

The Political Economy of Adult Education and Development: A Review in European Union

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Abstract : This study intends to clarify the nexus of adult education and economic development within the methodological framework of political economy within EU. The main logic behind this study is that economies with a higher level of adult education have higher levels of economic development. Despite the assumption that policy making in adult education will clearly be facilitated by any 'proofs' of efficiency, mainly monetary, this study acknowledges the limitations following the use of the narrow economic approaches embedded in the neoclassical framework and proposes that the methodological framework of political economy is the most relevant to explore the correlation between adult education and economic development. Focusing only on neoclassical economics to explore the financial impact of adult education, it will marginalize the consideration of its history, producing a sort of historical amnesia, besides the social harm, namely the devaluation of its socio-cultural influences. On the other side the political economy perspective offers a wider perception of adult education's profits from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective too. The understanding of adult education engages questions of political economy because it is identified mainly as means of transformation, either personal or societal, serving humanistic values, besides its accepted monetary attributes. The political economy elevates questions regarding how the three institutional arrangements -the state, the market, and the civil society, are engaged in promoting adult education and therefore how adult education could reinforce economic development. Here the economic substance is still considered but it is placed into a wider social spectrum, where politics, economy, and history interact with one another. This study restricts itself in EU and explores the role of the three institutional arrangements both in the formulation of policy planning, and in the mental transformational process of the individual learners, which opens the path to a deeper understanding of the interaction between the individual and the social action, and therefore between adult education and economic development. This study also elevates the idea that economic development can have a positive impact on the unification of Europe, which encompasses economic, political, and cultural components.

Keywords : adult education, economic development, EU, political economy, unification of Europe

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