Europe, it seems important to reconsider the different understandings of policy and modernisation and their forms and consequences for youth transition. The 'modernisation' perspective refers to all countries. Before a European perspective may evolve, it is important to understand developmental or 'modernisation' processes as they challenge, in diverse ways, the different countries of Europe.

References

Andersen, H. and Mørch, S. (2000) 'Socialpsykologiens verdener', *Psyke og Logos*, vol 21, no 1.

Beck, U. (1992) *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*, London: Sage Publications.

Freire, P. (1973) *De undertryktes pædagogik*, Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers Forlag.

Frønes, I. and Brusdal, R. (2000) *På sporet av den nye tid*, Oslo: Fakbokforlaget.

Galbraith, J.K. (1978). *The new industrial state* (3rd edn), Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self identity*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mørch, S. (2001) 'Some basic issues in youth research', in I. Guidikova and H. Williamson (eds) *Youth research in Europe: The next generation*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Mørch, S. (2003) 'Youth and education', *Young*, vol 11, no 1.

Mørch, S. and Laursen, S. (1998) *At lære at være ung*, Copenhagen: Ungdomsringen.

Rychen, D. and Salganik, S.L. (2002) *DeSeCo Symposium*, Discussion Paper, 2nd International Symposium of DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competencies), Geneva: OECD and SFSO.

Walther, A., Stauber, B., Biggart, A., du Bois-Reymond, M., Furlong, A., López Blasco, A., Mørch, S. and Pais, J.M. (eds) (2002) *Misleading trajectories: Integration policies for young adults in Europe?*, Opladen: Leske+Budrich.

Ziehe, T. (2001) 'De personlige livsverdeners dominans', *Uddannelse*, no 10.

TWELVE

Of roofs and knives: the dilemmas of recognising informal learning

José Machado Pais and Axel Pohl

Redefining learning in a changing society

According to Deleuze (1990), contemporary social change can be seen as a historical passage from 'disciplinary societies' to 'control societies'. Institutions forming the disciplinary society – school, family, factory, hospital and prison – experience a decline in their ability to retain control. Although disciplinary logics continue to persist, they spread apart, fluidly, across the social tissue. It is within this process of change that the striated space that characterises disciplinary societies gives way to the plain space of the control society (Deleuze, 1980)[1]. While disciplinary society makes fixed shapes for institutions, control society is based on flexible and modulating networks.

The change from a disciplinary society to a control society was made possible by breaking down the obstacles that constrained the autonomy of institutions. The continuous removing of obstacles increasingly makes the distinction between institutions' inside and outside less clear. Concomitant to this process is a redefinition of power and its field of action. What will be discussed here in relation to these changes – because it has not yet received enough critical attention – is the socialisation that takes place *in between* institutions; that is, informal socialisation interrelated with informal learning (Pais, 2001).

As one consequence of this change, the world of labour increasingly demands of its participants the competence to organise and structure their own working lives and to develop the personal and social competencies needed for this. At the same time, education and training are less and less capable of producing these essential capacities on their own. They are highly dependent upon the world outside to generate resources like meaning, subjectivity and motivation (see Chapter Eleven of this volume). Informal and non-formal modes of learning, therefore, have gained popularity not only among educationalists but also among policy makers in Europe in the course of the past few decades (Bjørnåvold, 2001; Dohmen, 2001). These forms of learning are associated with great hopes of extending the boundaries of the formally organised and well-ordered guises of learning, and curing some of the negative effects that

seem to be inherent in the latter. First, informal learning, it is hoped, should help in bridging the skills gap between the quickly changing demands of the economy for a qualified workforce and the relatively immobile output of education and training systems by providing flexibly acquired skills that are not available through formal training. Second, informal learning is viewed as containing the potential to ease the access to skills and competencies for young people who are alienated by the formal education and training system. Hence, it may be able to address the problem of unequal access to education and training resources. Third, informal learning seems to be a field where high potentials for the motivation of learners prevail, something which makes it more probable that biographic learning projects become subjectively more meaningful (du Bois-Reymond and Walther, 1999).

In this chapter, we critically assess, from a youth studies perspective, different strategies that try to make use of these potentials found in public policies in Europe at present. The first strategy is the most prominent among policy makers at European level and to a varying degree in several European countries. It aims to develop ways to officially acknowledge the skills and competencies acquired through informal and non-formal forms of learning. Sometimes the issues related to informal learning seem to be reduced to a rather technical approach and thus risk neglecting the deeper potentials of informal learning. Therefore, in this chapter, we suggest that transition policies should embrace two more options in recognising informal learning. The second strategy we examine starts from the observation that informal forms of learning happen not only in 'natural' everyday life contexts such as the family but also in the public sphere – for example, in community and youth work activities. Therefore, these types of strategy aim to strengthen such contexts in order to enhance the value of the learning processes to be found there. The third strategy we take into account is the renewal of learning in the formal education and training system that is informed by the knowledge gained on processes of informal learning.

Of course, this list of strategies is neither systematically elaborated in the sense that these are no more than roughly designed ideal types, which in reality might not occur in their 'pure' form. Nor is this list meant to be exhaustive – for example, policies in the enterprise world that are propagating informal learning are not discussed.

To conclude our chapter, we discuss the combination of these three strategies in the framework of an integrated approach to transition policies. In order to be able to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies, we have to recognise the multidimensionality of the contexts young people have to deal with in their transitions to adulthood today.

Current discourses on the recognition of informal learning

Policy makers and educationalists all over the world have become increasingly aware of the problems arising within the formal education and training systems

(Hager, 1998). In the context of the discussions surrounding lifelong learning, it has become apparent that informal learning has so far been a widely neglected potential. While scholars naturally have divergent ideas on which definition applies best to the nature of learning processes that happen outside educational and training institutions, the virtues of informal learning are nevertheless widely acknowledged:

- Informal learning is strongly determined by the learners themselves. It allows the learners to decide what is learned, when and at what pace.
- Informal learning is highly context-bound; as a problem-solving strategy, it fits very well with the needs of the situation in which it is happening.

In this section, we add more dimensions to this list by having a look at two different elements of policies that attempt to advance informal learning, before taking a more radical stance and analysing what these discussions could mean for the existing system of education and training.

Formal recognition of informally acquired competencies

The contextuality of informal learning is both an advantage and a disadvantage of informal learning. It is an advantage, because the knowledge and skills acquired are highly relevant to the situation and to the learner as well. Context-boundedness of knowledge and skills becomes a problem if there is not a social recognition of the learning outputs. For informally acquired competencies to be useful in socially shared situations like the labour market, they have to be converted into a socially legitimate exchange medium, for example, diplomas and certificates (see Chapter Eleven of this volume). At the European level, much effort is spent in developing means to assess and formally acknowledge skills and competencies acquired in informal and non-formal learning contexts. The primary objective of these efforts is to develop methodologies to assess competencies people have acquired in informal and non-formal contexts. The certification issue is central to many research and educational projects – for example, in the context of the EC's Leonardo da Vinci programme. We concentrate, therefore, on some issues related to the value of this strategy from our perspective without developing a comprehensive overview of the different aspects of the topic, which is covered in depth elsewhere (Björnavold, 2000; Dohmen, 2001).

One of the criteria we want to apply to our analysis of policy elements is whether they are likely to contribute to compensating for unequal access to educational resources such as formal training. And, indeed, there is some empirical evidence – at least for Canada – that informal learning is more equally distributed than participation in formal education. Unlike participation in further training for example, Livingstone (2001) found no difference in (self-reported) informal learning activity according to age, socio-demographic or formal education background. Therefore, well thought-out policies that try

to make the outcomes of informal learning convertible in socially acknowledged goods can contribute to increasing the cultural capital of young people who are hitherto excluded from formal education and training for various reasons (see Chapter Two of this volume).

Although this strategy has its strengths on the side of balancing some inequalities in access to formal vocational and further training, some drawbacks and potential dilemmas should be highlighted relating to the other two dimensions we draw upon in this chapter to evaluate the potential impact of public policies.

For instance, we can shed some light on this strategy's impact on motivation. If we follow Kahane's definition of 'informality' (Kahane, 1997), two important features of informal learning are in danger of devaluation by a growing tendency to assess informally acquired competencies for the purpose of labour market insertion. First, what Kahane calls the 'expressive instrumentalism' of informal activities is one of the key motivational factors of learning. Expressive instrumentalism means that informal learning consists of a combination of activities that are, on the one hand, undertaken for their own sake and, on the other, include more purposeful activities that are more directly connected to problem solving. The balance between the two types is vulnerable, and if external purposes like those provided by the foresight to gain vocational certificates prevail, the 'symbolic surplus' gained through these activities may lose its positive impact on the individual's motivation.

Although an increasing demand for a better-educated workforce cannot be denied, an increase in certification may even have a paradoxical effect. A certain certificate inflation (Wallace and Kovatcheva, 1998, p 97) has already provoked in many European countries what is called the 'education paradox': increasing numbers of young people obtain higher education and training certificates, which in turn decrease in value for the purpose of stable insertion into the labour market. Therefore, it is questionable whether the extension of certificates granted will lead to less inequality in the balance of cultural/educational capital among young people. To avoid this alienation process, one could perhaps think of alternative 'dialogic' processes by which these competencies should be assessed. Partners in this kind of dialogue would be local stakeholders, such as enterprise representatives, public education and training bodies and the individuals themselves. Of course, a shift towards an education and training system that can adopt such processes depends heavily upon the nature of national transition systems (Chapter Nine of this volume). Within a framework such as the NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) system in the UK, such changes are more likely than in the German context, for example, with its highly formalised education and training system. On the one hand, the latter system features highly standardised certification for only a few standardised educational and training pathways, which makes more open processes of negotiating the 'true' competence gained from outside the system very difficult. On the other hand, more output-oriented systems like the British one seem to leave more space for the ways actual competencies are 'produced'. That the degree of

regulation in the education and training system alone is not decisive can be shown, however, by the French case. Although France's education and training system is strongly regulated, the French 'bilan de compétence' shows that the political insight into the importance of opening up the concepts of what 'real' training is can be very efficient (Dohmen, 2001).

Thus, the processes of evaluation of informally acquired competencies has to be understood as a highly political process, and to a lesser degree as a methodological problem of inventing tools of assessment. One way of widening the perspective on informal learning is to shift from the macro level of certification of competencies to the meso level of societal arenas and have a look at institutions between the macro level of the education system and the sphere of everyday life where non-formal and informal learning are linked (Alheit, 1999, p 79).

Strengthening non-formal learning contexts

The emphasis on informal and non-formal learning implies a shift in the conception of learning itself: learning has to be conceptualised as being closely related to meaning and to identity. Learning cannot be thought of as something happening in young people's heads, but rather as something that arises out of social relationships (Wenger, 1998). Therefore, one key element of making better use of the potentials of informal learning and the social nature of learning itself is to support the contexts in which informal learning is happening. While a great deal of informal learning happens in the settings of everyday life, which are difficult areas for public policy interventions, some arenas of social activity are likely to provide individuals with opportunities for non-formal learning that are much more accessible to public policy management. So, institutions on this meso level between systems and individuals, which are neither state nor market, bear a high potential for some of the bargaining mentioned in the earlier section of this chapter. We can reduce our analysis here to dimensions directly related to informal learning because the third sector, as an important area for transition policies, is addressed in Chapter Eight of this volume.

On the 'pro' side, social institutions such as voluntary organisations, youth groups and the like share some advantages that make informal learning more likely to be embedded into more organised forms of learning. While informal learning cannot be planned, the non-formal types of learning happening on the meso level incorporate some important characteristics of informal learning processes.

They can pose lower access thresholds than formal education when they are set in young people's everyday life contexts such as local neighbourhood or youth (sub) cultures. Symbolic production, as an important aspect of some forms of informal learning, sometimes is the very purpose of such activities. The social aspect of learning is often met by the embedding of these activities in peer contexts. Hence, some of the major criteria of informality are fulfilled, which can provide a bridge between social integration (everyday life) and

systems integration. Although participation patterns and conditions in these contexts are structured by inequality, they are more open to processes of interpretation and negotiation (Walther and Stauber, 1999). Indeed, in some cases, young people themselves hold power over the active environment.

There is some evidence that the incorporation of informal learning in formal institutions can produce a middle-class bias because more open learning settings (for example, in companies) "do not adopt a more open and inviting attitude vis-à-vis educationally excluded groups, but a more defensive stance instead" (Alheit, 1999, p 82).

All these factors make informal learning more probable than in other environments. However, there is a flip side: some of these organisations themselves suffer from low social recognition in terms of the power and money awarded to them. For example, all kinds of youth work provide young people with much of what we have mentioned to be prerequisites of informal learning. But, as they belong to a policy sector that can be labelled the 'soft sector' (Walther et al, 2002), the outcomes of learning processes happening there are rarely transmitted into a socially legitimate form of cultural capital. What is more, the organisations themselves are troubled with the consequences of being part of the 'soft sector'. They often work under conditions of financial instability, which makes their position even weaker. These organisations can become 'learning environments' in the sense of Alheit (1999), only if a change in societal attitudes towards their outcomes could be established that would mean a step away from short-term labour market success to mid- to long-term biographical outputs. To make these biographical outputs visible, strategies of certification of informally acquired competencies (as mentioned in the previous section of this chapter) would be very helpful, especially for those young people for whom these forms of outreach have become the only anchor that keeps them from losing touch.

The dilemma of reconciling formal education and informal learning

The challenge that recognising informal learning represents for (disciplinary) society becomes obvious with regard to the consequences it has for formal education. Hence, in this section, we take a more radical stance by considering a third strategy that consists of a deeper challenge to the existing education and training systems, including educational institutions from upper secondary schools to vocational education and training, and training schemes for young people who already have been rejected by mainstream educational institutions. Many commentators believe that failing consecutively in school is a problem. Yet, very few think about this problem beyond the narrow parameters of students flunking. Formal schooling repeats, year after year, many of its own, rarely addressed, inadequacies: the same unadjusted pedagogic models; the same boring classes; the same controversial evaluations; the same lack of preparation by poorly paid and demotivated teachers; the same punishments and the same

concessions; the same unawareness and the same "it's always the same" (Benevides de Barros, 1997). Against this backdrop, some young people bet on the forbidden. Why do they 'play fight' in classes or throw paper planes? Why do they cheat teachers and schoolmates? Why do they talk about their tricks and jokes during break, the ones they did and the ones they are still going to do? The answer: because for many students the classroom is *dia*bolic, and for them what is more interesting is *sym*bolic creation. This is symbolic creation that can be found in doing things in a loose and spontaneous way, using imagination. Etymologically, the word 'symbol' is formed by *syn* (from the Greek, meaning 'with') and *balo* ('play') – as opposed to diabolic, in other words, *dia* (without) and *balo* (play). "The ability to create relations is the ability to create symbols" as Vaidergorn (2001, p 80) confirms. However, the architecture of formal education is diabolic: it does not have room for play, for relations, for the symbolic. While school bureaucracy values functional issues, young people experience a form of imprisonment.

Formal education: systems' permeability and liabilities

The education system is often disconnected from the reality around it. It encloses itself around an inside that is perceived as warranting its autonomy from an outside. But why do young people go to school? Thrown inside this system, young people shall 'prepare themselves for the future' (outside this system). Apparently, it is the future that legitimates the education system as it seeks to provide the education of 'tomorrow's adults': future citizens, parents, workers, professionals and leaders. In this perspective, young people are in a transfer process, with no present; or, their present is attached to the future: 'they go to school to become someone in the future'.

For formal education, the present seems to have only a transitional value, in other words, very little value. This way, young people's present is projected to the future in an unsure manner. And this happens even when young people choose the best courses available assuming that they will find the best integration route into the labour market. Once again the idea of 'exit' attaches the school to an interior (an inside), and to an exterior (an outside), the labour market. In today's society, educational careers do not end by obtaining a diploma. The objective of 'employability' presupposes 'lifelong learning', because of the permanent technological restructuring of the economy, which in turn determines that academic careers no longer have a definitive role for integration in the labour market – certainly not warranted for life (see Chapter Eleven of this volume). This happens because, beyond the tendencies we can project into the future, there remain large areas of uncertainty and insecurity – related to the maze-like complexity of our societies (Pais, 2001). In fact, European young people have polymorphic and ambivalent understandings of time, while at the same time admitting and recognising its linearity and its cycles (Pais, 1999).

Why, then, do young people go to school? To prepare for the future – as if the future already existed. In school, the future should not be something that

has already happened. It is to be made, preferably in a participatory way, involving young people themselves. However, in formal school situations, a prescriptive culture prevails: study plans and subjects, disciplinary rules, global exams (standard), pedagogical practices inscribed in a philosophy of 'mass production' – all according to the function of education systems with regard to large-scale economies.

The education model, still operated by our societies, increasingly appears to be losing touch with the reality it tries to shape. This education model is based on a supporting philosophy in which education and training are understood as a waiting room with doors not yet opened to the upstream of professional integration. Young people are trained for active working life with the consequence that students are looked upon as 'inactive' (in a waiting situation). As odd as it may seem, official statistics reproduce this philosophy, by excluding the 'waiters' from the active population. By establishing a strict frontier between a time to educate (of supposed inactivity) and another time to work (of activity), the horizons of knowledge (knowledge limited to school certification) are in danger of becoming confined to obtaining a diploma and to the assumption that, with a better qualification, one can find a job more easily. Thus, school has been working as an artificial factor of employment contention, a parking lot for potentially unemployed young people. The misleading effect of contention is very clear: instead of reducing unemployment rates, this system increases the qualification levels of unemployed people (obviously, the reverse solution, nonetheless, is no better). However, some young people have the perception that school diplomas are like 'predated cheques', without any worth in the present and possibly of little or no worth in the future (see Chapter Two of this volume).

And since the future that school has to offer is so uncertain, and since young people reject the role of 'inactivity' applied to them by the system, many young people end up by valuing informal learning in contrast to a prescribed routine of school hours. This routine, an old vice of the education system, prevents a pedagogy of autonomy from happening, for which – in the words of Paulo Freire (1997) – to be able to teach does not mean to transmit knowledge but to create conditions for it to happen with, of course, the active participation of students.

New pedagogic goals: for a 'roof pedagogy'

The challenge of informal learning to formal schooling may be illustrated by an experience made during a research visit to a school in the surroundings of Lisbon, with a considerable share of gypsy students. The head teacher opened a drawer in her desk to show a number of knives she had taken from some of the children. Why do gypsy children bring knives to school? Why are they violent? Probably, gypsy knives are weapons of rejection, meant to fight against the submission to a school culture, by ritualising aggressive behaviours that are seen as a part of the gypsy culture. In this sense, gypsy knives are not only

intimidation weapons; they are also an instrument of symbolic meaning that not only accuses the superficial structure of confrontation among students, but also the profound grammar of school education's contradictory culture.

Gypsy knives are not brought to school with the purpose of hurting or killing. The symbolism of the knife can be understood as mediation, enabling young gypsies to shape reality. Like every symbol, knife symbolism brings along a significant power element, justified by the fact that symbols themselves are multivalent, incongruent, polysemantic and splitting. The exhibition of a knife has the magical power to connote and denote visions of all the things it can represent. The act of taking the knife from the student does not empty its ability to confine the representation of all the tricks and blows it could cause, even if it is kept inside the head teacher's drawer. Symbols do have this structuring power; they structure imagination and proclaim or frame disorder, as well as order, invoking excesses of signification. The violence demonstrated by some gypsy children constitutes their particular way of showing their opposition to the frustrating learning models used in school. The meaning of life for these children can be found away from the official pedagogical discourses normally applied in the classroom.

The school head teacher who so carefully keeps the knives in her drawer recounted that during break, gypsy children, more than anything else, enjoy climbing on to the school's roof, as if searching for lost treasures. In fact, they are looking for birds' nests. The roof has a double meaning for gypsy children. From being a protection, a cover, it becomes a *dis*cover(y). Discoveries on the roof made us think that maybe the most significant things these children learn happen precisely outside the classroom where teachers' control can not reach them. The 'meaning of life' can be discovered (in a symbolic sense) on a school's roof, in a bird's nest.

The knowledge acquired on a roof is completely different from that acquired in a classroom, also epistemologically, because it is related to courage, risk, curiosity, adventure, transgression. What the children learn in the classroom usually seems foolish because it is embedded in an inflated rationalism, caused by a distance and abstraction from the real, experienced world. What can be done with children who find pleasure on the school roof, thus violating the normal rules of the education system? Do we begin disciplinary procedures?

What is important is the direction of organisation, arising from chaos and moving towards order. So, for children to understand the meaning of order, first they must understand chaos. If children are confronted with elaborated or stated information ('You can't go up to the roof!'), they will hardly understand its meaning. At most they will memorise it and reject it or assume 'that's the way it is'. When the head teacher, in a very clever manner, proposed to the gypsy children that, instead of killing the birds they should look after and feed them and gave them a cage, every day children brought in food to feed the birds. They were given a responsibility: to take care of little animals, a task they performed with enthusiasm and commitment. Then one day, they realised

there was no sense in keeping those birds inside the cage, the same way they felt jailed inside a classroom.

In other words, the head teacher's idea renewed the learning process. She did this by accepting the children's innate curiosity, allowing them to face their world's strangeness, instead of considering the shapeless knowledge that places children in a passive role, as mere boxes where one places reified knowledge; as passive containers of uninteresting knowledge (from the children's point of view).

One of the major problems with the education system is the fact that we consider knowledge to be a predefined content, instead of considering it to be the result of questioning. When we make children repeat mechanically non-assimilated data, we are also inviting them to live in the absurd. Curiosity teaches us that the basic inquiry force is the window (Whitin and Whitin, 1997) or the roof, because by looking through the window or engaging in 'roof observations', students are faced with the world around them and in which they live.

We have seen before that formal schooling is like a prison for gypsy children. It is worth referring to the aphorism of cages and wings, stated by Rubem Alves: some schools are like cages; others are like wings. Cage schools are there so that birds forget how to fly. Wing schools dislike birds in a cage; they are there to stimulate and encourage children to fly. They do not teach how to fly, because it is innate knowledge: birds know how to fly from birth. Sometimes all it takes is a simple gesture like the one of the gypsy children: it is enough to open up the cage's door to encourage flight[2].

'Roof pedagogy' suggests that most of our schools are cage schools, keeping teachers and children imprisoned. Teachers are controlled by the contents of official programmes, tight to an obligation to keep up with official subjects and timetables, tight to pedagogical routines imprisoning freedom of knowledge. Students, too, are imprisoned, with disciplinary absences caused by flapping wings against cage walls, in an attempt to gain some free space, to gain freedom; a space that, eventually, can be conquered on the roof of the school. There, they feel free from the chaining of the body to the desk in the classroom. When their bodies move in the classroom, teachers rarely understand this body language; teachers only speak and listen with words. The schools we have do not teach children to be a body, to develop a body sensitivity, to be self-conscious (conscious of their own meanings). The violence in school can be interpreted in the sense that students react to being imprisoned and/or to being expelled.

Knowledge formally transmitted inside a classroom is knowledge that is focused on the individual and her evaluation. On the other hand, 'roof knowledge' is socially shared in the most beautiful asset of knowledge: discovery. The violent behaviours teachers usually ascribe to gypsy children can be, after all, the expression of a hidden fight for the opportunity to take up roof knowledge; in other words, learning by discovering, by collective creativity. It should be important for teachers to use to their advantage their students' life experiences; students, that is, that so many times rebel against an education

system that silences them, that keeps them from discovering. Within this interpretative frame, their knives are also a symbol of power, or better still, counter-power against the way knowledge is usually transmitted in the classroom. Knives and fights during break-time help a frustrated energy to circulate that represents a sublimated potential for creativity.

We have seen that in traditional formal schooling, all training and education efforts, all learning contents, all behavioural rules, turn around a fixed goal: to prepare for future life demands (Pais, 2001). This model, however, only works when future demands can be established in an unmistakably clear way. If not, formal schooling is in danger of becoming an anachronistic reality or valued only for its cognitive capacity to transmit the functional contents of knowledge. Imprisoned in its own conventions, formal schooling is not ready to face new societal paths and challenges. A clear example of this lack of preparation is the difficulty that formal schooling has in dealing with the increasing heterogeneity of students, caused by a growing massification of education, but also by an intensification of (im)migration flows. Such heterogeneity – essentially socioeconomic in nature – is often transformed into a racial differentiation, not because students are different but because the difference is already predefined (as a consequence and not as a cause of differentiation) (cf Delgado Ruiz, 2002). This endemic inability to deal with difference contributes to school failures.

The formal school's inability to host 'the different' is reinforced by an ideology centred on school values, according to which the crisis experienced by the education system can only be solved by intensifying formal education. Relative failure of successive education reforms and the plain messianism of successive education reformers – who insist on ignoring the weight of school traditions and routines – prove that school is subordinated to a 'grammar' (Tyack and Cuban, 1995) of sedimented rules resistant to change. This resistance to successive reforms, over time, clearly shows that school is a 'persistent identity' (Nisbet, 1979). And as Nisbet argued (even though it may seem a paradox), there is not the least possibility of understanding the mechanisms of social change unless we understand or recognise seriously the fixation mechanisms of its persistence as happens in the education system. When governments change, they immediately change education programmes. However, these changes of programmes have no echo in the quality of the education system, or in the interests based on dominant corporation logic, or on the lack of preparation or demotivation of teachers – or on school failure. Programmes change, but routines subordinating pedagogy to the need to keep up with the programme remain: in terms of contents, means and time.

Should the ability to reproduce routines and resistance to change prevail, should schools only ensure devalued certification, to what extent do they have the ability to develop a democratic and egalitarian social order? Due to its persistent structure, schooling is organised through rituals that establish authoritarian structures. These structures only reward the most predictable students and those that show a strong compliance to the system routines. Socially

disadvantaged young people experience difficulties integrating into this kind of school. In order to attenuate the tension caused by the presence of these intruders, the state develops "policies to control inequality" (Stoer, 2002, p 250). This is the case of the 'binary system' that unfolds itself in the academic path and the vocational path. Alternatively, sometimes that tension is subject to contention, accomplished by 'compensatory' measures developed to fight the school failure of 'misfit' students, usually labelled as 'dummies'. As happens in the game of cards called 'dummy' (a game of cards where players have to follow suit), the one who cannot follow suit has to get a card from the pack, risking being a 'dummy' for as many years as the cards he is holding, when the game is finished. Some non-formal education projects are like a pack of cards where 'misfit' young people try to obtain the good cards they are missing. Other times, 'compensation' occurs by a false play, which is protected by the system itself. Young people who cannot adapt to school carry on to the next school year (without knowing how they did it and without 'knowing' anything at all), based on an economic logic that pushes the head teacher towards the goal of 'continuous progression' (students failing a year may affect economic resources). However, this juggling is unable to fight school failure; rather, it simply ameliorates the symptoms. When statistics show a decrease in failure rates and school dropouts, it gives the impression that the problem of academic failure is being fought. Finally, compensation can be institutionalised by measures to support students with 'learning difficulties'. However, such compensatory measures rarely question the education system's learning contents or educational goals and establish themselves as a counter-hegemonic movement, since they are framed within the system reforms.

The relevance of 'knowledge for life' – one of the main educational goals – is seldom discussed, something that points to the need to discuss the central methodological presuppositions of a fundamental shift away from the traditional future-oriented school towards a new life-oriented school. Michael Brater (1999) discusses these presuppositions by suggesting not only a new formal pedagogy, but also explorative and life-oriented learning, and learning occurring in real-life conditions. Learning contents, as Brater claims, should no longer be educational goals, but instead must become learning pretexts. This new formal pedagogy should enable the selection of those subjects to teach according to the relevance criteria of such subjects; relevance regarding the formation of young people's competencies, as an impulse to individual development. Such a proposition implies the selection of qualification contents, revealing themselves as didactic motives to develop competencies that contribute to nurturing an autonomous human being: thus, operational skills in the cognitive domain are needed but also development of affection, feelings, willingness, and moral and social development. The second methodical principle to face the pedagogical task of enabling young people's active development can be found in what has been called 'explorative life-oriented learning' (Holzkamp, 1993). In this case, learning occurs within experimental situations in which subjects to be learned are put into practice ('learning by doing'). For this, the organisation of the

education system needs to be rebuilt methodically by introducing learning processes centred on action. Interactive and non-centred learning processes allow contents to be experienced and explored, rather than absorbed and memorised cognitively. In such a model, students are invited to think, to know, to investigate, and to find out about new ways and new obtainable goals. The teacher no longer 'lectures', but commits herself to creating active learning situations, to help students themselves find solutions for problems, with a discovery logic (Pais, 2002). This exploratory learning – well illustrated in 'roof pedagogy' – stresses a process by which knowledge is produced, instead of defending a passive acquisition of transmitted and reified knowledge.

The third fundamental methodical principle centres on life-oriented learning, taking place in real situations. These conditions cannot be artificially simulated for didactic goals, or be divorced from real life, as often happens in conventional classrooms. In such contexts (divorced from real life), considerable losses are bound to happen, concerning meanings and motivation. These are important aspects that can only be found outside, in real life, on the 'school's roof'; because that is where real life takes place, and it is where one can see the expected training effects on skills, when they are released from school routines, life itself is shown to be the best place to learn.

As we have argued so far in this chapter, the education system can be looked at as a 'persistent unity over time', while persistence is well represented by the image of being imprisoned in a cage. Those living in a cage will hardly be free unless someone from the outside opens the door. In this sense, Nisbet (1979) argues that social change cannot be inferred from endogenous processes that, in nature, produce nothing but internal readjustments in the structure they refer to. Educational policies produce only small adjustments that cause little or no change in the education system because educational goals are seldom discussed. Robert Merton (1980) suggests distinctions between three models of achieving cultural goals (educational goals, in our case):

- The traditional model valuing 'institutional means' to achieve 'educational goals', which dominates current debates on educational reforms, creates, in fact, three kinds of student behaviour: *compliance* (educational success visible in the capacity to acquire all transmitted knowledge), *ritualism* (apparent compliance to educational system rules, but lack of motivation for learning) and *alienation* (withdrawal and clear demotivation regarding learning in school and compensatory quests in consumption and drug taking, among other things).
- The model – 'alternative means' to achieve old 'educational goals' – is, beyond a doubt, innovative. However, it should be stressed that it is an innovation that does not question the old 'educational goals'.
- The third model states that educational reforms should not be confined to actions directed to 'means', no matter how innovative these might be. There is no educational change if its goals are not discussed. And a change of goals can only be accomplished under an impulse of exogenous factors to the so-

called formal school. This change can project a new reality caused by an action that transforms: *trans* (beyond that) *forms* (old form). The *trans-form-a(c)tion* is only possible through action and by the effect of a constellation of efforts directed to it: *questioning* (the education we have and the one we do not have); *inquiry* (of exogenous and endogenous factors, as a source of stagnation, renewal, or change in education systems); *information/circulation* (of pedagogical experiences that can be discussed and experienced); *interaction/cooperation* (among education agents, not only teachers, but also parents and students); *intervention/transformation* (concerning not only pedagogical means, but also new educational goals).

In this sense, good practices taken from so-called non-formal education and informal learning should be taken into account. By valuing non-formal education and informal learning, we are not suggesting that these should replace formal education – nor should they be developed against formal schooling (Apple, 2001). In return, however, schooling must open up to experiences it traditionally refuses to accept. In some non-formal and informal educational experiences, we find real challenges concerning educational goals and learning methods that can be demonstrated by roof discoveries and 'pedagogy of desire' (Garcia Castro and Abramovay, 1998).

Roof discoveries should begin with the teachers and students getting acquainted with and discovering one another. This implies that students are allowed to express their individuality, to make their existence real through concrete representations, for example by drawing. For that reason, gypsy children represent violence by exhibiting knives – the same way those who study very hard and memorise everything exhibit their knowledge by systematically putting up a hand every time a teacher asks a question. All subjects to be taught should either meet the drive for knowledge, the drive for discovery and learning about new things (as it happens in roof discoveries), or they should develop self-expression as it happens in body and music expression. Usually, self-expression in visual arts is encouraged by promoting public exhibitions of art creations – the classroom is seldom thought of as a room to free creative energy and participation.

However, when knowledge is a desirable asset – the 'pedagogy of desire' – the teacher stimulates the creation of a community of apprentices – and indeed, becomes an apprentice alongside the students. The teacher can set questions and problems, can create a climate of curiosity, encouraging discovery and, from then on, privileging student participation. The pedagogy of desire also takes place through playful pleasure. Some people think play also means mess, disorder and chaos. Nothing could be less accurate, because playful order has discipline and rules. However, perhaps as a result of a lack of artistic sensibility, education bureaucrats can only admit that a sense of discipline can be attained by the 'cage' logic. This is misleading because the presupposition itself is a key factor of indiscipline and violence. Also in this case, the 'wings' of freedom can provide flights of responsibility (see Chapter Nine of this volume).

Conclusion

Informal learning: the Swiss army knife of Integrated Transition Policies?

In this chapter, we have analysed the strengths and also the various forms of dilemma of three different approaches to push forward the recognition of informal learning from a youth transitions perspective. This exploration of terrain included perspectives of increasing human potential, of tackling inequality and of narrowing the gap between institutions and (young) individuals. It has become clear that these three approaches have to be seen as complementary elements in a more comprehensive framework of changing the ways society supports young people in their transition to the labour market.

The strategy of formally acknowledging competencies and knowledge acquired by informal learning runs the risk of simply doubling existing inequalities in labour market access if it is not understood as a political process of power distribution surrounding the issue of what kinds of learning should be awarded recognition and what kinds should not. Moreover it links to political questions surrounding contexts such as the third sector that bear a high chance of being able to empower young people in that process but are not given enough resources to do so. However, simply formalising the learning outputs of informal learning contexts would aggravate the danger that these contexts would lose some of the very virtues that make informal learning possible. We argue, rather, that Integrated Transition Policies (ITPs) as a more holistic approach should be aware of what we have analysed as the prerequisites of the integration of informal learning in transition systems:

- Learning cannot simply be conceived as passing on knowledge from one person to another, but its symbolic value and its social and collective nature have to be respected.
- Knowledge cannot be reduced, therefore, to a more or less fixed set of cognitive competencies. Integrated Transition Policies would rather conceive of it as 'landscapes of meaning', which is closely related to individual and collective identities as well as to 'learning biographies'.
- Today's youth transitions can no longer rely on fictitious rewards in the future as a collective resource to keep up individuals' most crucial resource in learning biographies: motivation, in the sense of the individual's own ability to relate his or her current situation and learning opportunities to an individual and collective past and future.

One practical consequence of this for ITPs is that learning cannot be organised and planned in rigorous curricula, but needs to be developed in a way that respects young people's biography and subjectivity. On the level of policies steering the transition sector, this would make it necessary to put more emphasis on formative success criteria than on quantitative output of policies. Due to the fact that each of the three presented strategies demand a high level of

institutional reflexivity, a great deal of innovative energy will be needed if they are to become part of reality. As incorporating the 'informal' in each way will always mean the loosening of close-knit modes of planning and traditional ways of policy evaluation. One of the most important prerequisites for successfully developing integrated policies on this basis will be institutions' ability to accept uncertainty instead of emphasising short-term goals and rewards (see Chapter Ten of this volume). The complementary nature of the approaches we have described does not necessarily resolve the dilemmas that stem from the complexity of the given situation in today's education and training systems. However, each of them underlines what John Field (1998, p 1) has stated elsewhere:

> The idea of 'lifelong learning' draws attention not to education or training – traditional domains of policy-makers – but to learning, which is undertaken by individuals and organisations without much involvement by the state. A policy approach based on learning will be radically different from one based on education and training.

This means that concepts of transition policies that neglect the interrelatedness of these aspects, for example, by reducing the recognition of informal learning to an administrative tool, risk being stuck with the old model of education we have sketched in this chapter. An integrated approach would have to face the fact that discussing the means of transition policies without taking into account its objectives is a dead end. To put it in Peter Alheit's (1999, p 78) words: "A generally accepted informalisation of learning cannot be achieved without democratisation". In this sense, what has to be accomplished seems to reach far beyond a simple incorporation of some new methodologies of education and training, but requires an altogether fundamental rethinking of education and training as part of European societies.

Notes

[1] In the work of Deleuze, 'striated space' signifies "a partitioned field of movement which prohibits free motion. Smooth space refers to an environment, a landscape ... filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of "effects, more than one of properties" (www.rhizomes.net/issue5/poke/glossary.html).

[2] See www.rubemalves.com.br

References

Alheit, P. (1999) 'On a contradictory way to the Learning Society: a critical approach', *Studies in the Education of Adults*, vol 31, no 1, pp 66-82.

Apple, M. (2001) 'Away with all the teachers: the cultural politics of home schooling', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, vol 10, no 1, pp 61-80.

Benevides de Barros, R. (1997) 'Subjectividade repetente', in E. Guimarães and E. Paiva (eds) *Violência e Vida Escolar. Contemporaneidade e Educação, Revista Semestral Temática de Ciências Sociais e Educação, Instituto de Estudos da Cultura e Educação Continuada*, vol 2, no 2, pp 116-35.

Bjørnåvold, J. (2000) *Making learning visible: Identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning in Europe*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Bjørnåvold, J. (2001) 'The changing institutional and political role of non-formal learning: European trends', in P. Descy and M. Tessaring (eds) *Training in Europe. Second report on vocational training research in Europe. CEDEFOP Reference series (3 volumes)*, Luxembourg: EUR-OP.

Brater, M. (1999) 'Escuela y formación bajo el signo de la indivudualización', in U. Beck (ed) *Hijos de la Liberdad*, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica (original German edn, 1997), pp 137-63.

Deleuze, G. (1980) *Mille plateaux*, Paris: Minuit.

Deleuze, G. (1990) *Pourparlers*, Paris: Minuit.

Delgado Ruiz, M. (2002) 'Estética e infamia. De la distinción al estigma en los marcajes culturales de los jóvenes urbanos', in C. Feixa, C. Costa and J. Pallarés (eds) *Movimientos Juveniles en la Península Ibérica. Graffitis, Grifotas, Okupas*, Barcelona: Ariel, pp 115-43.

Dohmen, G. (2001) *Das informelle Lernen. Die internationale Erschließung einer bisher vernachlässigten Grundform menschlichen Lernens für das lebenslange Lernen aller*, Bonn: Federal Ministry for Education and Research.

du Bois-Reymond, M. and Walther, A. (1999) 'Learning between want and must: contradictions of the learning society', in A. Walther, B. Stauber, E. Bolay, M. du Bois-Reymond, S. Mørch, J.M. Pais and A. Schröer (eds) 'New trajectories of young adults in Europe: a research outline', in Circle for Youth Research in Europe Circle (CYRCE) (eds) *Intercultural Reconstruction*, European Yearbook for Youth Policy and Research, vol 2, Berlin and New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter, pp 21-45.

Field, J. (1998) 'Globalisation, social capital and lifelong learning: connections for our time?', in A. Bron, J. Field and E. Kurantowicz (eds) *Adult education and democratic citizenship II*, Krakow: Impuls.

Freire, P. (1997) *Pedagogia da Autonomia. Saberes Necessários à Prática Educativa*, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Paz da Terra.

Garcia Castro, M. and Abramovay, M. (1998) 'Cultura, identidades e cidadania: experiências com adolescentes em situação de risco', in *Jovens Acontecendo na Trilha das Políticas Públicas*, Brasílis, CNPD, vol II, pp 572-9.

Hager, P. (1998) 'Recognition of informal learning: challenges and issues', *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, vol 50, no 4, pp 521-35.

Holzkamp, K. (1993) *Lernen: Eine subjektwissenschaftliche Grundlegung*, Frankfurt-am-Main and New York, NY: Campus.

Kahane, R. (1997) *The origins of postmodern youth. Informal youth movements in a comparative perspective*, Berlin, New York, NY: De Gruyter.

Livingstone, D. (2001) *Adults' informal learning: Definitions, findings, gaps and future research*, NALL (National Research Network on New Approaches to Lifelong Learning) Working Paper 21, Toronto: NALL.

Merton, R.K. (1980) *Teoria y Estructura Sociales*, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, pp 209-39 [original English edn, 1949].

Nisbet, R. (1979) *Social change*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Pais, J. (1999) *Consciência Histórica e Identidade. Os Jovens Portugueses num Contexto Europeu*, Lisboa: SEJ/CELTA.

Pais, J. (2001) *Ganchos, Tachos e Biscates. Jovens, Trabalho e Futuro*, Porto: Ambar.

Pais, J. (2002) *Sociologia da Vida Quotidana. Teorias, Métodos e Estudos de Caso*, Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

Stoer, St.R. (2002) 'Desocultando o vôo das andorinhas: educação inter/multicultural crítica como movimento social', in St.R. Stoer, L. Cortesão and J.A. Correia (eds) *Transnacionalização da Educação*, Coimbra: Afrontamento, pp 245-75.

Tyack, D. and Cuban, L. (1995) *Tinkering toward Utopia. A century of public school reform*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vaidergorn, I. (2001) 'Sol e Ar, de solidariedade e de arriscar: a espacialidade e a sacralidade', in O. Rodrigues de Moraes Von Simson, M. Brandini Park and R. Sieiro Fernandes (eds) *Educação Não-Formal. Cenários da Criação*, Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, pp 79-93.

Wallace, C. and Kovatcheva, S. (1998) *Youth in society: The construction and deconstruction of youth in East and West Europe*, Basingstoke/New York, NY: Palgrave.

Walther, A. and Stauber, B. (eds) (1999) *Lifelong learning in Europe*, vol 2, Tübingen: Neuling.

Walther, A., Stauber, B., Biggart, A., du Bois-Reymond, M., Furlong, A., López Blasco, A., Mørch, S. and Pais, J.M. (eds) (2002) *Misleading trajectories: Integration policies for young adults in Europe?*, Opladen: Leske+Budrich.

Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whitin, P.H. and Whitin, D.J. (1997) *Inquiry at the window: Pursuing the wonders of learners*, Portsmouth/New Hampshire: Heinemann.