2011, 2012). It is therefore important to pay attention to the design and implementation principles of the types of programmes described in this article, in particular to the objectives, the support processes and the participating agents. As regards the objectives of the programmes, their focus must be aimed at achieving simultaneous improvements in productivity and job quality, at both micro (jobs) and macro (programme) levels. As for the design and implementation of the programmes, three types of knowledge are identified (Alasoini, 2011); about the design, the process and the diffusion. Firstly, the implementers of the programmes must have knowledge about the factors that influence changes in organisations (*design knowledge*); secondly, there must be a deeper knowledge about the different processes of change (*process knowledge*), both those that are guided by external expert knowledge (design-oriented) and in participative models (process-oriented); and thirdly, different strategies are required that enable an improvement in the creation and diffusion of the solutions generated by the programme (*dissemination knowledge*).

Part of the learnings accumulated in Europe over the course of more than five decades through the programmes can be used as a guide for the challenges that companies currently face. Like in the 70s and 80s (programmable machine tools, flexible production systems and automated control processes), they can shine a light on how the programmes must be designed and implemented in the current Digital Age, where automation, robotisation and digitisation have an impact on work organisation (Alasoini, 2016; Fricke, 2019).

References

- Alasoini, T. (1997). The Finnish national workplace development programme: background, starting premises and initial experiences. In: Alasoini, T., Kyllönen, M., & Kasvio, A. (Eds.) *Workplace Innovation – a way of promoting competitiveness, welfare and employment* (pp. 51-53) Helsinki: Ministry of Labour.
- Alasoini, T. (1999). Learning organizations in a learning society – the National Workplace Development Programme as a New Labour Strategy. In: Alasoini, T., & Halme, P. (Eds.). *Learning Organizations – Learning Society* (pp. 1-13). Helsinki: Ministry of Labour.

- Alasoini, T. (2004). The new Finnish workplace development programme (TYKES-FWDP) as an approach to innovation. *Concepts and Transformation*, 9(3), 279-295.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/cat.9.3.04ala>
- Alasoini, T. (2005). Towards qualitatively sustainable productivity growth: the role and potential of the TYKES programme. In Alasoni et al., *The Finnish Workplace Development Programme as an expanding activity: results, challenges, opportunities*. Helsinki: Finnish Ministry of Labour.
- Alasoini, T. (2006). In search of generative results: A new generation of programmes to develop work organization. *Economic and industrial democracy*, 27(1), 9-37.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X06060590>
- Alasoini, T. (2008). Building better programmes: learning networks in the promotion of workplace innovation. *International Journal of Action Research*, 4(1+ 2), 62-89.
https://doi.org/10.1688/1861-9916_ijar_2008_01_alasoini
- Alasoini, T. (2009a). Alternative paths for working life reform? A comparison of European and East Asian development strategies. *International Journal of Action Research*, 5(2), 155-183.
https://doi.org/10.1688/1861-9916_IJAR_2009_02_Alasoini
- Alasoini, T. (2009b). Strategies to promote workplace innovation: a comparative analysis of nine national and regional approaches. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 30(4), 614-642.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X09336556>
- Alasoini, T. (2011). Workplace development as part of broad-based innovation policy: Exploiting and exploring three types of knowledge. *Nordic journal of working life studies*, 1(1), 23-43.
<https://doi.org/10.19154/njwls.v1i1.2334>
- Alasoini, T. (2012). A New Model for Workplace Development in Finland. Rethinking Employee Participation and the Quality of Working Life in the Context of Broad-based Innovation Policy. *International Journal of Action Research*, 8(3).
https://doi.org/10.1688/1861-9916_ijar_2012_03_alasoini
- Alasoini, T. (2014). Learning from learning networks. Experiences of the Finnish Workplace Development Programme. *International Journal of Action Research*, 10(3).
<https://doi.org/10.1688/IJAR-2014-03-Alasoini>
- Alasoini, T. (2015). Two decades of programme-based promotion of workplace innovation in Finland: past experiences and future challenges. *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*, 1(1).
- Alasoini, T. (2016). Workplace development programmes as institutional entrepreneurs. Why they produce change and why they do not. (Doctoral Dissertations, Aalto University, 12/2016).
- Alasoini, T. (2018a). Learning networks as a vehicle for improving the generative capacity of working-life development programmes. *Action Research*, 16(1), 105-122.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750316673880>
- Alasoini, T. (2018b). Nordic Working Life Development Programs and the Tricky Problem of Scaling-up. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, 8(4). <https://doi.org/10.18291/njwls.v8i4.111929>
- Alasoini, T., Ramstad, E., & Totterdill, P. (2017). National and regional policies to promote and sustain workplace innovation. In: Oej, P. Rus, D. & Pot, F. (Eds.) *Workplace Innovation* (pp. 27-44). Cham: Springer.
- Alasoini, T., Ramstad, E., Hanhike, T., & Lahtonen, M. (2005). *European programmes on work and labour innovation—a benchmarking approach*. Work-In-Net Project. Helsinki/Bonn.
- Andersson, T. (2006). Evolving needs of organizational change and individual sentiments. In WORK-IN-NET (Ed.): 37-44.
- Argyris, C., Putnam, R., & Mc Lain, S. D. (1987). *Action Science*. Jossey.
- Arnkil, R. (2008). In search of missing links in disseminating good practice—Experiences of a work reform programme in Finland. *International Journal of Action Research*, 4(1+ 2), 39-61.
https://doi.org/10.1688/1861-9916_ijar_2008_01_arnkil

- Beinum, H. V. (1993). The kaleidoscope of workplace reform. Naschold, F., Cole, R., Gustavsen, B., & Van Beinum, H. (Eds.). *Constructing the New Industrial Society, Social science for social action: toward organizational renewal*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Borrás, S., & Edquist, C. (2013). The choice of innovation policy instruments. *Technological forecasting and social change*, 80(8), 1513-1522. doi: 10.1016/j.techfore.2013.03.002
- Brödner, P. & Latniak, E. (2003) Sources of Innovation and Competitiveness: National Programmes Supporting the Development of Work Organisation. *Concepts and Transformation* 8(2): 179-211. doi: 10.1075/cat.8.2.06bro
- Brulin, G., & Svensson, L. (2012). Managing sustainable development programmes: A learning approach to change. Routledge.
- Business Decisions Limited (2002). *New Forms of Work Organisation: The Obstacles to Wider Diffusion*. Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs.
- Dhondt, Totterdill & Van Hootgem (2019). A new take-off for EUWIN. *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*, 5 (1).
- Eeckelaert, L., Dhondt, S., Oeij, P., Pot, F. D., Nicolescu, G. I., Webster, J., & Elsler, D. (2012). *Review of workplace innovation and its relation with occupational safety and health*. Bilbao: European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.
- Engeström, Y. (2005). Developmental work research: Expanding activity theory in practice (Vol. 12). Lehmanns Media.
- Ennals, R. (1998) 'Partnership for a new organisation of work and Europe as a development coalition: an interview with Allan Larsson, Director-General of DG-V, European Commission', *Concepts and Transformation*, Vol. 3, Nos. 1-2, pp.143-152.
- Ennals, R. (2002). The existing policy framework to promote modernisation of work: Its weaknesses. Brussels: European Commission.
- Ennals, JR., & Gustavsen, B. (1999). *Work organization and Europe as a development coalition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Fals Borda, O. (2000). Participatory (Action) Research and social theory: Origins and challenges. In: P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of Action Research*. London: Sage.
- Ferns, D. C. (1991). Developments in programme management. *International Journal of Project Management*, 9(3), 148-156.
- Fricke, W. (1997) Evaluation of the German Work and Technology Programme from an Action Research Point of View. In Alasoini, T., Kyllönen, M., & Kasvio, A. (Eds.) *Workplace Innovation – a way of promoting competitiveness, welfare and employment* (pp. 51-53) Helsinki: Ministry of Labour.
- Fricke, W. (2000). Twenty Five Years of German Research and Development Programs "Humanization of Work/Work and Technology". *Concepts and Transformation*, 5(1), 133-138. doi:10.1075/cat.5.1.11fri
- Fricke, W. (2003). Thirty years of work life programmes in Germany. *Concepts and transformation*, 8(1), 43-68. doi: 10.1075/cat.8.1.04fri
- Fricke, W. (2011). Socio-political perspectives on action research: traditions in Western Europe- especially in Germany and Scandinavia. *International Journal of Action Research*, 7(3), 248-261. doi: 10.1688/1861-9916_IJAR_2011_03_Fricke
- Fricke, W. (2018). New Challenges For Action Research 1. *International Journal of Action Research*, 14(2/3), 83-109. doi: 10.3224/ijar.v14i2-3.02
- Fricke, W., & Totterdill, P. (Eds.) (2004). Introduction. Fricke, W. & Totterdill, P. *Action research in workplace innovation and regional development*. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Gray, R. J. (1997). Alternative approaches to programme management. *International Journal of Project Management*, 15(1), 5-9.

- Greenwood, D. J. (1989). Paradigm-centered and Client-centered Research: A Proposal for Linkage. In *In Proceedings of the Forty-Second Annual Meeting, Industrial Relations Research Association*.
- Greenwood, D. J. (Ed.). (1999). Action research: From practice to writing in an international action research development program. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Greenwood, D. J., & Levin, M. (2007). An epistemological foundation for action research. Greenwood, D.J., & Levin, M. In *Introduction to action research*, 55-76.
- Greenwood, D. J., & Santos, J. L. G. (Eds.). (1992). Industrial democracy as process: Participatory action research in the Fagor Cooperative Group of Mondragon (Vol. 2). Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Gustavsen, B. (1992). Dialogue and development. Social science for social action. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Gustavsen, B. (1994). Introduction to the Conference. Kauppinen, T., & Lahtonen, M. (Eds.). (1994). *National Action Research Programmes in 1990's: Active Society with Action Research Conference, 25-27 August 1993*. Helsinki: Ministry of Labour.
- Gustavsen, B. (1998). From experiments to network building: trends in the use of research for reconstructing working life. *Human Relations*, 51(3), 431-448. doi: 10.1023/A:1016904906698
- Gustavsen, B. (2001). Towards social partnership: trends in Norwegian workplace development programs. *Concepts and Transformation*, 6(2), 195-208. doi: 10.1075/cat.6.2.07gus
- Gustavsen, B. (2006). Learning Organisation and the process of regionalisation. *International Journal of Action Research*, 2(3), 319-342.
- Gustavsen, B. (2007a). Research responses to practical challenges: what can action research contribute?. *International Journal of Action Research*, 3(1+2), 93-111. doi: 10.1688/1861-9916_ijar_2007_01_gustavsen
- Gustavsen, B. (2007b). Work Organization and the Scandinavian Model. *Economic and industrial democracy*, 28(4), 650-671. doi: 10.1177/0143831X07082218
- Gustavsen, B. (2008). Learning from workplace development initiatives: External evaluations versus internal understandings. *International Journal of Action Research*, 4(1+ 2), 15-38. doi: 10.1688/1861-9916_ijar_2008_01_gustavsen
- Gustavsen, B. (2011). The Nordic model of work organization. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 2(4), 463-480. doi: 10.1007/s13132-011-0064-5
- Gustavsen, B., Colbjørnsen, T., & Pålshaugen, Ø. (Eds.). (1998). *Development coalitions in working life: The enterprise development 2000 program in Norway*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Gustavsen, B., Finne, H., & Oscarsson, B. (Eds.) (2001). *Creating connectedness*. Amsterdam: Benjamins
- Gustavsen, B., Hansson, A, Qvale, T. (2008). Action research and the challenge of scope. In: P. Reason, & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of action research* (pp. 63-76). London: UK: Sage.
- Gustavsen, B., Hofmaier, B., & Ekman, P. M. and Wikman, A. (1996) *Concept-driven Development and the Organisation of the Process of Change*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing.
- Gustavsen, B., Hofmaier, B., Philips, M.K. & Wikman, A. (1996) A Concept-driven Development and the Organisation of the Process of Change: An Evaluation of the Swedish Working Life Fund. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hildrum, J. M., Finsrud, H. D., & Klethagen, P. (2009). The next generation of national R&D programmes in Norway: consequences for action research and regional development. *International Journal of Action Research*, 5(3), 255-288. doi: 10.1688/1861-9916_IJAR_2009_03_Hildrum
- Johnsen, H. C. G. (2018). Reflecting on the Coping with the future conference. *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*, 4(1).
- Johnsen, H. C. G., & Ennals, R. (Eds.). (2012). Creating collaborative advantage: Innovation and knowledge creation in regional economies. Gower Publishing, Ltd..

- Johnsen, H. C. G., Karlsen, J., Normann, R., & Fosse, J. K. (2009). The contradictory nature of knowledge: a challenge for understanding innovation in a local context and workplace development and for doing action research. *Ai & Society*, 23(1), 85-98.
doi: 10.1007/s00146-007-0159-5
- Karlsen, J., & Larrea, M. (2014). The contribution of action research to policy learning: The case of Gipuzkoa Sarean. *International Journal of Action Research*, 10(2), 129-155.
doi: 10.1688/IJAR-2014-02-Karlsen
- Karlsen, J., & Larrea, M. (2016). Territorial development and action research: innovation through dialogue. Routledge.
- Kauppinen, T., & Lahtonen, M. (Eds.) (1994). Action research in Finland: Active Society with Action Research Conference, 25-27 August, 1993, Helsinki: Ministry of Labour.
- Kesselring, A., Blasy, C., & Scoppetta, A. (2014). *Workplace innovation: Concepts and indicators*. Brussels: European Commission, DG for Enterprise and Industry.
- Levin, M. (Ed.). (2002). Researching enterprise development: action research on the cooperation between management and labour in Norway. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Lorenz, E. (2013). Innovation, work organisation and systems of social protection. In Fagerberg, J., Martin, B.R., Andersen, E.S. *Innovation Studies: Evolution and Future Challenges*. Oxford: OUP.
- Miles, M. B., On temporary systems. In: Miles, M.B. (Ed.), *Innovation in Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1964), pp. 437-490.
- Naschold, F. (1993). Organization development: National programmes in the context of international competition. In Naschold, F., Cole, R.E., Gustavsen, B. & van Beinum, H.: *Constructing the new industrial society*. Assen/Maastricht–Stockholm: Van Gorcum
- Naschold, F. (1994). The politics and economics of workplace development: a review of national programmes. In Kauppinen, T., & Lahtonen, M. (Eds.). (1994). National Action Research Programmes in 1990's: Active Society with Action Research Conference, 25-27 August 1993, Helsinki: Ministry of Labour.
- Naschold, F., Cole, R., Gustavsen, B., & Van Beinum, H. (Eds.) (1993). *Constructing the New Industrial Society*, Social science for social action: toward organizational renewal. Maastricht: Van Gorcum, Assen.
- Oehlke, P. (2001). The development of labor process policies in the Federal Republic of Germany. *Concepts and Transformation*, 6(2), 109-140. doi: 10.1075/cat.6.2.03oeh
- Oeij, P., Rus, D., & Pot, F. D. (Eds.). (2017). *Workplace innovation: Theory, research and practice*. Springer.
- Packendorff, J. (1995). Inquiring into the temporary organization: new directions for project management research. *Scandinavian journal of management*, 11(4), 319-333.
doi: 10.1016/0956-5221(95)00018-Q
- Pålshaugen, Ø. (2009). How to generate knowledge from single case research on innovation?. *International Journal of Action Research*, 5(3), 231-254.
doi: 10.1688/1861-9916_IJAR_2009_03_Palshaugen
- Pålshaugen, Ø. (2014). Action research for democracy – a Scandinavian approach. *International Journal of Action Research*, 10(1), 98-115. doi: 10.1688/IJAR-2014-01-Palshaugen
- Pellegrinelli, S. (2002). Shaping context: the role and challenge for programmes. *International Journal of Project Management*, 20(3), 229-233. doi: 10.1016/S0263-7863(01)00073-4
- Pomares, E., Luna, Á., & Unceta, A. (2016). Patterns of workplace innovation in the Basque Country: Challenges and lessons from Gipuzkoa. *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*, 2(2).
- Pomares, E. (2018). Coping with the future: rethinking assumptions for society, business and work. *International Journal of Action Research*, 14(2/3), 219-222. Doi: 10.3224/ijar.v14i2-3.0

- Pomares, E. (2019). Revising workers participation in regional innovation systems: a study of workplace innovation programmes in the Basque Country. *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*, 5(1).
- Pot, F. (2011). Workplace innovation for better jobs and performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 60(4), 404-415.
doi: 10.1108/17410401111123562
- Pot, F., Totterdill, P., Dhondt, S. (2016): Workplace innovation: European policy and theoretical foundation. *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, 12 (1), pp. 13-32. doi: 10.1504/WREMSD.2016.073428
- Pot, F. D., Totterdill, P., & Dhondt, S. (2017). European policy on workplace innovation. In *Workplace Innovation* (pp. 11-26). Springer, Cham.
- Qvale, T. U. (1994). The role of research for the social shaping of new technologies: Designing a research strategy. *AI & SOCIETY*, 8(3), 245-269. doi: 10.1007/BF02073162
- Ramstad, E. (2009). Expanding innovation system and policy—an organisational perspective. *Policy studies*, 30(5), 533-553. doi: 10.1080/01442870903208551
- Riegler, C. H. (2008). Why is Learning from National Working Life Programmes not a Matter of Course?. *International Journal of Action Research*, 4(1+ 2), 90-113.
- Svensson, L., Eklund, J., Randle, H., & Aronsson, G. (2007). Interactive research -an attempt to analyse two change programmes. *International Journal of Action Research*, 3(3), 250-277.
- Svensson, L., Ellström, P. E., & Brulin, G. (2007). Introduction—on interactive research. *International Journal of Action Research*, 3(3), 233-249.
- Totterdill, P. (2015). Closing the gap: The fifth element and workplace innovation. *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*, 1(1).
- Totterdill, P., Dhondt, S., & Milsome, S. (2002). Partners at work?: a report to Europe's policy makers and social partners. Hi-Res project.
- Totterdill, P., Exton, O., Exton, R., & Sherrin, J. (2009). *Workplace innovation policies in European countries*. Nottingham: UKWON
- Turner, J. R., & Müller, R. (2003). On the nature of the project as a temporary organization. *International journal of project management*, 21(1), 1-8.
doi: 10.1016/S0263-7863(02)00020-0
- Van Eijnatten, F. M. (1993). *The paradigm that changed the work place*. van Gorcum.
- Whyte, W.F. (Ed.) (1991). *Participatory Action Research*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Zettel, C. (2010). Work-oriented innovation as a research topic—WORK-IN-NET closes a missing link in funding procedures in Europe. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 16(2), 273-275. doi: 10.1177/1024258910364338

About the author

Egoitz Pomares conducts action research and policy analysis on workplace innovation at Sinnergiak Social Innovation, a research organisation of the University of the Basque Country (Spain). In addition to his academic role Egoitz participates and contributes to the European Workplace Innovation Network, a learning network that promotes EU-wide knowledge sharing on workplace innovation. The network is open to organisations, social partners, policymakers and researchers.

Author's address:

Egoitz Pomares

Sinnergiak – University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)

Elbira Zipitria. Ondarreta Pasealekua 18. 20018 Donostia-San Sebastian (Spain)

E-mail: epomares@sinnergiak.org

Systematisation of Experiences: New paths to academic work in universities

Oscar Jara Holliday

The social sciences we have inherited – its disciplines, methodologies, theories and concepts – do not reflect our times adequately and, therefore, we cannot trust them to guide us in the ongoing social transformation processes (Boaventura de Sousa Santos)

Abstract

This article presents systematisation of experiences as a proposal for the production of knowledge from and about educational, organisational, and social and community practices. It particularly highlights the interest arising from experiences in the field of University Extension. It is argued that systematisation of experiences in University Extension can help to strengthen the transforming commitment of the university work, and contribute to the production of academic knowledge informed by the richness of the economic, social, political and cultural reality in which the university is inserted. Concrete steps to implement the systematisation of experiences in the university context, based on his experiences at the Universidad de Costa Rica and others, are presented here.

Keywords: systematisation of experiences, university extension, social action, popular education, Latin America

La sistematización de experiencias: nuevas rutas para el quehacer académico en las universidades

Resumen

El artículo presenta la sistematización de experiencias, como propuesta de producción de conocimiento sobre y desde prácticas educativas, organizativas, sociales y comunitarias. Resalta particularmente el interés surgido en el campo de las experiencias de Extensión Universitaria. Se argumenta que la sistematización de experiencias de Extensión Universitaria puede contribuir a reforzar el compromiso transformador del quehacer universitario y, además, aportar en la producción de un conocimiento académico nutrido de la riqueza de la realidad económica, social, política y cultural en la que la Universidad está inserta. Basándose en su práctica en la Universidad de Costa Rica y otras, se presentan pasos concretos para llevar a cabo Sistematizaciones de Experiencias en el ámbito universitario.

Palabras claves: sistematización de experiencias, extensión universitária, acción social, educación popular, América Latina.

Introduction

The new challenges for the creation of knowledge, that we face when recognising the complexity of unknown situations presented by the current context, increasingly demand the renewal of approaches, categories and methodologies with which we work. This is due, on the one hand, to the need to fuel the processes of democratisation of knowledge, both regarding their production and their flow, which implies the recognition of the importance to rely on various viewpoints from different practices by various individuals; and, on the other hand, because it is fundamental to dig deeper and rigorously into the novelty of events produced by recent situations. This means the development of the ability to transcend the descriptive and narrative, in order to generate from it an interpretative and theoretical exercise, that goes beyond the mechanical application of predefined conceptual frameworks, and that also has, as a component, the vitality of the emotional strength. This openness to a personal and collective “sentipensamiento” means definitively, according to Fals Borda, a radical break from traditional positivism and adherence to its methodological rules, as well as a critical detachment from an individualistic and encapsulated production, which has been the dominant characteristic of the academic work .

It is thus a matter of looking at the source of these renewed processes of knowledge production: concrete experiences that are performed by collectives, social movements, institutions, research and social action teams, and others. In them and from them it is possible to deal with these new challenges and design relevant epistemological and methodological strategies. Let us look at a few characteristics of one of the proposals that have become more relevant in recent times: The Systematisation of Experiences (Jara 2013, Ghiso, 2010, Torres Carrillo 2010, Falckemback & Torres, 2015, Streck & Jara ,2015).

Systematisation of experiences, as a proposal for the production of knowledge about and based on educational, organizational and social and community practices, has become, since the nineties of the last century, a focus of interest in academic and non-academic circles, in public entities, in social movements, in non-governmental organisations or international co-operation agencies. We can highlight particularly the interest arising from the field of experiences from University Extension, also called Social Action or Social Projection at different universities in Latin America, with which we have had the opportunity to work in recent years.

A common concern in these practices involves the need to strengthen the production and flow of academic knowledge at universities, resulting from extension projects, programs and activities. Despite the recognised and too-often heard statement that extension is a substantive dimension of university work, equal to research and teaching, the fact is that it is not treated in the same way. It is still considered an area or dimension of lesser importance, even expendable

The experiences underlying our discussion

In 2013, when identifying needs and expectations to justify a University Extension project for training on Systematization of experiences (CEP, 2013), it was considered, for instance, that:

- Academics do not document their experience regarding the work done by the university in communities through university extension or social action projects, or if they do, this is done very descriptively and schematically.
- Tools that will help recover, review and evaluate the scientific contribution of the practices of extension projects would be needed.
- We should give value to the importance of recovering the voice of the communities, with the purpose of going from “working in the communities” to “working with the communities”.
- Academics have only a basic and very abstract information about conceptual design and methodology for the systematisation of experiences. They lack knowledge about its epistemological and theoretical foundations, and of the methodological challenges involved.
- It is necessary to promote comprehensive training processes in this field, both theoretical and practical, and to have concrete products and results.

Based on the above, taking into account the people who promote extension programs and projects, we consider essential to provide visibility and value to this specific activity, as well as to its links with the teaching and research dimensions, in order to break their silos and effectively integrate them as component parts of a single comprehensive formation strategy.

Nowadays, when the growing trend emphasises a market approach to public universities, arguing that the priority is on training professionals to supply the needs of the market, and that therefore the resources of the universities should be centred on teaching, seen as an action focused on classroom activity, it is important to go back to the purposes and principles that animated the University of Cordoba Reform a century ago. According to the recent Manifesto of the University of Costa Rica, put forward to commemorate its centennial:

We must reaffirm a model of democratic and democratizing university that confronts inequality and inequity, as well as the tendency to the specialisation of a knowledge that is increasingly foreign to the popular and impoverished sectors to whom we serve.

A hundred years after the Cordoba Reform, the University of Costa Rica raises its voice again, reclaiming all university work and, above all, the social action or extension as a transforming and liberating practice closely articulated with teaching and research. The communities of the future must continue to feed public universities, not only with the resources needed for them to function, but with the accumulation of knowledge and wisdoms that give them life and meaning. Let us not allow the university to go back to be a dusty cloister, open only to market interests. Let us fight for a university that, on the contrary, provides space for the affection and hope of all people (UCR, 2018).

From the time when University Extension was started in Latin America as an essential component of academic activity and, even when movements to create Popular Universities in Latin America took place to follow similar experiences in Europe, the model of university that is proposed as necessary considers opening the walls and cloisters of universities to the most

critical issues of our societies and to the participation and proposals of the major social actors of our countries. Hence the commitment to a public, free, lay, inclusive, socially committed university, with high quality Extension (or Social Action), research and teaching programs, to become part of a single and unique ethical, political and pedagogical process. The university as a space for debate and confrontation of ideas. The university as a space to build critical thinking and relations of solidarity as a contribution to the democratisation of society.

Given the growing interest in going ahead with academic training projects in systematisation of experiences at the universities in Costa Rica, we have gradually had the opportunity of organising and participating in training activities of systematisation of experiences within the framework of inter university efforts, such as the proposals of the evaluation and training sub-committees of the National Council of University Principals (CONARE – Consejo Nacional de Rectores), and later, in proposals presented by some public universities in particular.

A first inter university project was started in 2013 (Jara 2015) aiming at offering a basic training process to learn the key concepts and tools of systematisation of experiences, at the same time that they were being put into practice. This work produced critical and participative thinking around the socio-cultural, political, technical and academic issues related to University Extension and Social Action.

This project consisted of three workshops during the year, with intervals for practical work designing and implementing systematisation processes of experiences selected by the participants themselves, and providing time for interchange among them, and follow-up and virtual consultancy from us. Thirty-seven persons from four universities participated, and 24 concrete experiences were processed.

One year later, after a positive evaluation of the mastering of the approach and methodology and its usefulness to contribute both to specific work and to constitute a space for inter-university exchange and critical thinking, it was decided to drive forward a multiplying dynamic. Thus, a course to train-the-trainers was devised, where the participants were those who had been in the previous course, who now would become advisors and tutors of other teams at their universities and would be in charge of the systematisations.

This course had four workshops and virtual tutoring from us. The last workshop consisted of a space for the socialisation of the products that had been developed by the people whom they accompanied and advised during the year. Twenty-three persons participated and 15 experiences were systematised.

A relevant aspect was the recognition of the importance of changing the roles of the participants, from the first to the second course. They went from being participants-systematisers to provide theoretical and methodological tutoring. Systematising other people demanded from them a deeper knowledge of their work and they even had to face unexpected or unknown situations.

Many lessons were provided by these first training activities, which allowed us to experiment and apply different dimensions of the systematisation of experiences: creating academic knowledge during Extension practice; exchange and knowledge dialog among the participants of Extension/Social Action projects (from universities as well as from the communities); historic reconstruction of the experienced processes; information was organised, and available records of experiences were searched; distancing from their own experi-

ence to analyse it and interpret it critically, looking at problem aspects found during the historic reconstruction; identification of analysis categories and relevant theoretical interpretation; drafting of conclusions and learning obtained from these analyses and interpretations, aside from generalities and platitudes; preparation of communication material to share learning and, at the same time, give a new look at the systematised experience and think about how to communicate it; etc.

All of this was more complex and meaningful than the traditional narrative reports of the University Extension or Social Action activities that would have to be delivered as a procedure in rendering accounts. It also implied a critical look from the logic and avatars of the process experienced, that enriched the elements obtained at previous evaluations.

After this, new training activities for systematisation of experiences were designed, with a similar pattern. From the one organized by CONARE's evaluation sub-committee in 2015, also inter-universities, to those provided by the Direction of Professional Development of the Universidad Nacional in 2016; the Vice-principal office for Social Action of the Universidad de Costa Rica in 2017 and 2018 (the last one for the regional Pacific office); the Vice-principal office for Extension of the Universidad Nacional in 2018 and 2019: which has already published five volumes with the results of the systematizations performed (UNA, 2018); the Interdisciplinary Initiatives of the Centre for Arts Research, teaching and extension of the same university; and others.

As an example, we cite the titles of some of the systematisations performed in these courses:

- The experience with the community of Palito Chira and local actors in oyster farming as socio-productive alternatives for marine-coastal communities.
- The experience of training and competition of mentally retarded swimmers who participated in the special Olympics in Athens, Greece, in 2011.
- Building of the concept "working with the community" in teaching Extension projects.
- The role of indigenous Bribri women in creating and consolidating the Iririá Alaklpa training center during the period of 2007-2009.
- The experience of the project to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit at Costa Rican penal institutions.
- The promotion of community tourism and local development initiatives in the Pacuare river basin.
- The experience of promoting fruit and vegetable consumption at school to develop healthy eating habits in early childhood.
- The experience of training in hygiene and manipulation of food for a population with intellectual disabilities.
- The experience of interdisciplinary academic articulation and of connection with social action in performing a socio-productive diagnosis with communities.
- The experience of the project of participative strategies of local climate change in two regions of the country.
- The contributions to recognising the knowledge and identity of the original peoples of Costa Rica.
- The work on the culture of peace and artistic expressions with people deprived of freedom at two different prison centers.

- Access, availability and sustainable use of drinking water by implementing a rainwater intake system with the populations settled on Isla Caballo.
- Popular education and community voices. The experience of the popular communication tool workshops with the communities of Guácimo and Palmar Norte during 2017 and 2018.
- The experience of the Laboratory exploring dramatic acting on the music-body relationship.
- The experience of 3 decades of teaching applying the Züllig contemporary dancing method in the bachelor's degree of Dancing course.

Clearly, there is a great thematic diversity thanks to the multiplicity of experiences that are performed in the University Extension or Social Action projects. Thanks to this approach, training in systematisation of experiences has helped, on the one hand, to gain a broader look of the complexity and diversity of practices that take place, or are unknown; and on the other, to develop a discussion and academic debate about the role of University Extension and its challenges, the limits and possibilities for producing academic knowledge based on practices, the participation of people from the communities as subjects of the processes, the link with research and teaching, the formative role for students of social action experiences, etc.

Training on theory and methodology of systematisation of Extension/Social Action experiences, has a starting point in the needs and motivations presented to the participants by the dynamic of the projects and programs developed together with the people in urban and rural communities, as well as through agreements with primary and secondary schools, state and municipal institution, and other social players. We start from the belief that the richness of teachings that can be found in the concrete experiences of university Extension, Social Action or Projection, does not necessarily become learning or academic knowledge. Activism or concern centered on the mere execution of the projects and on a formal rendering of accounts of what has been done, becomes the major obstacle to build those learnings to which we must dedicate a systematic and organised reflexive effort. Quite often, the necessary time to do it is not even considered in the work plans and distribution of responsibilities; besides, there is a need for methodological guidance and technical tools that will allow to do it.

From this dual starting point: the strong belief that experiences contain varied and rich learnings that we must identify, discover and explain; and, the need to have guidelines and tools to allow us to do it, we have been exploring possible and viable ways to systematise the experiences that set the way for the training activities offered by various universities, in Costa Rica, as well as in other countries.

An aspect that has been taken into account, is the need to suggest proposals for systematisation of experiences that are feasible and constitute a reflexive component of the very dynamics of the extension action, so that they are not seen as an additional task, which would demand putting aside what is being done to concentrate on the systematization (we have had to deal with the tendency: very frequent in universities, to consider that systematising is equivalent to writing a "thesis", which would demand us to isolate ourselves from everything to do it, and furthermore, file it once it is concluded. Making it possible that systematisation of experiences be permanently present, as a dimension of the extension prac-

tices, is the goal sought by practicing these flexible and feasible modalities in order to show, firstly, their usefulness and effectiveness and, secondly, how to motivate their continuity. And here we are, on this path).

We will present now the conceptual and methodological approach with which we have worked, as well as some assertive reflections about the ways that are being opened in the academic life, related to the importance and feasibility of this approach to the production of knowledge via the practice.

Aliveness, ephemerality and transcendence of experiences

When entering the field of University Extension, Social Action or Projection, as it is called by different Latin American universities, the starting point considers that we are dealing with academic projects that are implemented in different ways. However, the focus is not on the design, structure and objectives of these projects, but on the processes that the said projects produced from the day in which they were conceived and implemented. Besides, and in particular, we are interested in identifying those aspects that impacted us and, as a result, became the focus of our attention: the experiences lived by the people who are their key players. In them, facts of events not just “happen”; it is us, the people, who “make them happen” and they impact our lives; people who think, feel, take action, and relate to each other in given contexts and situations and, as a result, live experiences that, in turn, will become new contexts, situations, ideas, emotions and relationships, in a historic dynamic of links and frames that never end.

Thus, we make explicit the importance of living the experiences that are marked by the characteristics imprinted by their players. We *live* the experiences, not just perform them. And we live them with expectations, fears, hopes, ideas, and intuitions that are intertwined with complex and dynamic processes, that, in turn, impact us, condition us, demand from us, make us be. The experiences are individual and collective, we live them, and they make us live.

Besides, no experience “begins from scratch”; all experiences are lived in a historical moment, in a specific economic, social, political and cultural context which conditions and frames it, but does not completely determine it, because, at the same time, each experience carries the potential for its own innovative contribution. In this sense, each immediate and personal experience is connected to the entire human experience, from the particular historical moment in which one lives, even though this relationship may not appear in an evident or immediate way.

To find these transcendent threads, it is necessary to perform deliberate exercises which will allow us to go beyond the perceptions of the current and momentary event in order to identify the multiple temporalities nested in it.

The historical condition conceived from experience allows clearing the way to a nomadic, migrant, transitive reason, sustained by its own lived processes (...) recovering the plot of life as a complex network of contingent vital relations, that, acknowledging their transitivity can glimpse from that the transcendence that emerges as a certainty of the experience of what is human (Osorio & Rubin, 2010, 4).

Experiences are also living places for creating and re-creating knowledge. This everyday knowledge, “sentipensante” according to Fals Borda, that everybody has, is a fundamental part of experience: this is the knowledge produced by the experience, “saber de experiencia feito” in Portuguese as Freire said (1997, 32), which can be of variable nature depending on who lived it, and the conditions, habits and reflection characteristics: from immediate, empirical, descriptive, focused knowledge, to knowledge with a high conceptual framework. Yet, regardless of its nature and even if charged with transcendentalism, as has been mentioned, knowledge will always be related to a particular, new and “ephemeral” experience (Ghiso, 2010), becoming the starting point for a critical exercise of knowledge building and of discovery of the meanings of what has been lived. This is then the place for the systematization of the experience

What do we mean by systematisation of experiences?

From the conceptual point of view, it is necessary to distinguish from what is commonly understood by “systematisation”: to organise, classify and catalogue scattered data and information. The concept of “Systematisation of Experiences” refers to the critical interpretation of lived processes which, once organised and recovered, identifies significant learning that must be communicated and shared in order to nurture the experience itself or to inspire others in a transformative perspective. This second meaning, always related to “experiences”, implies an intellectual exercise of multiple tasks: recording, description, recovery, analysis, synthesis, interpretation, communication. Ultimately, it implies theorising starting from the lived experiences, something which demands a rigorous and, therefore, systematic procedure.

The processes of training in theory and methodology of the systematisation of experiences that we have been promoting with several universities, are performed with a Popular Education approach, that is, from a liberating, horizontal, dialogue-based educational perspective, that seeks to build transformative knowledge and develop abilities for social and personal change. This assumes an exercise of theorisation from practice, committed to transformative processes in which our work is reinforced as protagonist subjects of a History yet to be built, based on the interests, needs, aspirations and proposals of the popular majorities that suffer inequalities in our societies.

Accordingly, the systematisations of University Extension experiences have a double sign of commitment with the oppressed, marginalised, excluded or discriminated sectors of our societies: on the one hand, because these programs and projects mean university commitment to these problems in order to contribute to their improvement; and, on the other, because systematizing them to create meaningful learning will strengthen the critical and assertive understanding by those who are the participating subjects in the processes.. The latter promotes a dialogue between popular and academic knowledge, which is intertwined in the processes of Extension or Social Action, and, in turn, invigorates the investigative dimension and enrich the teaching dimension.

We want to elaborate now on some key aspects of the conceptual design with which we work, and thus reaffirm that:

Systematisation of experiences is the critical interpretation of one or several experiences that, once organised and recovered, unveils or clarifies the logic and meaning of the process lived in them: the various factors that intervened, how they related to each other, and why they did it in that way.

Systematisation of experiences produces knowledge and meaningful learning which allows the critical appropriation of lived experiences (their knowledge and feelings), understanding them theoretically, and directing them to the future with a transformative perspective (Jara, O. 2013, p. 78).

This conceptual framework requires the following elements:

- It is an intentional exercise that seeks to penetrate the intimate and transcendental framework of the experience with an interpretative exercise of theorization and conscious appropriation of what has been lived. It requires an effort of “epistemological curiosity” and assumes “methodical rigour” (Freire, 1997, 28-35) to turn the knowledge that comes from experience into critical knowledge, through its problematisation.
- It considers systematisation of experiences as an interpretation based on the arrangement and reconstruction of past events. This means, that it is the result of a complex effort to locate, describe, narrate, classify the elements, analyse and reflect on the lived experience.
- This interpretation seeks to identify the logic of the lived process: where, how and why the different factors of the experience related in a certain way throughout the experience? Which were the most active and determinant factors?, and which were the most dependent or secondary ones? What continuities, discontinuities, contradictions and ruptures happened and why they happened? What were the phases or stages of the experience and why was it possible to move from one to the other?
- The interpretation produces critical knowledge and significant learnings, starting from the features of what was lived during the experiences and from those who lived them. This often implies the possibility to perceive previously unknown dimensions and perspectives that were present in our experiences, but that we had not perceived or recognised.
- Thus, the systematisation of experiences allows the critical appropriation of the meaning of the experience, not because it previously existed already, but as a way of “making ours”, the meaning of our practice. Therefore, it becomes a critical and conscious construct of the meaning of the experience, making it possible, not only to understand it in its foundations and invisible framework, but also providing clues for its transforming guidelines towards the future.

What was just said reaffirms that we are subjects of History, and not just objects acting in it. The systematisation of experiences becomes a possibility condition to the theoretical understanding: with a greater level of abstraction and generalization, of the particularity of the experiences of Extension, so that we can take them into our hands with a transforming intentionality.

Therefore, the systematisation of University Extension experiences can help strengthening the transforming commitment of the university work, and also contribute to the production of academic knowledge nourished by the wealth of economic, social, political and cultural realities in which the University is immersed. This will also contribute to a social change where the social sectors of the communities we work with will be the main players,

and ultimately, to the support of projects of local management and social impact of varying scope.

This conceptual framework of systematisation of experiences breaks with the traditional schemes of extension intervention whose intention was to “take the academic knowledge to the communities”, and instead builds an academic knowledge nurtured by a dialogue of the knowledge produced during the experiences. This is why we also demand a methodology consistent with this vision.

A flexible and feasible methodological proposal to make systematization possible

During the training processes on systematisation of University Extension experiences that we have co-ordinated, we have been following the stages (not “steps” in a linear sense, nor a recipe to be applied) of a methodological proposal which, starting first with the lived experience, proposes a systematisation plan in which it is important:

- a) *To delimit the object or experience* to be systematised (in time and place) to identify the concrete practice, its actors and conditions and the period which will serve as the base to build the learning
- b) *To define a precise objective* as a result of this systematisation
- c) *To establish an axis* around the central aspects of the experience that interests us most, and , thus converting them into a guiding thread to read the experience.
- d) *To identify the information sources* available: registers of documents, photographs, sound recordings, audiovisual records, etc., and those that it would be necessary to obtain to gain knowledge of the experience.
- e) *To formulate the procedures*, techniques and activities to be performed and determine responsibilities, dates and products, and also prepare a budget to cover the exercise of systematisation.

Once the Plan has been elaborated, next comes a stage of Recovery of the lived history, of looking at the experience as a process, of using the possible records and sources, of identifying its stages, actors, interrelations. For this, it will be necessary to organize the information and also perform a historical reconstruction based on the systematisation axis formulated. Chronological matrices, testimonial narratives, timelines, maps, etc., are the type of techniques usually employed for this stage. This moment which is characterised by “distancing” from the lived experience to look at it critically and obtain a panoramic overview of the experience (in most cases for the first time), creates the conditions for looking beyond the events that happened and build an interpretation of the threads and substantial framework of the experience

This historical recovery provides the foundation to analyze separately: from this point on, the different aspects and to determine synthesis and interrelations between the elements found. This is the key and substantive moment of critical interpretation of the lived experience. At this point usually there will be several types of findings that were not noticed when they occurred, or that are now visible because they related to different aspects that occurred

during the experience. This is when we use the available categories of analysis and theoretical references, but it is also possible that it will be necessary to search for other references that help us establish a dialogue with other theoretical contributions. This is when we open from the reconstruction of what has been lived: a specific moment of theorisation, of abstraction, of understanding causes, common and different factors, tensions and contradictions that marked that process and defined it. This allow us, therefore, to move towards the formulation of conclusions, learnings and recommendations.

Lastly, these formulations must be communicated, shared, discussed to get consensus and guidance and to present proposals and lines of action for the future. Here is where the systematization of experiences allows us, not only to “appropriate the past experience”, but to aim at “appropriating the future”. Its main objective is to guide, with greater capacity and projection, what is proposed and recommended.

Following this path by means of face-to-face workshops and individual and collective exercises guided by a virtual educational Computer Platform¹, with the support of reading and audiovisual materials, each team or person who began the process a few months earlier becomes interested and feels the need to systematise a given experience of Social Action. This phase ends with a written academic article that synthesises the results of that systematisation. Moreover, based on the work on this systematization of an experience, some teams or persons will use the photos, recordings, videos and historical recovery matrices to develop other communication products to be shared, either with colleagues working with Extension or Social Action projects, or with the people in the communities where they worked, or others who have similar experiences.

Each product of systematisation supposes a heavy load of organising, reflecting, learning and exchanging. Many products are also developed with the people of the communities where the work was done, to allow their voices and knowledge to be expressed and shared through them. Having been subjects of the systematisation process has meant an opportunity to consolidate the autonomy of the projects, once the presence of the university has ended. Recently we have been encouraging this participation, and also have offered training activities with the participation of teachers, researchers, students and people from the communities.

Paths that lead to new ways

Although there is already a road or way that we have been walking for many years in this field, each new training experience produces different learnings, innovative issues, and demands for methodological variables suitable for never-before encountered conditions, and for a deeper look of new topics. This is how we can overcome the propensity to : activism, which does not leave time for reflecting ; prepares merely descriptive and narrative reports, which lack critical thinking; puts distance between the dialogue of knowledge produced during the extension experiences and knowledge gained by research activities. We also see a growing number of extension projects which include, from their planning stage, specific

1 We usually work with the Moodle platform, but we also communicate via email, WhatsApp and a Drive folder exclusive for each course

moments and human and material resources allocated to the systematisation of practices as an interpretative-critical exercise closely related to the development of the projects, and not as an external, occasional or subsequent task.

Each new training and capacity building experience in systematisation of experiences of University Extension, Action or Social projection is, in fact, an incentive and a marvelous opportunity to learn for those of us who are proposing them. Therefore, we continue to learn and share learnings such as those we have discussed in this article. We hope that this will also provide an incentive to add this dimension to the extension work, not as an isolated activity, but as a permanent exercise that will help support the efforts for a committed and coherent university in dealing with the challenges of our societies.

We definitely consider that we have opened paths towards achieving the always wanted inter or transdisciplinarity in academic work, as well as the linking of the research, teaching and extension dimensions (having as a rallying axis precisely the complex and rich experiences of extension). Finally, we believe that this is a fundamental way to meet the challenges of an academic work committed to brave the threats of our times, and to build a transforming public university, that, as a responsible social and political actor, provides critical thinking based on practice and on the interaction with the major sectors of our societies.

References

- CEP Alforja (2013): *Propuesta preliminar para la realización de un curso-taller sobre teoría y metodología de sistematización de experiencias de extensión universitaria en coordinación con la subcomisión de capacitación de Conare (Comisión Nacional de Rectores)*. Documento de trabajo.
- Falckembach E. & Torres Carrillo A (2015): *Systematization of Experiences: a practice of Participatory Research from Latin America* en: *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research* (Hilary Bradbury ed), London, pp. 76-82.
- Freire, P. (1997) *Pedagogia da autonomia. Saberes necessários à prática educativa*. São Paulo, Paz e Terra.
- Ghiso, A (2010) *La fugaz verdad de la experiencia: ecología del acontecimiento y la experiencia formativa*. www.cepalforja.org/sistem/bvirtual
- Jara, O. (2013) *La Sistematización de Experiencias, práctica y teoría para otros mundos posibles*. Guadalajara, IMDEC, CEP Alforja, CEAAL, Oxfam Intermon.
- Jara, O. (2015) *Producir conocimientos desde las prácticas de acción social de las universidades. Sistematización de experiencias de Extensión Universitaria en Costa Rica 2013-2014*, en La Piragua, Revista de Educación y Política, n. 41, pp. 55-69, CEAAL.
- Osorio y Rubio (2010) *Investigación-Acción desde un enfoque pedagógico eco-reflexivo: consideraciones para el desarrollo de un programa crítico-hermenéutico* en merlinescas.blogspot.com.
- Streck & Jara (2015): *Research, Participation and Social Transformation: Grounding Systematization of Experiences in Latin American Perspectives* en: *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research* (Hilary Bradbury ed), London, pp. 472-480.
- Torres A (2010): *From participatory research to the systematization of experiences*, *International Journal of Action Research*, 6, Mering, Germany pp. 196-222.
doi: 10.1688/1861-9916_IJAR_2010_02-03_Torres
- UCR (2018). *Manifiesto de la Universidad de Costa Rica en defensa de la universidad pública y por una acción social transformadora, en conmemoración de los 100 años de la Reforma de Córdoba*. San José, abril 2018.

UNA- Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica (2016-2018):

www.extension.una.ac.cr/index.php/es/noticias-y-eventos/177-tomos-coleccion-democratizando-experiencias-de-extension-universitaria

About the author

Oscar Jara Holliday is Popular Educator and Sociologist, Doctor in Education, Director of the Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones Alforja en Costa Rica. President of CEAAL (Consejo de Educación Popular de América Latina y el Caribe).

Author's address:

Oscar Jara Holliday

APARTADO POSTAL 1272-2050

San Pedro, San José, Costa Rica

tel +506 88221299

oscar@cepalforja.org

Introduction to Gustavsen's "Action Research and the Problem of the Single Case"

Richard Ennals

In this new special issue of IJAR, which is concerned with "Building Bridges", we have the opportunity to clear up an enduring misunderstanding.

In Bjorn Gustavsen's native Norway, he is primarily remembered for designing and managing a series of national development programmes, each of which depended on collaboration between government and the labour market parties (employers' associations and trades unions), with an ongoing culture of dialogue. These national programmes had a declared foundation of Action Research, and the two became closely associated. Gustavsen (1938-1918) is remembered in a similar way in Sweden, where he designed and led the major national programme LOM, based on dialogue at several levels, and then led the evaluation of the Work Environment Fund (ALF). For many years, he held professorial posts both at the Work Research Institute (AFI) in Norway, and at the Swedish National Institute for Working Life (NIWL).

It may therefore seem odd for this special issue of IJAR in 2020 to focus attention on Gustavsen's 2003 paper on "Action Research and the Problem of the Single Case" (CAT 8.1. 2003). Here Gustavsen is responding to a paper by Davydd Greenwood (Greenwood 2002), whose approach to Action Research had been based on "single cases". Greenwood's paper had the mission of defending Action Research from criticisms from other methodologies, such as surveys. Gustavsen's response is robust: the other methodologies have often led to detached academic critiques, rather than engagement in action, as in the case of Action Research. Greenwood himself has been a consistent advocate of social and institutional change. A fresh and unapologetic approach to single cases is needed. If that fresh approach is recognised and understood, Gustavsen's place among the "Varieties of Action Research" can be illuminated, and the potential power and efficacy of Action Research can be appreciated.

In order to understand what Gustavsen is saying and doing in his paper, I suggest that we have to look beyond his work in Norway and Sweden. His national programmes were "waves", intended to stimulate social movements and bring about sustainable change. In his work elsewhere in Europe, he might be seen as an engaged Action Researcher, active at a

local level. He could be seen as “a particle”, rather than simply “making waves”. In this he provided illuminating examples for researchers on projects within national programmes. To be an Action Researcher is to be an “active particle”, whether in a project or a programme.

It must be acknowledged that the “Norwegian Model” of tripartite collaboration underpinned national programmes, as was formerly the case with the “Swedish Model”. The Swedish culture of Working Life has become more confrontational in recent years. The Norwegian dialogue continues to be more that of a family. The point is that each national culture is different, but that Gustavsen’s conceptual framework can be applied in each (Ennals and Gustavsen 1999). With a bottom-up approach to “concept-driven development”, Gustavsen talked about “productive partnerships”, “work organisation” within and between organisations, “development coalitions”, enterprise development and working life, and regional development.

Gustavsen argued that “there is no one best way”. He helped to develop the European Commission Green Paper in 1997 “Partnership for a New Organisation of Work”, for Allan Larsson, then Director-General for Employment and Social Policy. This Green Paper underpinned a set of policy initiatives and ongoing networks, such as the European Workplace Innovation Network (EUWIN). Gustavsen saw “Europe as a Development Coalition”, a context in which we could “learn from differences”. As is outlined in Ennals and Gustavsen (1999), he organised a number of processes in which a series of international workshops brought together separate single cases. These cases were not presented with academic detachment, but by engaged researchers who had sought to bring about change. They described their cases against the background of other cases, and the descriptions became richer in each successive workshop. A shared language and conceptual framework developed to describe such cases. Researchers engaged in action were encouraged to draw on insights from researchers who had engaged in previous action.

Around the world today, for example in Latin America, Asia and Africa, we can see examples of focused approaches to development based on community mobilisation, rather than relying on the imposition of external expert-led solutions. Development workers and communities are encouraged to work on individual local single cases. I suggest that Bjorn Gustavsen’s 2003 paper “Action Research and the Problem of the Single Case” provides a “bridge” which can enable single community based cases to be linked, through action and dialogue, into an international movement. As Gustavsen argues in his paper, this is consistent with the approach taken by Freire and Fals Borda.

The “bridge” was there all the time. It can now be used.

About the author

Richard Ennals is Emeritus Professor at Kingston University, co-editor of IJAR, and Editor in Chief of EJWI. He has professorial posts in Norway, Turkey, Lithuania, Nepal and South Africa.

Author’s address

19 Belgrade Road
Hampton
Middlesex TW12 2AZ
UK

Action research and the problem of the single case¹

Bjørn Gustavsen (1938-2018)

Abstract

In his article in Volume 7, No.2 of *Concepts and Transformation*, Greenwood lays the ground for a self-critical review of action research. This is very much called for, but there is a need to avoid this review becoming a revival of yesterdays “famous cases”. Major parts of today’s action research is oriented towards social movements, learning regions and other levels of organisation far beyond the small group. The associated research challenges can be met only by developing new research platforms and seeking new alliances with other branches of research.

Key words: Action research, social constructivism, development programs

Investigación Acción y el problema de los casos únicos

Resumen

En su artículo Volumen 7, nº2 de *Conceptos y Transformaciones*, Greenwood plantea una autocrítica de la investigación acción. Se trata de una reflexión necesaria ligada a los problemas derivados de los casos únicos pero no deberíamos caer en revivir los 'casos de éxito' del pasado. La mayoría de los procesos de investigación acción actuales están orientados a los movimientos sociales, los territorios que aprenden y otro tipo de organizaciones que van más allá de grupos reducidos. Los retos derivados de dichos procesos se pueden abordar mediante nuevas plataformas de investigación y alianzas con otras disciplinas de investigación.

Palabras clave: investigación acción, constructivismo social, programas de desarrollo

Action research may be something that the world needs, but it is also something that the world seldom wants. This is the point of departure for a recent article by Greenwood where the purpose is to look into why this is so (Greenwood 2002). Some of the reasons he places at the door of action research itself, for instance much sloppy reporting and even when the reporting is adequate it often pertains to issues of limited interest outside the action research community itself. Among the last are the epistemological and moral reasons why action research is superior to all other forms of research and detailed presentations of all the whys and hows of action research on project level. This focus is, it can be argued, akin to a sur-

1 Published in “*Concepts and Transformation*. International Journal of Action Research and Organizational Renewal”, vol. 8, no. 1 (2003), pp. 93-99. The International Journal of Action Research, now published by Barbara Budrich Verlag succeeded this journal.

vey researcher continuously discussing the epistemological challenges of survey research and the construction of items, scales and questions, without ever doing any survey.

The purpose of this note is not primarily to disagree but rather to see to what extent some of the problems of action research can be even further highlighted. In this contribution, focus is on the last of the themes covered in the Greenwood article: the issue of scale (page 136):

While most people interested in society level issues tend to pose their questions and concerns in more or less general terms: what to do about poverty; participation in work, the process of globalization, the answers provided by action research are generally based on “local cases”. The cases are, furthermore, not only local; they tend to be very local in the sense that the great majority of action research studies pertain to processes between one or a few action researchers and very small groups of other people, often even during fairly short periods of time. Can, however, questions of concern to other actors than those directly involved in the project be answered on the basis of cases of this kind?

The standard research response to this challenge is to write a report where experiences from the case are set down, often in terms of theoretical and methodological reflections. This is what the researchers bring with them when facing the next group with which to do action research. The knowledge gained from the previous situation will help understand the new one better, it will enable the researcher to move faster to the point of identifying appropriate action, and so on. However, what is to emerge from the *second* case if the knowledge from the first is sufficient to do the right things? Theory and methods can always be improved on and the second case can help do that. This can continue with a third case, a fourth case, and so on.

But is there a limit? Do we ever reach a stage when action can be *suspended* and texts take over? Can a number reports from a number of cases eventually provide a reasonably “full” theoretical-methodological package? It will, of course, never be 100 % , but can it be completed to such an extent that further development can be converted to implementation of theory rather than continued action research?

Most action researchers would say no: Each new situation will always be more open than the idea of “applied research” presupposes and the need for action research will never end. But if the need for action never ends it means that no “complete theory” can ever be delivered. All the answers that action research can provide will be of the type: We can give you some points for consideration, some ways you can take but you have to add a strategy for action in your own context. Only through going into action is it possible to gain those additional insights and understandings that are necessary to act fully appropriate in your own context.

Most action researchers: and certainly Greenwood, would argue that if what action research delivers is limited, so is what other kinds of research deliver: The difference is that while action research sometimes admits that all conclusions are inputs into new action rather than self-contained theories, other kinds of research generally pretend to offer texts that in themselves give, if not a full, so at least an adequate understanding of the situation.

So far, however, the balance between action research and other research is at a draw. Both deliver limited products, the difference may be that action research does it in a way that is slower, more expensive and generally even more limited in terms of number of peo-

ple that express their views through the project than what is the case for other types of research. At this point something can obviously be done on the research side. Greenwood has a good point when he argues that by suspending at least some of the more or less endless discourses on "internal issues" of epistemology, morality and methodology, more space can be created for presenting and discussing the social constructions that we actually contribute to and their social and human meanings and functions. This will, in itself, go some distance towards giving action research a more visible position in the discourses of society. Even small scale examples can be of interest and good examples well presented are quite clearly of more interest than diffuse examples that are buried in discussions of what the actors concerned did rather than in discussions about what came out of it. However, the core issue does not lie here. Although there is room for substantial improvement these improvements will not radically change the position of action research in society.

To make this more radical change there is a need to face another problem: How can the unique property of action research: the fact that it does action, be turned into a positive asset in the discourses of society? Are there ways in which action research can *transcend* the single case without losing the action element along the road?

There is no simple response to this challenge but there is at least some experience in working with it. Greenwood credits this author with the development of broad programs rather than single case projects: the point about these programs is just to approach the problem of scale from an action research perspective. He argues, on the other hand, that there is little adequate reporting from these programs, in particular concerning the relationships between the programs and the cases that constitute the parts of each program. This may be true. However, to approach this question we need to look at how scale :or "critical mass" as it was once called, is meant to be reached:

First and foremost: the idea is not to replace the single case with a number of cases, but to create or support *social movements*. A social movement is a series of events that are linked to each other, and where the meaning and construction of each event is part of a broader stream of events, and not a self-sufficient element in an aggregate. There is little point in replacing the single case with a number of disconnected cases. What is here called a social movement can emanate from many sources, and pertain to a wide range of themes; in the case of this author the core concern has been democracy and participation, with a main focus on the role and significance of work (Gustavsen 2000).

To initiate or relate to social movements the research resources must generally be of some size. This is the reason for programs rather than projects. When it has been possible to create programs of some scale: say, up to the level of 50 research-years over some years, it is often, by outside observers, ascribed to particularly favourable political circumstances that are not paralleled outside the Nordic countries. To this one may make several points:

In the same way as a social movement does not have a single centre, the action research programs do not have such a centre. The research resources are applied in a *distributive* way. The ongoing workplace development program in Norway (Gustavsen 2002) is organised in altogether 9 so-called "modules", that is: geographically distributed units of researchers and networks of workplaces, in principle covering most of the country from the north to the south. Given the present political intentions in most countries of spreading educational and R&D resources it is far easier to finance this kind of pattern than one big "na-

tional action research centre". A fairly similar program in Finland has much of the same pattern (Alasoini and Kyllönen 1998).

Second, much of the action element is financed by other sources, such as regional authorities, making it possible to increase the scale without being completely dependent upon research money.

Third, the programs actually deliver what they promise and what the sponsors are paying for. In Gustavsen et al (2001: 39-70) there is a fairly detailed presentation of how one of the programs was evaluated; the book as a whole contains a presentation of its outcome. This outcome was found fully satisfactory by the Research Council of Norway, the social partners and others concerned.

This, it can be argued, is all very well. But where is the report of "global significance"? Greenwood may be right when he argues that it is hard to find. However, this author also believes that it is sometimes a question of where to look.

At this point we need to turn to what is involved in working with social movements rather than single cases. If we use action research in a distributive way to create social movements, it becomes more important to create many events of low intensity and diffuse boundaries, than fewer events that correspond to the classical notion of a "case". Instead of using much resources in a single spot to pursue things into a continuously higher degree of detail in this spot, resources are spread over a much larger terrain to intervene in as many places in the overall movement as possible.

But how can this be defended in research terms? Unless we deal with sharply featured events that can be turned into research cases, each one to be scrutinised in as detailed a way as possible, how can knowledge travel from event to event? The point is that *knowledge does not travel from event to event purely through research channels*. If we assume that the collaboration with, and action from, partners in joint projects is an essential element it means that no interesting event can be created by research alone. Research can never fully take over the construction of each separate event. To reach scale there must be two processes of "diffusion" running in parallel: one within the research community, one among the people concerned. Action research has to design its points and modes of intervention in such a way that it is *the combined effect* of both processes in interaction with each other that is maximised.

Emerging as a partner in the construction of social movements, research does not stand or fall purely with its own efforts. Instead, it shares success as well as failure with other actors. In this sense it is part of what can be called "development coalitions" (Ennals & Gustavsen 1999) rather than a "branch of research" struggling for recognition among numerous "branches of research".

This may, however, seem to leave action research with an even more difficult family of tasks than before. How can we research and report adequately on "movement level" rather than case level? It would be futile to argue that this has been very well done from the programs for which this author has carried some degree of responsibility. The point is, however, that this weakness is not remedied by turning back to classical single case reporting. What is needed is a new generation of efforts to catch initiation, development and results on movement level.

And in turning to this task we do not start completely from zero point:

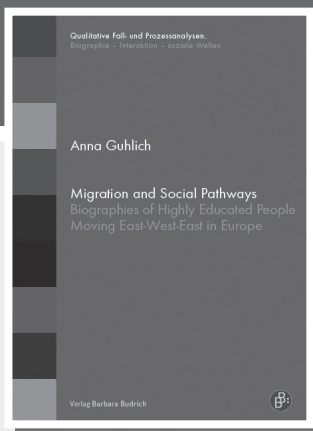
First we need, as pointed out by Greenwood himself, to more actively use what is done by, for instance, Latin American contributors like Paolo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda: with them focus has all the time been on movements, not on cases². In fact, the study by Greenwood and colleagues of the Mondragon co-operative (Greenwood et al 1992) is much more about a social movement than “an organisation”. There are, however, other works that are often overlooked in discussions about action research. One example is the evaluation by Frieder Naschold of the LOM program in Sweden (Naschold 1993). It would take us too far, in this context, to present the approach and content of this study. It goes, however, a long way towards doing just what Greenwood argues should be done: to link micro and macro, to place each event in a broader context. In doing this, however, each event has to move into the background and be a part of a larger scene rather than stand out as something to investigate in detail. This study was fully read by few, but its impact was major. When action research in working life was made subject to a fierce critique by two American and one Danish-American social scientists (an episode referred to in Greenwood, page 132) the Naschold report did not only block this review from having any effect, it actually turned the tide in the sense that the Research Council of Norway decided to increase investments in action research rather than decrease them. The point in this context is, however, that we cannot face the larger questions of society by digging continuously deeper into an endless series of disconnected groups, however interesting the relationship between the action researcher and each group may be. The shift in focus has far deeper implications. I am, on the other hand, in perfect agreement with Greenwood in the sense that even though there may be some studies that point in the right direction, they are far from sufficient.

Looking at the debates on action research that have occurred over the years one may possibly say that action research has won most of the epistemological debates and lost most of the research policy ones. In spite of occupying the moral high ground, as well as being fully in line with the dialogically oriented, interactive social constructivism that has more and more emerged as the epistemological main ground for the social sciences, action research is still struggling with its legitimacy. There is, after all, limited interest among policy makers, research councils, development agencies, governments and even the people concerned by the social movements to which we relate, in the internal workings of action research and its self-perception in moral and epistemological terms. What these and other bodies and actors are looking for is what does action research deliver to society and what is the scope, solidity and functional properties of these deliveries. The impressive effort of Reason and Bradbury (2000) to bring together much of what today constitutes action research in a global perspective has for the first time made something approaching an overview possible. This constitutes a platform for a renewed debate on action research and Greenwoods has made it abundantly clear that on top of the new discourse agenda is the society level impact of action research.

2 See Eduardo Almeida (Mexico) “How to create a social movement” in: “Concepts and Transformation”, vol 7:3 (2002) and Cenio B. Weyh, Danilo R. Streck “Participatory budget in Southern Brazil: A collective and democratic experience”, this issue (editor’s note)

References

- Alasoini, T. and Kyllönen, M. (eds.). 1998. *The crest of the wave*. Helsinki: National workplace development program
- Ennals, R. and Gustavsen, B. 1999. *Work organisation and Europe as a development coalition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins
- Greenwood, D. J. 2002. "Action research: Unfulfilled promises and unmet challenges". *Concepts and Transformation*, 7(2): 117-140. doi: 10.1075/cat.7.2.02gre
- Greenwood, D. and Santos, G. 1992. *Industrial democracy as process: Participatory action Research in the Fagor cooperative group of Mondragon*. Assen/Maastricht: van Gorcum
- Gustavsen, B. 2002. "Constructing new organisational realities: The role of research". *Concepts and Transformation* 7(3): 237-261 doi: 10.1075/cat.7.3.03gus
- Gustavsen, B. 2000. "Theory and practice: The mediating discourse". In: Reason, P. and Bradbury, H. (eds) *Handbook of action research*. London: Sage
- Gustavsen, B., Finne, H., and Oscarsson, B. (eds.) 2001. *Creating connectedness: The role of social research in innovation policy*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Naschold, F. 1993. "Organization development: National programmes in the context of international competition". In: Naschold, F., Cole, R., Gustavsen, B. and van Beinum, H. van: *Constructing the new industrial society*. Assen/Maastricht: van Gorcum
- Reason, P. and Bradbury, H. (eds.). 2000. *Handbook of action research*. London: Sage



Anna Gühlich

Migration and Social Pathways

Biographies of Highly Educated People
Moving East-West-East in Europe

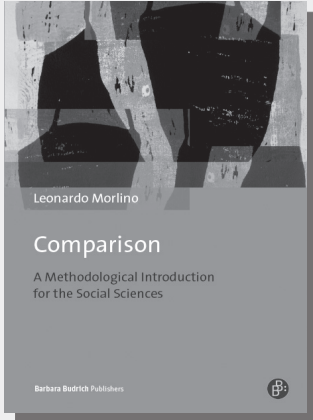
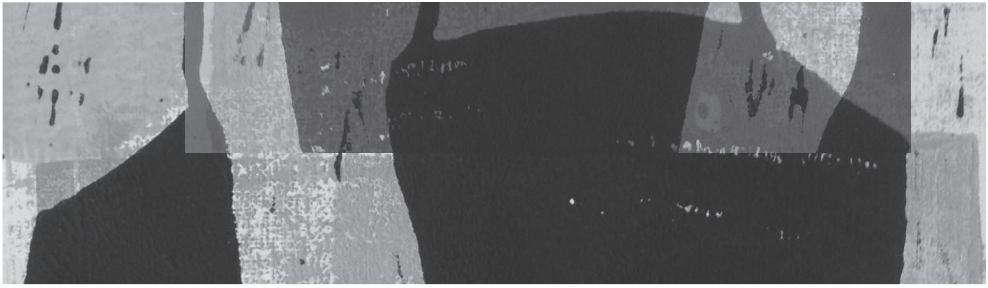
Qualitative Fall- und Prozessanalysen. Biographie – Interaktion – soziale Welten
2017 • 363 pp. • Pb. • 46,00 € (D) • 47,30 € (A)

ISBN 978-3-8474-2118-4 • eISBN 978-3-8474-1106-2

The landscape of European migration has changed considerably over the past decades, in particular after the fall of the iron curtain and again after the EU enlargement to the east. The author researches the phenomenon of highly qualified migration using the example of migration between the Czech Republic and Germany. The book reveals diverse strategies migrants use to respond to the possible de-valuation of their qualification, e.g. by making use of their language skills, starting new studies or using transnational knowledge.

From the Contents: Context: Czech-German border crossings against the backdrop of the shifting landscape of European migration • Research on highly skilled migration in Europe: state of the art • Biographical approaches to migration and social mobility • The research process • Biographies • Cross-case comparisons and findings

www.shop.budrich.de



Leonardo Morlino

Comparison

**A Methodological Introduction
for the Social Sciences**

2018 • 128 pp. • Pb. • 19,90 € (D) • 20,50 € (A)

ISBN 978-3-8474-2143-6 • eISBN 978-3-8474-1146-8

Comparison is an essential research method in political science. This book helps students to understand comparison as an academic instrument, to grasp its necessity and its effective purpose for research. For that reason the author answers three simple questions: why compare; what to compare; and, how to compare. Doing so, he considers not only the comparative tradition but he takes also into account methodological innovations of the last two decades.

From the Contents: Introduction: choosing the question? • Defining comparison • Why compare? • What to compare: the basic units • What to compare: space and time • How to compare: the key mechanisms • How to compare: recent developments • Beyond comparison: other research methods

www.shop.budrich.de

Budrich Journals



European Review of International Studies

ISSN: 2196-6923
eISSN: 2196-7415
volume 5, 2018
3 x per annum
approx. 150 pp./issue
Language: English



International Journal for Research on Extended Education

ISSN: 2196-3673
eISSN: 2196-7423
volume 6, 2018
2 x per annum
approx. 120 pp./issue
Language: English



Journal of the International Network for Sexual Ethics & Politics

ISSN: 2196-6931
eISSN: 2196-694X
volume 6, 2018
2 x per annum
approx. 120 pp./issue
Language: English



Politics, Culture and Socialization

ISSN: 1866-3427
eISSN: 2196-1417
volume 9, 2018
2 x per annum
approx. 200 pp./issue
Language: English

- Available Print + Online •
- Single Article Downloads •
- Various Subscription Types for Individuals and Institutions •
- Free Contents (ToCs, Editorials, Book Reviews, Open Access Contents) •
 - Online Access by Campus Licence via IP for Institutions •
 - Archival Rights for Institutions •
 - Permission for Interlibrary Loan •
 - VPN access permitted •
- No Limitations on Number of Users at Budrich Journals •

www.budrich-journals.com

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACTION RESEARCH

IJAR – International Journal of Action Research provides a forum for an open and non dogmatic discussion about action research, regarding both its present situation and future perspectives. This debate is open to the variety of action research concepts worldwide. The focus is on dialogues between theory and practice. The journal is problem driven; it is centered on the notion that organizational, regional and other forms of social development should be understood as multidimensional processes and viewed from a broad socio-ecological, participative and societal perspective.

IJAR is a refereed journal and published three times a year. The editors invite contributions from academic social sciences, giving special attention to action research and action research practice, to conceptual and theoretical discussions on the changing worlds of work and society.

Author Guidelines

Author guidelines can be found at <https://ijar.budrich-journals.com>.

Submission

Manuscripts should be submitted via e-mail to the editor-in-chief, Dr. Danilo Streck: dstreck@unisinos.br

Databases / External Websites

CNKI | CNPeReading | Crossref | EBSCO | EconPapers | Fachzeitschriften | Gale Cengage | GBI-Genios | Google Scholar | IBR-Online | IBZ-Online | IDEAS/RePEc | ProQuest Central | ProQuest Social Science Database | ProQuest Social Science Premium Collection | scholars-e-library | SCImago | SCOPUS | SSOAR

Back Issues (2012 and older)

All full texts of contributions from back issues (2012 and older) – which are not available in the online archives of the journal at Budrich Journals – are freely available in Open Access at the Social Science Open Access Repository (SSOAR).