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INTRODUCTION

European Adult Education Policy in Question

European adult educators are sometimes prey to the vanity that adult education began in Europe. Though contentious, their exemplars – Grundtvig, Erasmus, Socrates, to name a few ‘immortalised’ in the titles of European Union (EU) programmes – suggest the belief is not wholly groundless. Yet Europe has, until quite recently, been a continent of empires and nation states: European adult education has generally emerged within national contexts. For two or three centuries past, the nation has generally provided a guiding rationale. Sometimes this is explicit, as with Grundtvig and Danish nationalism (Steele, 2007). But even movements generally associated with labour and socialism were often strongly national in character – early 20th-century adult education in Britain, for instance, epitomised in the work of Albert Mansbridge and R.H. Tawney, was strongly influenced by ideas about ‘Englishness’.

Recently, however, Europe has seen an attempt to build an unprecedented supra-national polity. The EU, building on the work of its predecessors since the *Treaty of Rome* (1957), combines a number of independent nation states. The resulting entity has established itself as a major international organisation. Originally six, its member states now number twenty-eight; a further four countries are substantially committed by choice to EU rules. The EU accounted for 7.3% of the world’s population in 2010, and over one quarter of world’s GDP (Eurostat, 2012: 17, 29). Although originally an ‘economic community’, over time the EU has acquired legislative, judicial and executive authority over a far wider sphere of activities – including a substantial influence over adult education. Exactly what role the EU now plays in adult education across Europe is the subject of this book.

The aim of this book is to explore some of the complex issues involved in research about policy affecting adult education in Europe. Adult education may have national roots, but it has also often been deeply internationalist. Adult educators’ commitment to international organisations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has been profound. But the EU is unusual, if not unique, among international organisations in that its twenty-eight member states have, progressively over time, to an increasing extent, pooled some of their sovereignty. In adhering to the EU, single states maintain their powers to govern people residing within their national territories. However, by acquiring EU membership they also delegate some of their powers to shared political institutions, granting them responsibility in decision-making processes. Education – a sphere of

activity reserved to member states under the subsidiarity principle – was long largely exempt from this process. Over the years, however, as the EU has evolved, so have the relations not only between the EU and its member states, but between those member states themselves.

Despite national diversities, a cursory glance at contemporary processes in adult education across European states brings to light many common or similar characteristics in systems and mechanisms. Of course, some member states' histories have been closely intertwined for various periods: Slovenia and Croatia, Austria and Slovenia, the United Kingdom and Ireland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, to mention a very few. But more recently, the EU – led by the European Commission – has encouraged state representatives to share and exchange knowledge about their national systems in peer-to-peer activities, working groups and networks. Such cross-national communications and initiatives are also the result of joint political will and agenda-setting at European Council meetings, and find further expression in the work of shared political institutions like the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Communities. All member states, therefore, are now involved in debates – domestic and international – on the status and development of adult education.

The contributors to this book share these essential points. First, adult education in Europe can no longer be considered a policy matter for individual states alone, although national governments continue to hold legislative power to regulate the great bulk of public intervention within their territories. Second, all authors are aware of the complexity of the policy processes that shape the realities of adult education in contemporary Europe. Each contribution addresses this complexity at theoretical or methodological level, while acknowledging the inherently dialogical relation between these levels.

The aim of this book is not to *describe* adult education policy in Europe – nor even the processes by which adult education policy in Europe is made. Recent years have seen a number of contributions which have advanced our knowledge of both (e.g. Riddell, Markowitsch & Weedon, 2012; Saar, Ure & Holford, 2013). Rather, our purpose is to explore key issues in how research can be carried out. This introduction identifies and discusses the emergence of a research agenda on the production of European policies and the reconfiguration of adult education in contemporary Europe that comes with it.

COMPREHENDING THE EUROPEAN UNION

'We have the dimension of empire', European Commission President José-Manuel Barroso reflected in 2007, but while all hitherto existing empires had been constructed by 'force' and 'a centre imposing diktat', EU member states had, voluntarily, 'fully decided to work together and to pool their sovereignty' (or, in the words of an Irish political blogger: "'It's an empire Jim,' said José, 'but not as we know it'").¹ Although the imperial comparison can be politically embarrassing – 'Eurosceptics'

have made great play with it – there are many respects in which comparison with colonial enterprises can be revealing (see, e.g. Holford, 2006). Empires attempt to construct new and more extensive polities, often incorporating existing forms of rule in various ways, but overlaying them with political formations and ideologies which – some hope – will generate new identities and values. In this respect, the EU is little different from the Roman, Holy Roman, Russian, German, or British empires; and though there are important differences from multi-state (‘federal’) polities which eschew the notion of ‘empire’, such as Australia, Canada, Malaysia, or the United States of America (USA), the comparisons can also be revealing. For instance, the USA, originally a voluntary association of autonomous states (or, if one prefers, rebellious colonies) established through Civil War that while accession might be voluntary, membership could not be rescinded. Nevertheless, and despite an elaborate – and exemplary – constitutional structure, aspects of the relationship between central government and states’ rights remain unsettled to this day. In contrast, the EU includes some of the world’s most powerful – or at least, quite recently most powerful – nations. The relationship between the Union and its ‘central’ organs – such as the European Commission and the European Parliament – and Europe’s member states is therefore far more contested than the US Federal government’s relations with US states.

Yet if the EU has an imperial dimension, it has also evolved during an era of global governance. The early 20th century saw the rise and fall of the League of Nations; and from the 1940s the United Nations and its specialist agencies have proved lasting features of the international relations landscape. Beside them, of course, is an array of other international organisations, agencies and regional groupings. As the EU has evolved, therefore, and attempted to make policies on education (or shape those of its members states), it has done so in the context of wider processes of policy formation by UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, and other bodies. Part of the motivation for this book is, of course, that – among these organisations – the EU has a greater impact on education and lifelong learning policy development within the European region. A plethora of policy documents has now been produced by its institutions; these are the work not only of a civil service in the European Commission, but of countless working groups, agencies, parliamentary debates, research projects and informal discussions on educational matters. This draws attention to an important – but often overlooked – feature: the EU may have monolithic characteristics (not least, in the architecture of some of its buildings), but it is not uniform. Like any bureaucracy, it is a working community, and working communities contain – and are made up of – a ‘plurality of social systems’ (Burns, 1966). While it can, therefore, be legitimate and revealing to examine the EU on an ‘output’ basis – by close and critical reading of its published policy statements, for instance – there is also an important place for examining who thinks and does what, and why, and whose influence prevails, within the organisation and its policymaking processes.

No observer of the EU today can overlook the intensity of the crises which have overtaken it over the last decade. In 2000, it set itself a “new strategic goal . . . to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” by 2010 (CEC, 2000: para. 5). The Kok Report (High Level Group, 2004) is testament to how soon the economic hubris of this aim was exposed. Then came political setback: the voters of France and the Netherlands – two of its original six founding members – rejected the proposal for a new *Constitutional Treaty* in 2005. Next, economic crisis hit: the financial crisis of 2008 was followed by economic recession across the world – but it hit western economies especially hard, and in due course led to a particularly serious economic and political crisis for the Eurozone.

For education policy as a whole the emergence of the EU as a major player has been significant; for adult education still more so. Partly the latter is because the EU has adopted and promoted the language of ‘lifelong learning’ – often blurring whether this refers to adults or to all. Partly, it is because the EU’s constitutional position gives it a stronger mandate – certainly, stronger confidence of action – in the area of vocational training than in relation to children’s education. But very importantly it is also because the EU, and especially the European Commission over the last decade, has given a particular profile to adult education and adult learning. What impact this has had on policy in member states remains unclear, and largely unexplored, but there are pointers. England’s ‘New Labour’ government, for instance, having largely ignored adult education for seven years after the individual learning accounts fiasco, resurrected an interest in ‘informal adult education’ in 2008 (DIUS, 2008, 2009; Holford & Welikala, 2013). While domestic factors cannot be ignored – a new government department (now defunct) focusing on post-compulsory education and training – this revived interest followed hotly on two significant EU policy statements: *Adult Learning: It is Never Too Late to Learn* (CEC, 2006) and *Action Plan on Adult Learning: It is Always a Good Time to Learn* (CEC, 2007).

EUROPEAN POLICY ON ADULT EDUCATION VERSUS LIFELONG LEARNING

As suggested above, the EU’s terminology around education and adult education has not always been consistent or tightly defined. Sometimes it has used the phrase ‘lifelong learning’ to refer to all education and training, ‘from cradle to grave’; sometimes adult learning, education and training have clearly been to the fore. Around 2006 the term ‘adult learning’ entered its lexicon as a distinct sub-category (CEC, 2006), with lifelong learning taking a more overarching role. One result of the widespread, if blurred, use of ‘lifelong learning’ and the ‘learning society’ in the wake of the 1995 white paper on *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society* (CEC, 1995) was to raise the profile of adults’ learning within wider frameworks, both in the public and private sectors. However, at the same time it has often obscured the specific – some would argue unique – features of adult education.

Adult education, of course, emerged in most countries as a marginal form of provision, often linked to remedial provision – particularly for literacy and other ‘basic skills’. It was also strongly promoted by social movements of the working class, associated with socialism and social democracy. In some cases, and in some countries, it became strongly institutionalised; in others it remained far more marginal. Even where most strongly entrenched, the erosion of the working class in the last quarter of the 20th century increased its vulnerability. Within EU member states, the location of governmental responsibility for adult education varies, as does its legal status. There is similarly variability in the nature of the institutions which deliver it: there are colleges, schools and universities across public, private and not-for-profit sectors; there are profit-making businesses, professional and industry associations, and enterprises training their own staff (EAEA, 2006). Though a broad trend over recent years to increasing involvement from the private sector seems almost universal, the actual extent varies greatly from country to country. Together, these mean that the ‘matrix’ of actors, and the relations between them, in each EU member state varies markedly; and this applies to government leadership and control over the sector as much as to any of the other actors.

The contributors to this book share a common concern for the adult as a pedagogical subject addressed, constructed or affected by European policy. Nonetheless, the terms adult education, lifelong learning, adult education and learning or the like appear throughout this book: depending on the authors’ sensibilities and foci, sometimes interchangeably, sometimes as expressions of specific conceptualisations.

SCHOLARSHIP ON THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS POLICIES

If EU policy has been rather overlooked in adult education research, this is hardly true of the social sciences more broadly. EU policy processes have been a subject of research in political science, social policy and European studies for many years; strangely, however, education policy is seldom addressed. The major Oxford University Press textbook on policymaking in the EU (Wallace, Pollack & Young, 2010), for instance, now in its 6th edition, contains whole chapters on virtually every area of policy (social, agricultural, employment, biotechnology, fisheries, trade, foreign and security, etc.); it mentions education only in passing on four of 597 pages (*ibid.*). Adult education, and concepts such as the learning society and lifelong learning, are not mentioned at all. Although there are very occasional mentions in the journal literature (e.g. Blitz 2003), other books on EU politics and policy tell a similar tale of the unmentioned (e.g. Cini & Borragán, 2010; Falkner & Müller, 2013; Hix & Hoyland, 2011; Nugent, 2010). Major debates in European studies, therefore (e.g. around Moravcsik’s (1993) ‘liberal intergovernmentalist’ approach to European integration) which have tried to capture and explain cross-country processes of integration, have found few if any echoes in the educational literature. With roots in political science, sociology, economics, law and history, European studies has shed important light on the functioning of power relations within the EU,

and between the EU and its member states (e.g. Klatt, 2012). Despite this there are, of course, educational researchers who have given attention to the influence of EU membership on national educational reforms – both in longer-standing and in newer member states. In so doing, some have suggested that the EU has, in effect, created a ‘European educational space’ (Dale & Robertson, 2009; Lawn & Grek, 2012; Nóvoa & Lawn, 2002; Pépin, 2006). While scholars have interpreted and operationalised this somewhat differently, it would seem to imply that the subsidiarity principle is now in effect by-passed in education, so that educational policymaking – and in some versions, educational practice – is ‘Europeanised’. In other versions, however, this ‘space’ should not be seen as allowing ‘European’ policies to be applied from above by the organs of EU government, but rather as a location in which a range of actors compete – though not on equal terms – to shape the geography of European education.

One of the weaknesses of this ‘European space’ conceptualisation has been the relatively limited extent of empirical literature on which it has been based. Though now growing (e.g. Holford et al., 2008; Riddell, Markowitsch & Weedon, 2012; Saar, Ure & Holford, 2013), the empirical literature on EU lifelong education and learning policy remains modest. The complexity of policymaking as a co-production process remains largely unexplored. So far as adult learning is concerned, this may be in part due to the legacy of adult education’s theoretical ‘thinness’ as an academic discipline, compounded by the downsizing of adult education research capacity in European universities at just the time when educational and learning activities for adults are receiving greater policy attention. Interdisciplinary fields such as education gain much from their ability to draw freely on a wide range of insights and theories; at the same time, however, interdisciplinary areas – especially small ones – must constantly guard against the danger of uncritical or ill-informed appropriation of theories. In recent years – among more established or emerging approaches to research in education (e.g. Fenwick, Edwards & Sawchuk, 2011; Fejes & Nicoll, 2013) – discourse analysis has come to dominate in educational policy studies. This approach can be fruitful, as Andreas Fejes suggests in this volume. But some of its appropriation can seem a matter of fashion, or even convenience: discourse analysis of published texts – which too often passes for policy research – is a great deal cheaper and less time-consuming than, for example, participant observation of policy processes, and sometimes results in conceptual speculations that say little about the lived realities of people involved in or affected by policies, how they are made, and the practices that come with them.

LOOKING AHEAD AND THE CHALLENGES IT POSES

This book aims to encourage deeper analysis of policy and policy processes within the EU. It encourages empirical research. But it does not attempt, in any strong sense, to be prescriptive. It stands for no particular theoretical or methodological approach. It does not assert the superiority of one or another theory or research focus.

Its premise is simply the need for continuing, and deepening, cross-disciplinary dialogue about, and empirical knowledge of, the EU, and its ways of working, by adult education scholars dealing with policy studies. Of course, by selection, it draws – and gives – attention to the potential of some approaches, and is silent on others. Thus Part IV focuses on studies through the perspective of ‘governmentality’, but – as noted above – this approach also has limitations, particularly insofar as it may implicitly encourage some of the more simplistic, policy-text based forms of discourse analysis. Many highly desirable forms of empirical research are, of course, difficult to implement for reasons of access, expense or confidentiality. The Chancellor of Germany, the President of France, and for all we know, every European Commissioner, may have their telephones and emails tapped and recorded, but many documents and discussions are still considered confidential or ‘secret’. Seldom do politicians, civil servants and other policy agents – lobbyists and the like – allow full or even circumscribed access to researchers. The European Commission, in particular – despite its laudable enthusiasm for involving ‘stakeholders’ in policymaking – is by no means relaxed about opening its inner workings to researchers. And of course, when researchers do gain access to ‘policy communities’, national or European, there are often ethical issues to be confronted.

BOOK STRUCTURE

The contributions to this volume have been selected to begin a process of ‘picking apart’ the complexities involved in researching policies that influence adult education in Europe. Decision-making processes, as we have noted, are no longer located at supra-national or national levels alone, but involve co-production, appropriation, and resistance, by a multiplicity of political actors – with diverse purposes and capacities – across a range of locations. These processes are widespread in Europe – and in the EU in particular. The four chapters in Parts I and II show how adult education became an element of policy coordination at the European level relatively late, but has since moved out of the European policy periphery. Rasmussen explores the European Commission’s contribution to constructing a ‘transnational’ dimension in European adult education policy, while Mohorčič Špolar focuses on the wider intellectual and policy background to the Commission’s activities and thinking. The conceptual potential of political science perspectives for understanding the complex dynamic between member states, and their role in making sense of EU policies, national adaptations of EU policies, and the horizontal relations and exchanges between countries are the subject of the chapters by Klatt (on the inner-workings of the EU, its structure and its relationship with member states) and Milana (on the significance of member states’ support for EU policymaking and policy implementation).

Specifically, Part I looks at the evolution of EU policies which have had a direct effect on adult education practice by raising questions such as: How have these policies evolved? Who were, and who are, the political and other actors involved? Who has been included, and who has been excluded, from this process? And most

importantly, what effect are these policies likely to have in shaping the future of adult education in Europe? Both chapters in Part I draw on thorough reviews of policies under the auspices of the EU, and (in Chapter 2) other policy relevant inter-state institutions like UNESCO, or the OECD. These chapters take an historical approach, commenting on how education policy progress intertwines with broader historical developments, how ideological perspectives take hold and gain influence among inter-state organisations and EU bodies such as the European Commission.

In Chapter 1, Rasmussen takes diagnoses of the evolution and prospects of the EU, and its institutions as his point of departure, tracing not only how attention to adult learning developed, but also the role it plays within broader EU strategies. He depicts how, lacking a legal basis, cross-country collaborations on vocational education and training had occurred only to a very limited extent before the *Maastricht Treaty* (1992) established the EU. Adult education first became a self-standing policy area under the Grundtvig programme in 2000; though it gained further attention thereafter. However, this coincided with the initiation of the Lisbon process and new governance mechanisms like the Open Method of Coordination. As Rasmussen shows, EU initiatives on adult education have always given a priority to links with the labour market and employability – and still more so with the growth of benchmarking mechanisms. As Rasmussen points out, this reflects the allocation of responsibilities within the European Commission, where adult education links to different Directorates General (DG), but most strongly to those responsible for Education and Culture (DG EAC) and Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

In Chapter 2 Vida Mohorčič Špolar and Holford explore the wider intellectual and policy background to the European Commission's work in this field. Over the past two decades, the Commission has appropriated a language related to adult learning which itself has a long history. They show how this has influenced educational institutions and movements across the world, as well as the thinking of national governments and international organisations. Their chapter examines adult learning's transition from a relatively marginal field to a prominent one in the language of the European Commission and European Parliament, and in doing so, explores how the terminology evolved, how a lifelong learning agenda grew, and how it gradually changed in focus.

Part II develops the dialogue with theoretical perspectives and knowledge on the working of the EU drawing from political science, exploring how these can shed light on how political power is exerted, and its implications for European adult education policy. It examines such questions as how different institutions within the EU work, what the power relations among them are, and how these relations have changed over time. Which 'hard-' and 'soft-law' mechanisms are utilised? And last but not least, what political space is retained – or gained or lost – by the member states? The contributors to Part II develop their arguments by drawing on a body of literature emerging mostly – but not only – from the field of European studies. In doing so they identify and comment, from a perspective that assumes transnationalism and close interdependence amongst administrative and governance systems at national

and European levels, on critical elements and advances in how we can make sense of day-to-day policymaking. Their use of these contributions highlights the added value that political science perspectives can bring to researching adult education policy, as they clarify the context of European policy analysis and the relations between ideas, networks and agents governing European adult education.

In Chapter 3 Klatt argues that the EU's complex architecture and policymaking processes carry constant challenges for researchers. There is a growing tendency in academic literature to avoid separating the national and the EU level of policymaking; the pressures of globalisation and member states' national interests are strongly mediated by what she calls the 'actorness' of the EU: the number and variety of actors involved in education policymaking and implementation. She argues that a political science perspective helps open the 'black box' of EU policymaking, by contextualising the inner-workings of the EU, its structure and its relationship with member states. She discusses the agency-structure dichotomy in EU policymaking, and the institutional basis of 'soft law' and policymaking in the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament. Further, she sees Europeanisation as a three-way analytical concept that includes the infiltration of the member states' policy preferences – or rules into the EU – as well as the 'national adaptation' of EU policies, and horizontal exchanges between states. She also explores the usefulness of the 'normative power' concept in explaining how the EU is perceived, and how member states themselves become 'norm entrepreneurs'.

In Chapter 4, Milana draws on state theory, European studies and education to problematise how the changing nature of the state restricts or amplifies member states' political space. She explores how changes within the EU meant the subsidiarity principle in education could be by-passed, generating a new policy scenario. Although this process, generally labelled Europeanisation, has reinforced a shift in authority from member states to EU institutions, she believes the authoritative backing of political agencies from within member states remains an important aspect of EU policy work. She also explores the organisational mechanisms of member states, so to capture the changing nature of legitimate authority by and within them. European policy work in education, she argues, is increasingly a matter of individual, organisational and inter-systemic negotiation and coordination across member states (and their array of political agencies), and the EU (and its diverse political institutions) as a pooling of sovereignty. She shows some of the implications of bringing the state back into the study of adult and lifelong education policies in Europe.

The complexity of the European socio-political landscape, involving a myriad of actors, opinions and interests, has profound implications for adult education. Some of these issues are addressed in the two chapters of Part III, which examine the mechanisms by which a European lifelong learning regime works, and how it affects the EU's citizens. Thus, using a 'governmentality'-based approach, Normand and Pacheco explore the grammars of justice in lifelong learning politics and the emergence of a new spirit of capitalism, while Fejes discusses how a governmentality approach

can illuminate how a regime of practice in lifelong learning fabricates individual citizens. Together, the chapters of Part III use sociological perspectives to explore, theoretically and analytically, the emergence of a new kind of governance, in the sense proposed by Foucault (2007), through European lifelong learning politics and its regime of practice. They discuss such questions as: What kind of arrangements and actions define the common good at a European level? What principles of justice feed into the construction of a new moral self? And no less important, what identity do these create for the adult learner in Europe? Both chapters, as mentioned, take a point of departure in Michel Foucault's conceptions of power, governmentality and the technologies of the self; however from this common starting point they move in rather different directions.

In Chapter 5 Normand and Pacheco explore how European lifelong learning politics contribute both to the emergence of what, drawing on Foucault, they see as a new kind of governmentality – ordering populations and individuals within the European territory through various framing procedures (standards, classifications, indicators, and so forth) and legitimating new principles of justice which reshape notions of the common good. Drawing on the work of French sociologists, they argue that in their lives individuals are confronted by hardships which are 'related to different orders of worth and definitions of the common good'. Through these hardships, people mobilise material and cognitive resources to justify their actions and criticise those of others, particularly in the public sphere. The resulting politics is reflected in agreements and compromises between different individuals and groups; these converge to form a 'common good'. However, they also suggest that political technologies which create a new moral self at the same time offer some opportunities for radical criticism and modes of resistance within civil society.

In Chapter 6, Fejes argues that Foucault has a valuable part to play in research on the education and learning of adults. He shows how Foucault's work has been taken up in adult education research, how extensive such research is, and what parts of Foucault's work are used. He argues specifically for the value of a governmentality perspective, and explains some key concepts such as governmentality, power, technologies of the self, and regimes of practice. He then argues that policies on lifelong learning (in which adult education and adult learning are currently inserted), and the regime of practice of which it forms a part, 'fabricates' particular kinds of citizens. Transformations in the socio-political landscape affect public and private interventions in adult education and learning profoundly; to examine how they do so, and the effects this has on different social groups, adult education policy researchers are exploring and employing new methodological tools.

The two chapters of Part IV address how adult education scholarship can productively borrow methodologies from other disciplines, and how this can contribute to methodological advancement in the field. Thus Cort explores some of the methodological challenges of moving beyond discourse analysis to 'trail' actual policies, while Koutidou discusses the potential of a socio-legal approach in comparing statutory frameworks at both the EU and at member state levels. The

two chapters thus draw on the sociology of law, policy sociology and critical policy analysis. Taken together they challenge disciplinary boundaries and offer an attempt to provide new methodological approaches calling for the triangulation of methods of data gathering, and the combination of analytical strategies. These include, but are not limited to, discourse analysis, quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis of policy documents, interviews and other narrative data. Such triangulation seems particularly helpful in engaging with a research field in ways that capture otherwise ‘silenced’ voices and perspectives. For such, it also creates better conditions for exploring policies at the intersection between the EU and its member states.

In Chapter 7, Cort develops Holford’s (2013) notion of ‘policy trails’, arguing that the methodology of policy trailing and the use of the mixed methods of discourse analysis and narrative inquiry are a means of overcoming ‘methodological nationalism’ and of linking structure and agency in research on the ‘European educational space’. The ‘trail’ metaphor, she suggests, captures the intentionality and the erratic character of policy. The trail connects sites and brings about change, but – although intended to be linear and to have specific outcomes – it often has to turn and bend, and sometimes meets insurmountable obstacles.

In Chapter 8, Koutidou presents a methodological framework from the sociology of law, and explores its relevance for adult education research on the implementation of statutory frameworks with particular ethnically and culturally diverse social groups. She does this comparatively at both the EU and national levels. She sets out the theoretical bases of socio-legal studies as a discipline, from which both theoretical standpoints and technical research tools arise. In addition, she outlines an adult education research project carried out through the lens of the sociology of law. She discusses the research sources (both European and Greek ‘soft law’ documents), and presents some key research findings and their implications for adult education policy.

We trust this collaborative effort will contribute to a better understanding of the current terrain of adult education policy analysis in Europe.

NOTE

- ¹ <https://cedarlounge.wordpress.com/2007/07/11/its-an-empire-jim-said-jose-but-not-as-we-know-it/> (accessed 9 November 2013).

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